CHAPTER - 3

POST-COLONIAL KENYA:
A CORROSIVE DISILLUSIONMENT

We must all struggle for a world in which one's cleanliness is
not depended on others' dirt, one's health on another's ill health,
and one's welfare on another's misery

*Ngugi wa Thiong'o* - *Barrel of a Pen.*
CHAPTER- 3
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Even after much debate, the concept of post-colonialism has generated a lot of controversies and confusions. Scores of books have been written and innumerable seminars have been held. But still no one has been able to give an acceptable and a comprehensive definition. As far as Ngugi is concerned, he gives the meaning of post colonialism, which is applicable and suitable proposition to Kenya. He defines:

If in these essays I criticize the Afro-European (or Euro-African) choice of our linguistic praxis, it is not to take away from the talent and genius of those who have written in English, French or Portuguese. On the contrary I am lamenting a neo-colonial situation, which has meant the European bourgeoisie once again stealing our talent and geniuses as they have stolen our economics. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Europe stole art treasures from Africa to decorate their houses and museums; in the twentieth century Europe is stealing the treasures of the mind to enrich their languages and cultures. Africa needs back its economy, its politics, its cultures its languages and all its patriotic writers.


Ngugi is one of the known names in postcolonial literature and theory. Generally post-colonialism is used to signify a position against imperialism and Euro-Centrism. There are some pertinent questions about postcolonial literature, which need to be clarified. Should the writer use a colonial language to reach a wider audience or return to the native languages more naturally relevant to people in the post-colonial Kenya? Has the preponderance of the postcolonial novel led to a neglect of other genres?
Makarand Paranjape, in his address at Jawaharlal Nehru University on *Decolonizing English: Attaining Swaraj*, says:

The damage is so deep, you know the backbone is broken and the psyche is deeply wounded. We have to rethink what we mean by *Swadeshi*, so that we can use the resources of the contemporary world.

Ngugi’s writing against neo-colonialism shows that African literature developed as a direct response to concrete historical conditions, which transformed the function and ideology of the African writer and the artistic forms they use.

1950s was the decade of hope during which most African countries gained independence as anti-imperialist movement triumphed. African writers, born in this decade, had an anti-colonial, and anti-imperialist outlook, yet their hopeful mood explains the assertive and optimistic nature of writings of the period. On the other hand, the white settlers tried to pacify the Africans by advocating the justifying of racial and cultural superiority. They argue that, while making the ignorant African aware of culture, modernity, to provide a way of life, and a sort of exploitation and oppression are inevitable. The new African writer counter—attacked such claims by producing artistic works, which reflected that Africa had its own history, culture and civilization were equal, if not superior, to that of the imperialists.

Historically, 1970s reveal more clearly the transition from colonialism to neo-colonialism that began during the 1960s. Writers began to understand that the roots of social contradictions and conflicts lay more in class differentiations than in color. The African writers directed their writings on the peasants as their audience, by using their oral songs and other dynamic orature techniques. This made a fierce debate about what constitutes African literature. Ngugi as a writer
is of the opinion that if one writes in a foreign language it would be considered as European literature and not African literature. Writing in African languages would reach the natives. On the other hand the natives might read the writings and be aware of their positions. He sets an example in this direction by writing in his mother tongue Gikuyu.

As a mark of rebellion against foreign domination, Ngugi wrote his novel *The Devil on the Cross* in Gikuyu. He thinks that translation of his works into English would reach 'other language communities'. According to him English is always a colonial language. He tests translation method in his three later successful novels: *The Devil on the Cross*, *Matigari* and the powerful and magnanimous novel, *The Wizard of the Crow*.

Ngugi published *Matigari* in 1986 and its contents prompted the Kenyan government to ban the novel from 1986 to 1996. So, the novel was not sold in Kenyan bookshops.

Ngugi continues to write prolifically and speak around the world at different Universities. His books have been translated into more than thirty languages and they continue to top the lists of best selling books. Ngugi returned to Kenya from his exile on 26, 2004, August. Then the first part of his latest book written in Gikuyu –was launched. *Murogi Wa kagogo* is a thought provoking satirical novel that gives a surgical examination of the cult of dictatorship in Africa and the rest of the world. Narrated in six volumes, the story of *Murogi wa Kagogo* is set in an imaginary country called Aburiria, which is under the leadership of His Excellency President. The English translation of it by the author himself was published in 2006.

In an interview, Ngugi recalls:
When I came to the *Devil on the Cross*, two things have happened. I change language...I have to shift the language to Gikuyu...When you use a language, you are also choosing an audience. Now I can use a story, a myth, and not always explain because I can assume that the Gikuyu readers are familiar with this...I can play with words, sounds and images, I can rely more and more on songs, proverbs, riddles, anecdotes...I maintain multiple centers in a sense, simplify structures.

[Rao, web: p3]\(^1\)

The conflict between the native culture and the alien culture has shaped Ngugi's polemical thinking and radical writing. He continuously tries to escape from the hegemonic legacy of colonial culture and wants to reshape the national culture of his motherland. That is why he attacks Christian education system and their Bible, which always play double standards. The Christian education scribbled on the clean minds of Africans, which would be difficult to reverse. This education system created a divided society which according to Ngugi, the society is a racial Pyramid—'the European minority at the top, the Asian in the middle, and the African forming the base'.

Ngugi strongly believes that literature is a weapon that brings about social and political changes and not merely a work of art. In fact, this is one of the consistent themes, pursued by many African writers. Ngugi considers that oppression of the 'neo-colonialists' is more dangerous than the colonial predecessors.

In *Devil on the Cross* everything was seen in reverse order—Black-turned-white, immoral-turned-moral and devil turned—divine. By using pungent satire, he exposes the ruling class. The title itself is suggestive of the situation. Instead of Christ, there is a devil on the cross. This novel became so popular that professional readers read in bars and other public places.
"A Grain of Wheat, Petals of Blood, Devil on the Cross, Matigari and Wizard of the Crow, show Ngugi’s idea that ‘history and literature should strive to portray the actual struggle and should stand by those involved in it’. These creative works indicate how political independence has failed to bring changes to people’s lives. The colonialists may have left the country, but the attitude and vicious seeds of oppression stifling of the political dissent continues, as black rulers follow their white predecessors and even exceed them in using imperialist tactics.

Ngugi’s life and writing were not harmed as long as he used to write in English. Once he started writing in the language of the common man, and on the plight of the common man he had to face incarceration at Kamiti Maximum Security. When he began talking and writing about the native culture, freedom fighters and native identity, he had to face self-exile in 1982. It is because; he uses the language and themes, which would be understood by the peasants. The unanswered question is—is it harmful to write in one’s own mother tongue?

The problem of medium of writing becomes a prominent issue and how one should study African literature is the other prominent issue. Should African literature be studied at par with western method of reading? or African writings based on the particular historical, cultural conflicts. For them life and literature are not two different entities. They correspond each other.

In Pen points, Gun points and Dreams Ngugi clarifies the relationship between art and politics:

I am basically exploiting the relationship between art and political power in society. I have always taken it that art is not outside them province of power struggles in society. But I have always refused to accept that art is something less then politics. When people ask me, why are you interested in politics, I always answer, because I am
an artist. Whatever affects the lives of human beings, ecological, economic, political, social, cultural or psychological is within my province as a writer. I am not in art because of politics; I am in politics because of my artistic calling.

