Chapter IV
Alien Masks and Native Guilt

The economic, psychological and cultural changes brought about by the colonial system of domination and expropriation in Kenya, leaves its individuals absolutely rudderless. The cohesion of the society is destroyed and social intercourse impaired. Against the background of intense personal suffering, during the period of the early colonial onslaught, the Emergency and the Mau Mau rebellion, individuals succumb to irrepressible passions resulting in a treacherous betrayal of their ethnic values and of their own selves too. James Decker in his article “Mugo and the Silence of Oppression” observes that the fragmentation of the society generates intense confusion, self-doubt and lack of confidence in the individuals. It is a society where “Neighbor betrays neighbor, wife betrays husband, friend betrays friend, all in an effort to maintain personal welfare” (55). For some of the individuals, it is a total adoption of the alien values. In their fierce attempt to belong to the colonial and post-colonial scenario, they jettison their ethnic values with greater ardour than the colonialists themselves.

Betrayal signifies a destruction of trust which arises when people’s expectations of themselves and of others are not realized. Betrayal threatens the integrity of the individual being and violates his most deeply held beliefs. He becomes susceptible to mental anguish, fear and a hesitancy to hope. Fanon apprehends that Kenyan Uhuru “instead of being the all-embracing crystallization of the innermost hopes of the whole people” turns out to be “only an empty shell, a crude and fragile travesty of what it might have been” (WE 121). The colonialist values have become so tangibly ingrained
in the psyche of the neo-colonial Kenyans that they now resort to more repressive and exploitative measures than the colonizers. The disillusioned masses find themselves marginalized, without an anchor, without any hope for a stable future.

Ngugi, like Fanon, condemns the black ruling elite as ‘parasites’ who, even after they have inherited the flag, tend to look at the people and their world through alien eyeglasses and ensure neo-colonialism. Speaking of the betrayal perpetrated by the neo-colonial leaders and their dialogue with finance capitalism, the lawyer in *Petals of Blood* remarks:

> We, the leaders chose to flirt with the mother god, a blind, deaf monster who has plagued us for hundreds of years. [...] We forgot that it has always been deaf and blind to human woes. So we go on building the monster and it grows and waits for more, and now we are all slaves to it.

(*PB* 163)

Ngugi points out that those who took refuge in universities and government services and avoided having to fight for independence are the foremost betrayers. Once freedom is gained, these educated men accept the greatest rewards for prostituting their nation. Ngugi rephrases Achebe’s words to describe the neo-colonial situation: “Neo-colonialism has put a bayonet in things that held us together during the anti-colonial struggle, and things have fallen apart” (*WP* 129).

A sense of guilt accompanies the consciousness of social failure that arises due to fissures in the social framework. Andrew Gurr makes an apt comment in *Writers in Exile*: “Guilt is the consequence of social betrayals” (103). All betrayers are probably not stung by the pangs of guilt. But the African society at large, reacted with an intense
sense of guilt at its own acts of betrayal. Fyodor Dostoevsky has noted that man's conscience is his greatest cause of suffering (qtd. in Stein 6). Some of the betrayers experience an acute need to expiate their sense of guilt. This guilt propels them sometimes to acts of aggression, at other times to intense soul searching.

Guilt is often expressed as conflict, tension, anxiety, depression and remorse. John Rickman in *Selected Contributions to Psycho-analysis* acknowledges guilt as a painful tension arising between an individual and a code of behaviour. This code of behaviour can signify the social conventions in which he is brought up and also the dictates of conscience implanted in him by his religion (120). The moral conflict caused by a society bedeviled with alien values gets deeply rooted in the psyche of the individuals and manifests itself in their external relationships and behavioural patterns. In her book *Human Emotions*, Carroll Izard argues:

Guilt results from wrongdoing. The behavior that evokes guilt violates a moral, ethical or religious code. Usually people feel guilty when they become aware that they have broken a rule and violated their own standards or beliefs. They may also feel guilty for failing to accept or carry out their responsibility. Guilt, like all the other emotions, has a great deal of generality. Since it is associated with behavior in the broad sphere of morality, ethics, and religion, the causes of guilt vary widely from individual to individual, from one ethnic group to another, and from culture to culture. (423)

In Kenya, this sense of guilt is an individual as well as a collective experience induced by the alien values under colonialism and later under the capitalist mode of governance.
The theme of betrayal and guilt forms an integral part of Ngugi's fiction. The values of the alien culture have penetrated the psyche of different characters, compelling them to demonstrate negative traits of behaviour. Charles Nnolim contends that, "betrayal features prominently in his major works, and those who betray others, who fail to join those of their group in a show of solidarity, either are tortured by mental anguish or meet violent ends" (223). Eustace Palmer in his article, "Ngugi's *Petals of Blood*" points out that Ngugi presents indecisive young men who are unable to play a major and successful role in society because they are plagued by a sense of insecurity and guilt (153). *The River Between* and *Weep Not, Child* demonstrate the moral conflicts and tensions which the protagonists are subjected to because of the dichotomy in values, introduced by a new religion and a new educational system. Edith Jacobson's *The Self and the Object World* postulates that those who become aware of contradictions between the school world and the world at home are thrown by their experiences "into a temporary state of lonesome confusion about right or wrong, good or bad, correct or incorrect, true or false, worthy or unworthy" (141). In this state of lonesome confusion some of the characters are prompted into acts of betrayal, while some others succumb to the trauma of guilt after such acts.

Waiyaki in *The River Between* epitomizes the truth of the prophecy of an elder, "Betrayal. Betrayal is a bad thing for a man in a position of influence. The curse of the people falls on him" (RE 126). The novel probes the denigrating implications of the imposition of an alien educational system and European cultural norms on the African peasantry. Waiyaki's exposure to the alien realm of books has influenced his outlook. He fervently believes in the white man's doctrine that education should not concern
itself with the government or politics. Waiyaki’s attempt to propagate an alien educational system only helps to augment an alien culture and an alien religion. This aggravates the already existing gap among the tribes brought in by Joshua’s brand of Christianity. Waiyaki opts out of assuming leadership of the Kiama, a tribal organization, meant to propagate unity. By choosing not to lead them, Waiyaki the revered leader and the prophesied saviour, betrays his people’s love and trust.

But deep down within himself, Waiyaki feels the stirrings of an inner doubt as he wonders if the education he was trying to spread was not a contamination to the ridges. Waiyaki’s alien education has transformed him into an ineffectual embodiment of procrastination and self-accusation and he fails to act upon his misgivings. Obsessed with his mission of education, Waiyaki fails to preach reconciliation at the meeting of parents. Guilt weighs heavily on him, as he realizes after the meeting, that he had been carried away by his enthusiasm for schools and education. “And with a fleeting feeling of guilt, he remembered that he had forgotten to preach reconciliation” (RB 98). Carroll Izard in *Human Emotions* aptly affirms the sense of guilt experienced by Waiyaki.

Guilt occurs in situations in which one feels personally responsible. There is a strong relationship between one’s sense of personal responsibility and one’s threshold