[Ngugi:1988 p5]*

According to Ngugi life and art are not two different entities. They are inseparable. When he was kept alone in prison, he defined the loneliness by writing novel in his mother tongue. Ramakrishna Rao observes in Indian Response to African Writing:

A writer just takes down notes dictated to him by life among the people, which he then arranges in this or that form I need life to write about life'. He also recalls 'human isolation created by the government to make him reconsider his resolve to continue his fight against the repressive culture neo-colonialism".

[Rao:1993 109p]*

In this chapter, it is proposed to study post-colonial situations in India and Kenya as presented by Chinnappa Bharathi and Ngugi respectively. The remarkable achievement, which is similar in both the writings, is the 'use of mother tongue' as a mark of protest against neo-colonialism. This is the first step towards decolonizing ourselves from the mental slavery and clutches of English. Ngugi writes in Gikuyu whereas Chinnappa Bharathi writes in his mother tongue, Tamil.

Whatever may be the difference; the treatment and approach of Ngugi and Bharathi in their later works reveal that the comprador bourgeois ruling classes in these countries do not tolerate any kind of opposition to their rule; they are more ruthless and brutal than their colonial masters.
Probably, Ngugi is outspoken, but it is the need of the hour, as Lingaraj Gandhi, in his article published in *Deccan Herald, Literature as Weapon for Change*, remarks:

So long as African writers in English, he continues to enrich European languages and culture. He remains a slave to it. Ngugi believes colonialism of the mind that undermines once dignity and confidence is the worst outcome of colonization. If an African writer really wants to de-colonize his mind, from European slavery he has to write in his own language. Besides African writers have a duty to enrich African languages and cultures. Ngugi regrets the choice of writers like Soyinka and Achebe to write in English.

[Ngugi: Web: 2005 p2]

He further adds:

Ngugi is among a handful of authors who have written successfully in more than one language—Samuel Beckett and Vladimir Nabokor are among the few others—but his reasons for doing so differ somewhat from those of other bilingual authors. Decolonizing the Mind, is both an explanation of how he came to write in Gikuyu as well as an exhortation for African writers to embrace their native tongues in their art.

[Ibid: p3]

Ngugi is persistent and committed in the issue of language. He sums up the heated debate:

I have tried to argue that the language question is so crucial because language occupies a significant position in the entire hierarchy of the organization of wealth, power, and the values in a society. Let me summarize the argument. Language is a product of a community in its economic, political, and cultural evolution in time and space.

[Ngugi: p3]

Post-colonialism creates a sort of awareness of identity. For many formerly colonized peoples, the heritage of colonialism is negative. It is a burden difficult to deal with and something they want to get rid of as soon as possible. Reading postcolonial literature forces one to find
self identity: who is he? What is he? Why is he like this? The meaning of existence is revealed. It has forced one to define oneself.

Some critics point out that reading novel after novel on colonialism is stereotypes reverse, like in some African Marxist novels. This argument may be applicable to only a few writers who reacted against others created stereotypical and often false picture of the others and glorify their own deeds and traditions. Neither Achebe nor Ngugi fell into that trap. Their writings do criticize colonization, they have also been careful to point out that not all whites were totally bad and all blacks totally good.

Hence, fiction is the most vigorous and interesting genre in the entire literary field today. From the times of the reversal of stereotypes from the colonial era, the genre has transformed itself into an extremely efficient weapon of social criticism, not just in post-colonial matters, but also in all ethical discussions.

Introducing conflicts within the textual limit is one of major themes of Ngugi. The conflict can be physical, emotional, or ethical, but it always creates some sort of tension that the characters must resolve. By this device he meant that plot is a series of events that depend on one another, not a sequence of unrelated episodes.

Ngugi has shown to the creative writers about the zeal to write, a sense of strong commitment to fight against the wretched society, created by either outsiders or his countrymen in Kenya in particular and the world as a whole. During 1978, while he was under incarceration at Kamiti Maximum Security Prison, he wrote in Gikuyu on toilet paper and later he translated it into English as *Devil on the Cross*. The manuscript was confiscated by the prison authority but fortunately, after going through the manuscript the Senior Superintendent in charge of Kamiti returned the pile
To make his unfold story meaningful Ngugi uses a number of techniques; journey is one of the prominent motifs, as was the case in *Petals of Blood*. Jacinta Waringa and Wanja in *Petals of Blood* are similar examples. In earlier novels, Wangaari like Nyakinyua provides a link with the freedom struggle. She also represents peasantry and the women-two most exploited sections of the society not only under colonialism but also in post-independent Kenya. The dominant theme is the same: complete and most inhuman exploitation of the Kenyan masses by a nexus of the ruling comprador bourgeoisie and the criminal thugs in alliance with their ‘global allies’.

The decision of writing in Gikiyu language was a remarkable and bold step against neo-colonialists. Ngugi himself records in his *Detained: A Writer’s Prison Diary*:

Free thoughts on toilet paper. I had deliberately given myself a difficult task. I had resolved to use a language with did not have a modern novel, a challenge to myself, and a way of affirming my faith in the possibilities of the language of all the different Kenyan nationalities, languages whose development as vehicles for the Kenyan people’s, anti-imperialist struggles had been actively suppressed by British and Colonial regime......and by the neo-colonial regime of Kenyatta and his comprador KANU cohorts...I would not avoid any subject...science, technology, philosophy, religion, music, political economy—provide it logically arose out of the development of theme, character, plot, story and world view. Further I would use any and every thing I had ever learnt about the craft of fiction—allegory, parable, satire, narrative, description, reminiscence, flashback, interior monologue, stream of consciousness, dialogue, drama provided it came naturally in the development of character, theme and story. But content—not language and technique—would determine the eventual form of the novel. And the content? The Kenyan people’s struggles against the neo-colonial form and stage of imperialism.

[Ngugi: Detained: A Writer’s Prison Diary: 164p]
Ngugi’s post-colonial writings are more determined and matured, in his thoughts and actions. *Devil on the Cross* is a significant work for many reasons. He has shown the facets of exploitation, as David Cook and Michael Okenmkpe in their *Ngugi wa Thiong’o: An Exploration of his Writing* observe:

"*Devil on the Cross* on the one hand, both thematically and stylistically a logical development from Ngugi’s earlier fiction. His socio-political stand is now confident; it crystallizes the viewpoint towards which he was finding his way in the first three novels and which he embodied in a somewhat more complex and enigmatic manner in *Petals of Blood*. On the other hand, *Devil on the Cross* is a startling new departure a work which no faithful reader of Ngugi up to the time of his imprisonment without trial could reasonably have predicted”.  

[David and Okenmkpe: 1983 p121]

Ngugi’s women characters are patriotic, bold, and ready to protect the nation in general. It is not just token of sympathetic gesture to them but he has genuinely as well as intentionally focused on their commitment and sacrifice. He considers that the black women have been exploited twice, one in the name of women, second for their black colour.

For Karl Marx, haves and have-nots are the two extreme positions in every society, prominently in industrialized nations. The ‘haves’ do not have any consideration—caste, creed, nation, colour, self-identity or respect, patriotism—for the mere sake of greed of power and richness. All human qualities are peripheral. In Kenya, the neocolonialists ‘haves’ ‘shared’ with their predecessors-white people in every sense of the word, to brutally exploit their own near and dear Kenyans, kith and kin, who dreamt of favorable living conditions while fighting in the forest as Mau Mau- freedom fighters. This reverse made Ngugi register his disillusionment in his writings with the strongest possible terms. Ngugi,
without making an iota of compromise, resolutely protests against these power mongers and lustful men running after money, women and land. He shows his anger in his *Detained: A Writer's Prison Diary*:

"Because the women are the most exploited and oppressed section of the entire working class, I would create a picture of a story determined woman with a will to resist and to struggle against the conditions of her present being. Had I not seen glimpses of this type in real life among the women of Kamiriithu Community Education and cultural center? Isn't Kenyan history replete with this type of women? Mekitili, Muraa wa Ngiti, Mary Muthoni Nyajiru? Mau Mau women cadres? Waringa will be the fictional reflection of this resistance heroine of Kenyan history. Waringa heroine of toil...there she walks....


Change of language as a medium for his creative writings, transformed him greatly, he took a stand which was irreversible one. *Devil on the Cross* is a landmark achievement in this new direction not only to Kenyans but to every creative writers. The conflict with mother tongue and other tongue is a permanent phenomenon for many writers today. They are caught between the two, they are not still free, like Ngugi. This is a sign of weakness and parasitic life. Even some writers use pidgin English as a sign of protest, instead of abandoning English completely. Ngugi sets an example in taking a firm no-reversal stand.

*Devil on the Cross, Matigari,* and the latest novel, *Wizard of the Crow,* are all written in his mother tongue, Gikuyu. But the colonizers used English language as a strong weapon to suppress and exploit the peasants and Kenyan mass.

The historian in Ngugi records the following:
The settler despised peasant languages of slaves, and believed that the English language was holy. Their pupils carry this contempt a stage further. Some of their early educational acts on receiving the flag were to ban. African languages in schools and to elevate English as the medium of instruction from primary to secondary stages.

Ngugi uses folk elements in his writings. Traditional songs are the part of folk culture which can be found plenty in his novels and dramas. These poems and songs have strong patriotic meanings and messages. He uses these songs to make the Kenyan aware of the past present future.

"We are not afraid of detention
Or of being sent to prison
Or of being sent to remote islands
For we shall never give up
Our struggle for Land/Freedom
Kenya is an African people's country"

In Devil on the Cross, from the beginning to the end, Ngugi speaks directly to the reader, as a third-persons omniscient point of view. The narrator thinking and talking to himself forms the second key oral style in Ngugi’s work. A third distinct oral style is used in the mouth of Wariinga, the protagonist of Devil on the Cross — Wariinga’s oral style is central to Ngugi’s novel. Finally, the oral style hearkening to African song is used to evoke a sense of timelessness, rhythm, and mythology.

In Devil on the Cross Jacinta Wariinga plays the role of female protagonist. She makes a fault by refusing the sexual offer advanced by her boss Mr. Boss Kihara. Wariinga is the representative of the whole of Kenyan modern women. As the novel keeps her as a center of all the activities, she may be compared with any oppressed woman. It may not be exaggerated if one compares with the modern Kenyan women. Because they too have been continuously exploited on all fronts. Ngugi describes:

She enters another office. She finds there another Mr. Boss. The smiles are the same, the questions are the same, the rendez-vous is the same—and the target is still Kareendi’s thighs. The Modern
Love' Bar and Lodging has become the main employment bureau for girls, and women's thighs are the fables on which contracts are signed.

Ngugi: Devil On the Cross: 19

Wariinga's tragic life continues to be multiplied after losing her job. Her most trusted lover John Kimwana accuses her of being Boss Kihara's mistress and walks out, leaving her alone. She has not been able to cope with this situation. Her owner of the so-called 'bird's nest-room' raises the rent for her room and she refuses to pay. The landlord hired thugs to throw Wariinga's things out. The door was locked with a new padlock. A piece of written paper they left for her; It reads:

We are the Devils Angels: private Businessmen: Make the slightest move to take this matter to the authorities, and we shall issue you with a single ticket to God's kingdom or Satan's --a one-way ticket to Heaven or hell. (DC:10)

The heroine becomes fed up with her life in Nairobi, which is large, soulless and corrupt'. Ngugi makes Nairobi a representative of the whole of the world. He builds a sinful attitude against the new-colonizer-bourgeoisie.

The same is true of all the cities in every country that has recently slipped the noose of colonialism. These countries are finding it difficult to stare off poverty for the simple reason that they have taken it upon themselves to learn how to run their economies from American experts. So they have been taught the principle and system of self-interest and have been told to forget the ancient song that glorify the notion of collective good. (DC:15)

Wariinga's life falls apart in just two days, after refusing herself to Mr. Boss Kihara as 'sugar girl. She decides to go back to her native Ilmorog to live with her parents, who were once freedom fighters in Mau Mau struggle. It is given in the later part of the novel through flash back. After coming home, even before reading the card, she senses the meaning of it so she takes a pause and examines. The card, which reads:

Devil's Feast!
Come and see Yourself,
A Devil-sponsored Competition
Journey as a motif helps Ngugi discover the state of things in Kenya, as he has done in the earlier novels. Mwaura discovers that one of the passenger's he carries in his vehicle no. MMM 333, does not have money to pay his fare. He shouts at her in the jungle.

I don't want any wrangling between us. This vehicle does not run on Urine...Nothing is free in Kenya. Kenya is not Tanzania or China.

(DC:37)

The old woman, a passenger, Wangari, narrates her story. She comes from Ilmorog as a peasant, and actively participated in Mau Mau movement.

"That we shed blood because of the great movement that belonged to us, the people of Kenya, Mau Mau, the people's movement so that our children might eat until they were full, might sleep in beds free from bed bugs? That our, should learn the art of producing wealth for our people? ...But these legs have carried many bullets and many guns to our fighters in the forest...and I was never afraid".37DC

Wangari continues her sad tale, which gives the picture of independent Kenya.

My small piece of land, two acres, had just been auctioned by the Kenya Economic progress Bank, as I had failed to pay back loan I had Deadened myself with so that I could keep grade cows. It was a loan of 5000 shillings. I bought posts and fence wire. I bought a cow that was six months, pregnant. Then I used some of the money to pay my son's schools fees. The cow gave birth to a bull. The milk brought in only enough money to cover the monthly interest payments to the bank.
My cow caught gall fever. The Vet did not arrive until after the cow had died and had been buried. I had not even paid a quarter of the debt. (DC:41)

Wangari says, ‘Vagrancy or something like that, that is what they called it. But, our people, think; I, Wangari, a Kenyan by birth. How can I be a vagrant in my own country? How can I be charged with vagrancy in my own country as if I were a foreigner? I denied both charges; to look for work is not a crime. (DC:43)

Gatuiria, introduced himself, as a Junior Research Fellow in American Culture, argues so powerfully. ‘Our culture....sorry, I mean, our culture has been dominated by the western imperialist cultures. That is what we call in English cultural imperialism. Cultural imperialism is mother to the slavery of the mind and the body. It is cultural imperialism that gives birth to the mental blindness and deafness that persuades people to allow foreigners to tell them what to do in their own country, to make foreigners the ears and mouths of their national affairs’ (DC:58)

Ngugi believes that ‘the voice of the people is the voice of God. The novel deals with two nations within ‘Kenya one comprising peasants, workers and intellectuals who were in the forefront of the freedom struggle but have been marginalized after independence and the other comprising traders and businessmen like Mwaura and Mukiraai who were lackeys of the colonial administration but who have usurped power in the new situation and have continued the exploitation of the Kenyan people the help of the financial hold which their former colonial masters still hang over their country’ (PF:H.N.121p)

Ngugi draws much from the oral, traditional narrative style in this novel to reach the common peasants. “Our stories, our riddles, our songs, our customs, our traditions, everything about our national heritage has been lost to us’ (DC:59)
The second part of the novel is the celebration of Devil's Feast; a form of competition among Kenyan thieves and robbers to elect the greatest of them. Wariinga, Wangari, Mututri, Gautria, Mukiaai and Mwaura have also attended either to observe or to participate.

Sometimes, Ngugi not only creates humor and but also reveals his pungent sense of political satire. As far as agenda is concerned the two terms are enough; theft and robbery; a man from ‘OTR-International Organization of Thieves and Robbers, whose head quarters are New York, USA, shares his wisdom as the following:

I think there is not 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 our, then kneel down before the god of money. Ignore the beautiful faces of your children, of your parents, of your brothers and sisters. Look only on the splendid face of money and you’ll never, never, go wrong. It’s far better to drink the blood of your people and eat their flesh than to retreat a step (DC:89).

Here, Gatuiria tells Wariinga about his birth, education and his rich background. He wants to do research in African music. After his narration, it is Wariing’s turn. She too gives a lengthy information. She says, her father was arrested in 1954 for participating in Mau Mau, and she studied at Nakuru Day Secondary School. She was a brilliant student. She wanted to become either an engineer or a doctor. but while in school days only she was introduced to a rich man. She was taught to play ‘Hunter and Hunted’. She became pregnant, because of the role she was forced to play. She tried to commit suicide but gave birth to a daughter. This made her move towards Nairobi to get a job for her survival.

These people have demonstrated and conducted public rally outside the cave, charging the thieves, robbers, and exploiters to leave the country. But, protests were disrupted and the protesters were killed.
Waringa still continues as an automobile engineer. She lives in a small room in Nairobi. Ngugi highlights the confidence of Waringa by doing so. He envisions a new Kenyan woman who is a foil to the stereotyped women. Ngugi seems to look beyond the general saying on ‘Women whose only job was ‘to cook, to make beds and to spread their legs in the market of love’. (PF:HN:123)

At the end of the novel Waringa marries Gatuiria. She is relieved. Waringa of today has rejected all that, reasoning that because her things are and her body is hers, she must accord all her faculties their proper role and proper time and place and not let any one part be the sole ruler of her life, as if he had devoured all the others. (DC:218)

After her marriage with Gatuiria, they go to get blessings. It’s a very pleasant Journey with a lot of hopes. But she is shocked to find Gatuiria’s father and her daughter Wambui’s father. The old man requests Waringa for her forgiveness.

‘Leave Gatuiria. He is my only son, and I love him dearly.....My home would fall apart. My property would be left without a manager. My life would break into seven pieces. Jacinta, save...I would like to leave Gatuiria......Be mine Remember, you once belonged to me,. I believed I am the man who changed you from a girl to a woman. And you are the mother of my child, although I’ve never set eyes on it’. (DC:251)

Waringa does not believe him, as she knows the meanings of ‘little fruit’ little and orange. She shoots him from pistol, she kills him and goes out without regrets. She answers Gaturiia: There kneels a louse, a weevile, a flea, a bedbug! He is mistletoe, a parasite that lives on the trees of other people’s lives!’ (DC:254).

Ngugi attacks the post independent Kenya and its ‘wholesale’ exploitation of the masses peasants, workers, students, and women—and rampant corruption—the nexus between businessmen and
politicians, even between the one nation with another nation is reflected in his all writings. No doubt, it is a revolutionary novel, which exposes naked-daylight robbery.

Mr. Boss Kiharas and the rich old Man, Waigokos, Kamoongoynes-represent Kenya's rich male exploiters. Wariinga has been the victim of these cunning fellows. Sometimes, the reader is surprised to see how this 'bright girl' has been exploited and duped, more than once. But she is not that much of a stupid woman. From the day one, when her dreams shattered by Mr. Boss Kiharas, she has been waiting to take revenge and she does it at the end of the novel cold bloodedly. The novel depicts the socio-economic and political situation of contemporary Kenya.

The mood of novel is so gloomy, restless, disillusioned among the honest Mau Mau fighters and common man of Kenya. Apart from all the merits of the novel, there seems to be too much angry outbursts, which have spoiled the genuine taste. His use of art for his personal reaction is rather questionable. He should have distanced himself as what T.S. Eliot describes "Catalyst".

It seems to be clear that Ngugi should have been a little soften his stand. That is, had he got out of that angry butt, the novel would have become more artistic. However, for Ngugi 'art is a medium' to bring change into the society. Ngugi ends the novel with a brutal killing, but Wariinga's journey, struggle, and her woe continues. In a sense, these things in life are timeless and show Universal messages. Transformation of personal to universe is one of the features of Ngugi's writings. The angry posture continues further in his, Matigari.
MATIGARI:

*My entire intellectual formation was of a polemical nature, so that it's impossible for me to think disinterestedly or to study for the sake of studying.*

Antonio Gramsci: *Letters from Prison.*

Creative writing itself is a mark of protest. Ngugi and Chinnappa Bharathi stand as good examples for this. There is a close relationship between personal and authorial experiences. The literary production arising from that experience is a concomitant process of historical explanation.

Preaching about cultural and social harmony is easy. Since times immemorial the exploitative class has continuously taught the common and the poor people that how to live and how to respect others but they never practised it. Hence, writers like Ngugi support armed struggle against the exploiters. He remembers those days as explained in an authoritative web titled *African Literature & the post-colonial context:*

*I worked there sometimes, digging the ground, tending the settlers' crops, and this for less than ten shillings. Every morning African workers would steam across the valley to their sweat for such a meager sum of money, and at the end of the week or month they would give it all to the Indian trader who owned most of the shops in our area for a pound of sugar, maize flour, or grains, thankful that this would silence the children's clamor for a few days. These workers were the creators of wealth but they never benefited it; the products of their collective sweat went to feed and clothe the children of the Indian trader, and those of the European settlers not only in our country but even those in England. I was living in a village and also in a colonial situation.*

[Hug Web: Qtd] 14

In African history, one undisputed fact is the formal achievement of Independence. The end of direct colonial rule in Ghana (1957) set the pattern of apparent imperial retreat. Ghana was followed by Nigeria (1960), Uganda (1962), Kenya (1963), Zambia and Malawi (1964) and Gambia (1965), African freedom appeared to have been appreciated and applauded very much by the freedom fighters of all over Africa.
Yet African writers and leaders were cautious. As Jomo Kenyatta spoke of image and reality about independence.

But it is not enough to have simply an image in our minds. We cannot be satisfied just with a design, or take refuge in dreams....from all citizens of Kenya we need the vigor of practical initiative, the fire of new patriotism, to turn image into reality.

(ibid:29)\(^5\)

Jomo Kenyatta explains the ambition and optimism of *Uhuru* ‘there is nothing we cannot accomplish’. But Ngugi’s reaction to *Uhuru* appears to have been more cautious. ‘He saw that an educated group had gained not only political power but also economic power as well’. ‘Will this class use their political power to enrich their economic position?’ he asks.’ This is naturally the central theme in African literature. After independence, African literature is mainly concerned with an answer to that question. As far as Ngugi’s writing is concerned, it proves that he doesn’t foresee any progress as long as neo-colonialist bourgeoisie occupies the power and control over the economy. He is skeptical about the future of Kenya.

Ngugi’s post colonial novels are cultural texts. They include more story riddles, proverbs and sayings. In *Decolonizing the Mind*, Ngugi discusses the importance of oral literature of his childhood days:

I can vividly recall those evenings of story telling around the fire side. It was mostly the grown ups telling the children but everybody was interested and involved. We children would retell the stories the following day to other children who worked in the fields.


*Matifary* is the product of his theory that in colonization the bullet is the means of physical subjugation and language is the means of the spiritual subjugation. Through colonization, English became the language of education. As a result, the growth of orature
in Kenyan language was hindered. This was devastating to African literature because: 'Language carries culture and culture carries the entire body of values by which we perceive ourselves and our place in the world'. Therefore, he questions 'how can the African experience can be expressed properly in another language? Ngugi argues for the creation of a literature that conveys the true African experience, often because much of local tradition has been preserved in that language. Ngugi values traditional songs and stories very high. He is right when he says that it is important to reach an audience in the language of its heritage. Ngugi's world view is profoundly Marxist, and one has to question how this single division-imperialism versus resistance is useful in this century.

Being a bilingual writer, Ngugi has a pioneering spirit, a man who helps to steer African literature on its road to recognition. Ngugi tried hard to break cultural domination, which is precisely a result and reflection of economic and political domination. He points out that the colonial power uses 'colonial culture as an instrument to perpetuate their hegemony'. They used culture to impose total silence on a restive majority. It created subservient atmosphere in the society. And another method they used was 'detention without trial'. As against this, Ngugi tried to propagate revolutionary culture of courage, fearlessness, and defiance to oppression, non-submission and pride in oneself and in one's country. He does not support the acceptance of national humiliation.

*Matigri* was published in 1987, just after four years of *Devil on the Cross*. This novel is a continuation of not only Ngugi's 'efforts to write in Gikuyu, but also an amalgamation of creative and oral literature. Ngugi himself makes it clear that it is 'based partly on an oral story about a man looking for a cure for an illness'. MG:7.
Ngugi gives a brief summary of the folktale:

'He is told of man Ndiro, who can cure his illness, but he doesn't know how to get to him. So he undertakes a Journey of search. He meets different people on the way and to each he sings the same description of old man Ndiro:

Tell me where lives old man Ndiro
Who, when he shakes his foot, jingles,
And the bells ring out his name: Ndiro
And again: Nadiiro. (MG-vii.)

Helped on by the different people, he eventually reaches his destination, where he finds the necessary cure. The story is simple and direct' (pvi)

Ngugi adopts this folk material to tell his tale of contemporary Kenya. The complete name of Matigari is Matigari ma Njiruungi which means in Gikuyu 'the patriots who survived the bullets'. (MG:20)

Ngugi tries to recreate the genre of oral history and a broad nationalist tone by claiming that 'the story is imaginary'. The characters are imaginary. The country is imaginary—it has no name even, Reader/Listener; may the story take place in the country of your choice. (MGix)

Ngugi wants his readers to read the text metaphorically as the story of the oppressor against all oppressed. He believes that all Kenyans should be able to identify themselves in these terms. While Ngugi's work has been banned by the government because it is so historically focused and so adamantly critical of the government a metaphoric reading as well in Ngugi's terms means to read their story through the story of the Gikuyu, which is something many Kenyan ethnicities are not willing to do.

In *Penpoints and Gunpoints*: Ngugi claims:

'Art has more questions than it has answers. Art starts with a position of not knowing and seeks to know. Hence its exploratory character. In fact art has hardly any answers'. ....

Ngugi goes on to illustrate his point by using Matigari as an example.

'Who was going asking questions related to the truth and justice of what was going on in the country. Actually Matigari was only
asking one question: where could a person wearing the belt of peace
find truth and justice in a post-colonial society? When the police
found that Matigari was only a character in a novel of the same title
good old Toroitich Arap Moi ordered the book to be apprehended
very well co-ordinated police action, the book was taken down from
the shelves in all the book shops and even from the publishers’
warehouse.


In fact, the novel created a hysteria among the people, Ngugi has
succeeded in creating a fascinating and revolutionary concept of genre
Matigari is a novel and at the same time it is an oral narrative
performance. The question, which arises in everyone’s mind, is: who is
Matigari? Is he young or Old? Dead or living or even Jesus Christ?
These are the questions asked by the people when a man after surviving
a war for independence emerges from the mountains. Matigari is in
search of his family. He wants to rebuild his home and start a new and
peaceful future. But his search becomes a quest for truth and justice
as he finds the people still dispossessed and the land he loves is ruled
by corruption, fear and misery. The novel makes the reader feel that
one cannot defeat the enemy. He vows to use force of arms to achieve
his true liberation. Lyrical and hilarious in turn, Matigari is a memorable
satire on the betrayal of human ideas and on the bitter experience of
Post-Independent African society.

Ngugi emphasizes that art and literature’s function may in
some way seem to contradict as in Ngugi’s own development from A
Grain of Wheat to Devil on the Cross. In Matigari two questions are
prominently asked: Where is truth and justice to be found and had
anything really changed between then and now?

These questions are being tested as Matigari explores the
ideological cartography of the country after independence. After his
encounter with the children who are being exploited by the adults, his Socratic query is shifting to a more rhetorical one:

'So a handful of people still profited from the suffering of the majority, then sorrow of the many being the joy of the few?'

(Ngugi:1998:12p)

Ngugi's insistence on the Socratic role of art seems, therefore, more theoretical than seriously related to Matigari. While questions can be asked, there is a sense that the answers are grounded in and premised on a fairly preconceived ideological foundation. Matigari's version of post-colonial Kenya is thus based on the fierce contest of 'Whose reality counts'. As the teacher says: 'I also know that there are two truths. One truth belongs to the oppressor, the other belongs to the oppressed': (ibib:121p)

Ngugi drew largely on orature from pre-colonial Gikuyu society. He says:

But the clearest and most deliberate drawing of features of oral narratives is in my sisters. The story, so simple, is of a man who has an incurable wound and is in search of cure. He is told of a medicine man whose name is Ndiiro, but he does not know the way to Ndiiro's place. He encounters different people and asks each one of them the way to Ndiiro's. The story depends on a repetition of the song that describes Ndiiro. I used the same structure in the contraction of Matigari, the story of a wanderer in search of social justice in a post-colonial society.

(ibid-124p)

Ngugi gives a number of examples also about how settlers exploited the common man of Kenya: one such example is:

Matigari was the one who produced everything. But it was settler Williams who collected the profits. Imagine: the tiller dying of starvation, the builder sleeping on the veranda; the tailor walking about without clothes and the driver having to go for miles on foot. How could such world be? Matigari told Guthera: MG:38)
He continues his argument the builder demands back his house, and tiller his land... Does he (white man) think that he is God's representative here on earth?

He sang a song:

You foreign oppressor,
Pack your bags and leave!
For the owner of this house
Is on his way!

Matigari attacks even the lazy African blacks 'Our country has remained in darkness because of the ignorance of our people. They don't know the importance of the word 'individual' as opposed to the word 'masses'...survival of the fittest. (MG:48-49)

Matigari took the oath of patriotism, and fought against the white settlers in the forest. He has a commanding voice and approach, when he warns the police:

'I am Matigari ma Njiruungi, and I warn you, Leave that woman alone!' How am I describe it? His voice was like thunder. The dogs stopped with their tails in mid-air......Foreign exploiters and their lack servants must now pack up their bags and go. The patriots, Matigari, call. He who sows must be the one who reaps! We refuse to be the post that cooks but never eats the food. (MG:60)

The novel is completely filled up with questions. For the question Why? Ngugi gives answer here:

'You may ask me as many questions as you like
'I say questions are the gateway to wisdom and knowledge. Show me a person who doesn't ask questions and I will show you an idiot'.
(MG:62)

Matigari's views are direct, simple but strong and firm. He says:

'I have come back to the people girded with a belt of peace. A farmer whose seeds have not germinated does not give up planting. A person who seeks justice never tires of the search until he finds it. Truth never dies, therefore, truth will reign the end, even if it doesn't reign today. (MG:64)
The novel focuses on the power of neo-colonialist forces, which controlled even the police:

‘And do you know something else? the whole police force is in the hands of these two. So are all the law courts. (MG:65p)

Since the very beginning, Matigari captures readers with foreshadowing, use of similes, and many techniques that the European writers use. However, structure is different from that of a novel written in the European tradition. The language is kept simple, as someone would speak when telling a story. There are many repetitive words and phrases in Matigari and readers would not underestimate the significant value of everyone of them.

‘The true seeker of truth never loses hope. The true seeker of real justice never tires. A farmer doesn’t stop planting seeds just because of the failure of one crop. Success is born of trying and trying again. Truth must seek justice. Justice must seek the truth. When justice triumphs, truth will reign on earth (p84-MG)

Examination of one or two quotes from the novel Matigari, would give more insight in to the story. There is no night so long that it doesn’t end with dawn’. This metaphorical expression has a very significant meaning in the context of the story. It expresses the untold sufferings of people in that land. Mostly it emphasizes their hope for a better tomorrow. Things have not changed after the settlers left. The imperialists set a worldwide system in which the sorrow of the many is the joy of the few. The wealth of an entire nation is in the hands of five percent of the population while the other ninety five percent are dying of starvation.

Another important phrase in Matigari is: ‘I have girded myself with the belt of peace’. It illustrated the non-violent attitude of the hero. Matigari is a nationalist, a peaceful messenger who wished for

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harmony in his community. Another phrase that provides the most significant insight into the text is 'house and home'.

In addition, when Matigari was in the jail cell the unnamed shepherd woman shared food with other people in the jail. It is parallel to Jesus who shares his bread with twelve other people. Literally the food, Matigari had shared could be the last supper. Matigari is not only the representation of bitter experience of post-independence African society, but it is a picture of timeless suffering and struggle for freedom and independence as well. Matigari's patriotism for his country and people haunted his soul. His search for truth and justice eventually let him live in the forest and mountains. The greatest message is that it creates hopes the people who start questioning their way of life rather than blindly to following in the footsteps of their heroes. The shepherd woman dubs Matigari:

'My dear wanderer, you cannot find answers to you questions here nobody lives. Truth and justice are to be found in people's actions. Right and wrong are embedded in what people do.....Let me whisper this in too much fear in this country. How does the saving go? Too much fear breeds misery in the land. Leave me in peace. Go! Go to the wise men, those who know how to read the stars. (87.MG)

He encounters students and after words a teacher. Matigari says to the teacher:

'There are to two worlds'. There is the world of those who accept things as they are, and there is that of those who want to change things'. (92)

According to Matigari there are two types of wise men: those who love the truth and those who sell the truth'. (92) Matigari's answer is obvious that he would not stop questioning. He says 'No government not even the most repressive, has ever managed to silence the voices of the masses. The people sing the song:
"Even if you kill us
Victory belongs to the people,
Victory belongs to the people (p127)

The novel ends with Matigari and Guthera disappearing in the forest followed by a hail of bullets from the police. But as the boy Muruuki gazes after them, they seem to have entered into a world of myth, as he hears a song symbolizing the victory of the peasants and patriots of the land.

Ngugi admits before writing of *Matigari*, the rationale behind the use of the Bible: 'I have also drawn from the Bible in the sense that the Bible was for a long time the only literature available to Kenyan people that has been available to them in their national languages'. Ngugi: 10

Harish Narang in his book *Politics as Fiction*: argues:

This new social vision that Ngugi presents in his *Matigari* is one of the forces of revolution comprising the patriot peasants represented by Matigari, the working class represented by Naguru wa Krio, youth represented by Muriuki and women represented by Guthera confronting the forces of repression represented by the state police, Minister of Truth and justice, John Boy Junior and Robert Williams. In the end, the house of John Boy Junior-representing the combined forces of repressive comprador bourgeoisie and imperialism—is burnt down by Matigari and his friends. Matigari, Guthera and Muriuki are last seen floating down the river—no one knows where they have gone and whether Matigari would not appear again amongst them as mysteriously as he had done earlier. The state forces of repression continue to live in constant fear while the people have overcome theirs.


Ngugi has been successful in doing what he had been striving for doing all along writing a truly revolutionary novel. His recent landmark novel *Wizard of the crow* is to be examined hereafter.

It is not proper to say that Ngugi makes gimmick while using folk tales and orature. He feels that this method of writing reaches the masses of Kenya. But he might have felt futility in using highly charged political jargon. Hence, he has avoided its use altogether. The society,
in this novel is divided into two groups: The Wa-Benzi and the others. The readers should also be listeners as the novel demands it.

The analysis made by Nandita Sinha is, perhaps, suitable for the conclusion of this analysis: She writes:

The novel thus a has a multi-layered meaning. At the basic level, Matigari is an individual searching for his family. At another level, his return symbolizes the return of the freedom fighters to their work of cleansing society of its ills and reshaping it in more egalitarian terms. The path is that of armed resistance. At a further level, he is the archetypal questing hero of myth and folktale. This aspect is reinforced by the structures of oral narrative and epic for in the tradition of heroic figures of such traditions he is both warrior and trickster, and youthful fighter and wise elder. Finally, his coming into society to transform it is linked to the Second Coming of Christ.

(Sinha 2006: 21p)


I am the country and the Country is Me

(Ngugi: Wizard of the Crow; 2007: p698)

These are the highest egoistic words the Ruler of Aburiria. Aburiria is the epicenter of the novel. Murogi wa Kagogo titled in Gikuyu, is a very long novel of 1250 pages. The English translation of it is titled as Wizard of the Crow. This is the third novel he writes in his mother tongue in protest against the colonized language English and to make himself de-colonized as much as possible. In Gikuyu, it was published in 2004. A number of reviews on the Wizard of the Crow are available on the Websites. The following is an insightful commentary on the novel.
Can Ngugi Ape and Hope to Promote Vernacular? by Ken Kamoche: in his article, says:

“In exile now for more than 20 years, Ngugi wa Thiong’o has become one of the most widely read African writers of our time, the power and scope of his work garnering him international attention and praise. In *Wizard of the Crow* he gives us a novel whose aim in his own words is nothing less than ‘to sum up Africa of the twentieth century in the context of two thousand years of world history’. Commencing in ‘our times’ and set in the ‘Free Republic of Aburiria; the novel dramatizes with corrosive humour and keenness of observation a battle for control of the souls of black folk. Among the contenders: His High Might Excellency; the eponymous Wizard, an avatar of folklore and wisdom, the corrupt Christian Ministry; and the nefarious Global Bank. Each story weaves into the next, creating a dazzling tapestry of humanity in all its ceaselessly surprising complexity. Informed by richly enigmatic traditional African stories and storytelling, *Wizard of the Crow* is a masterpiece, crowning achievement in Nggugi’s career thus far”.

(Web: All Africa, Kenya [colum] or URL: http://www.g21.net/gb21.html)

The author of this article says that ‘Ngugi is preaching Gikuyu while practising pidgin English. Ngugi uses *Englishisms* through. ....phonetic backdoor’. This author is of the opinion that Ngugi himself has violated what he has written in *Writers in Politics* in 1981: ‘We cannot develop our literatures and cultures through borrowed tongues and imitations’. (Ibid-web) But what Ngugi does in *Wizard of the Crow* is quite the opposite. He has not violated what he has written.

Ken Kamoche makes a long list of words which are not Gikuyu but pidgin. This is because the contact between the Europeans and the so called indigenous people. Some of the samples from this article will give sufficient evidence to the presence of pidgin

In *Murogi wa kagogo*, right from the first page where Ngugi makes his dedication, he talks about “*humwaka*” (homework). In his acknowledgement, he throws in words like “*bamiri*” (family),

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"Njanuari" (January), "miriniamu" (millennium). It goes on and on, page after page. It gets bizarre when he talks of 'riynuioni ya bamiri" (family reunion), "bathi thiheco" (special pass), and so forth. You don't have to be a Gikuyu speaker to recognize that this is not Gikuyu. It is pidgin English. No doubt many other of our languages have fallen into this trap.^^

Some more examples: "thekondari" (secondary), "thwiti" (sweet), "borithi" (police), etc, with which Murogi wa Kagogo is littered. Ken Kamoche says, 'I am not persuaded that Ngugi is making enough of an effort to promote the bona fide vernacular that he wants so much to defend. He makes it clear that he has selected these examples from the acknowledgement, dedication, and biography, not from the narrative. The truth of this writer's sayings cannot be rejected or accepted fully till another reader of Gikiyu can come out with his opinion. We are non-Gikiyu readers. But it is an interesting and informative article.

Whatever, the shortcomings, Ngugi's abandonment of English and moving to his mother tongue, Gikuyu and writings three successful novels -Devil on the Cross, Matigari and Wizard of the Crow is an epoch making, revolutionary step beyond all criticism as Ngugi has said in an another occasion, that 'I have undying spirit' which should enlighten every reader of his not only creative writings but ever thoughtful, sometimes, controversial and polemical non-fiction as well.

I

The novel is a flexible form of literature, in which the novelist makes use of imagery, rhythm of a poem, and a strong allegoric satire. The novelists have been making experiments, continuously and constantly, with new directions. Novel is a written fictional form. Murogi wa Kagogo, in Gikuyu, Wizard of the Crow in English version, translation by the novelist himself, is an exception to the above statement that 'novel is a written fictional form' because, he uses folk tales and oral
form extensively in it. In fact, all his novels do have this special element in them, but *Wizard of the Crow* can be understood fully through orature. In other words, the reader is not a reader but he should be either a speaker or a listener or both, similar to soliloquies. On one hand the novelist freely moves from Kenya to ancient Indian epics, — the Mahabharatha and the Ramayana and also the story of Ekalavya's sacrifice of his thumb to Drona and on other hand, he ironically touches upon the burning issues of the modern society. This is the reason the novel has neither a fixed society nor fixed a geography. All are purely imaginary. It implies that the saga of this novel may be applicable to any nation, and any society. Ngugi rightly exposes the ugly picture of the imaginary Aburirian land, which has to be the fate of the really existing society like his motherland, Kenya. It might be fruitful, if we study the folktale avatar of Republic Aburiria and neo-colonized Kenya a side by side—a parallel study.

Major African writers, who have experienced, directly or otherwise, the devastating effects of colonialism and erosion of native culture responded resolutely, sometimes revolutionarily. Physical colonialism has been ended in most of African countries today but the aftermath effects remain a concern. Ngugi is one of the prominent thinkers who have voiced against the colonialist's rule and he also severely questions the neo-colonialist-bourgeoisie rule in Kenya. He complains that the present neo-colonial rulers do follow the same method of exploitation, dictatorial rule and the common man has to suffer a lot. These rulers do responsible for the moral decay because they are mentally corrupted. This is the central theme of the novel *Wizard of the Crow*, where the ruler is just called the *Ruler*, who follows the administration of the President Daniel arap Moi. As Ngugi speaks in an interview on *Wizard of the Crow*: 'What we have in Kenya is Moi-ism
without Moi. ..There has been a terrible moral decay. An individual can go, but the system continues'.

_Wizard of the Crow_ deals with the brutal, corrupt and ruthless administration of the President Daniel arap Moi. The Ruler is the representative of Moi in the whole novel of 768 pages. _Wizard of the Crow_ is a bizarre and wizardry allegoric novel. Ngugi re-creates the Kenyan history of Moi regime through this novel, which reflects his personal point of view along with the universal features.

Alan Woods in his article, defines:

> Despite all the prejudices about the lonely artist communicating with himself, in practice, no artist paints a picture that he does not intend to be seen and no writer writes a novel or poem just for their personal consumption. **And in order for art or literature to act as communication, it must have something to say.** Art links the particular to the universal. (Emphasis added-Web)

First, since _Wizard of the Crow_ is the phantasmagoric saga of fictional Republic Aburiria, powerful, compelling and skillfully narrated, an abstract of the mega story or a synoptic picture of events of the novel is not without a merit. Secondly, Ngugi himself pointed out: ‘to sum up Africa of the twentieth century in the context of two thousand years of world history’.

(Ngugi:2006:on the blurb of the novel)

The Ruler is the administrator of the Republic Aburiria. His passionate desire is to build a skyscraper called Marching to Heaven;
for which he intends to take loan from the Global Bank. The Global Bank Mission has troubled him, at every step, giving one or the other pretexts. They have informed him that in Aburiria, there is a mess of queuing of the people, leading to law and order problem and they have come to notice that an organization of women called ‘voice of the people’ was working underground and making all out efforts to fight against the Ruler’s plan of constructing the ‘sky-tower’. So the Global Bank officials considered that Ruler’s request for aid is not viable and go back hurriedly. The Ruler is not ready to accept even the fact that the plan is not acceptable to the officials of the Global Bank. Since he considers the project as seminal and first of its kind in the whole world, he plans to meet the Global Bank officials at their head quarters at the USA. Meanwhile, it is rumored that his body is protruding he is becoming pregnant despite being a male. Besides, all these adverse elements, he tries to meet those people but ultimately his mission completely fails. He comes back after taking much risk to his life.

During his absence, the whole Aburiria has been anarchic. All his ministers behaved in their own fashion. Wizard of the Crow, a male witch, by name Kamiti and his girl friend, Nyawira, have controlled the whole of Aburiria, by making sorcery or magic through the mirror. The most trusted Cabinet Ministers, Machokali and Sikiokuu, the greedy businessman Titus Tajirika and the devoted high ranking police officers were either suspended or silenced permanently by the Ruler, though they were very much psychopathic and dancing to the tune of the Ruler. The dictator never had faith on anybody. This is the fate of a ruler who has unlimited powers. The dream of construction of Marching to Heaven tower was failed but interested a mega international company called Global Insurance Company was built on the same spot.
The Wizard-Kamiti and Limping Witch-Nyawira, taking hand in hand had left Aburiria. The very beginning of the novel is the indication of the saga of the common man of the imaginary country called Aburiria. The novelist tries to give a sort of warning.

'In the spirit of the dead, the living, and the unborn,
Empty your ears of all impurities, o listener,
That you may hear my story'.

(On the opening page)

These words of the narrator awake the readers of the novel. He also tells through these words that the story is of the past, the present and the future. Physically, the novel has been divided into six parts—Book one: Power Daemons, Book two: Queuing Daemons, Book three: Female Daemons, Book four: Male Daemons, Book five: Rebel Daemons, and Book six: Bearded Daemons. These six units were basically six volumes of the novel in Gikuyu.

The Free Republic Aburiria had been suffering from many strange diseases but the citizens remember only five. As it has been the fashion of dictators the world over, The Aburirian Ruler demands that every action of his should be on the T.V, mainly on the international network:

His every moment-eating, shitting, sneezing or blowing his nose—captured on camera. Even his yawns were news because whether triggered by boredom, fatigue, hunger, or thirst, they were often followed by some national drama.(3-4:2006)

As a matter of fact, the whole novel is the study of the behaviour and psyche of the colonialism and the dictatorship. There seems to be no difference between the two. The dictator has to have some systems to silence his enemies but the democrats expect their voice back. The Ruler has Red River, where the crocodiles are kept to ensure eternal silence. Even the symbol the Red River was on the Buri notes, the paper currency of Aburiria.

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The Ruler had the qualities of Satan. This element is reflected at the time of the Ruler’s birthday celebrations. The psychopathic ministers, such as Machokali had white ache. Hence he got enlarged his eyes to check the enemies of the Ruler, Sikiokuu got enlarged his ears to listen to the sound made by the Ruler’s enemies.

Then one day he flew to England, where under the glare of publicity he entered a major London hospital not because he was ill but because he wanted to have his eyes enlarged, to make them ferociously sharp, or as he put it in Kiswahili, Yawe Macho Kali, so that they would be able to spot the enemies of the Ruler no matter how far their hiding places. Enlarged to the size of electric bulbs, his eyes were now the most prominent feature of his face, dwarfing his nose, cheeks, and forehead. The Ruler was so touched by his devotion and public expression of loyalty that even before the MP returned home from England the Ruler had given him the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, an important Cabinet post, so that Machokali would be his representative eye wherever, in whatever corner of the globe lay the Ruler’s interests. And so Machokali he became, and later he even forgot the name given at his birth’. (13:2006)

Johan Kaniuru, known as Kaniuru, was one of the spectators at the Rulers birthday celebrations. He tried to make a voice at the function but the security men silenced him i.e the innocent man was brutally murdered. The Ruler’s ambition is to build House of Babel, for which the Israel failed and the Ruler thinks of his Marching to Heaven-Sky-tower to be the only the highest and the tallest building in the world. People should talk about it instead of talking of Taj Mahal. The Ruler wishes to get the aid from the Global Bank. The Bank people are planning to visit Aburiria.
The Global Bank would soon send a mission to the country to discuss Marching to Heaven and see if the bank could loan Aburiria the money for its completion. Machokali believes that this building—Marching to Heaven—is as the gift of a grateful nation to its Ruler. (19:2006)

The novel deals with the sycophantic and parasitic attitude of the major characters—Machokali, Sikiokuu, Titus Tajirika and even Kaniuru. It discusses the problem of patent act. The doctor in the USA wanted the signature of the Ruler for taking up the case for medical examination treatment under this patent act.

The novel focuses very much on the dreaded diseases like AIDS, without any hypocrisy or false orthodoxy. It equally examines the significant role of folk tale and folk culture through sorcery. A critical eye can look at a nation under the rule of dictatorship, common man’s struggle for the voice, for freedom and finally for language. The novel criticizes the Ruler’s meaningless schemes such as his birthday celebrations, his futile effort to avail the aid from the Global Bank for building sky tower called Marching to Heaven. The common man does not get minimum facilities of shelter and clothes and fights for a piecemeal a day. The Ruler continues the hegemony of the former colonialist’s rule. In fact, the story of the novel is the retold story of Kenya, mother land of the author, with a lot of autobiographical elements. The author’s own life history, and the sad part of his life is revealed in the novel. But the novel stands for multiple cultures, which is against monoculture. The dictatorship, all over the world, always keeps up monoculture, which is against the humanity. To put it in simple term he talks of democratic society and rule, where every citizen has a say.
Ngugi confronts with the despotic rule in Kenya in the novel. It is a political satire. The major characters are psychopathic, having one or the other sufferings. Ngugi says that they need the treatment by ‘Afrochiatrists’. They behave sycophantic towards the Ruler at every point of time. Their efforts at wooing the Ruler would not work for a long time, because they would be silenced by the Ruler. ‘A slave first loses his tongue. Then he loses the language’.

The title of the novel has a great significance. *Wizard of the Crow* it is Ngugi himself who is the ‘Wizard of the Crow’. Advanced Learner’s Dictionary defines the meaning of ‘Wizard’ as ‘male witch, especially in fairy stories; magician: a *person with extraordinary abilities*; *genius*. (emphasis added) The second reason may be, Ngugi is original thinker and genius. Even intellectuals all over the world who oppose him for various reasons of their own accept him as a prolific writer and his writings make the people the world over aware of the ‘otherness’ in the world. The novel rightly deals with binary oppositions silence and speech, and powerless and powerful. Ngugi says ‘speech is the beginning of knowledge’. (Ngugi: 2007: p626)26

The critics comment on Ngugi for his use of folk tales, which get distorted. But he uses tradition through story telling is not to embrace of tradition but a productive dialogue. In the same way at present KESDEMO:

(The Kenyan Scadinavia Democratic Movement) is deeply concerned with the reformation of Kenya. It is clear that while writing the mega novel, Ngugi had in mind more than one dictatorship—Moi, Mobntu, Idi Amin and Pinochet all dictators round the world.
NOTES


2. Makarand Paranjape: *Decolonizing English; Attaining Swaraj*: Available at: paran_swaraj_frameset.htm-1k.

3. An interview with Ngugi by Dr. Venkat Rao: CIEFL, Hyderabad, titled: Colonial Links: Available at: muse.jhu.edu/journal/research_inafrica_literature/vol30/30/ro.html


11. Ibid: p59

12. Ibid: p66


15. Ibid: 29


18. Ibid: 12p


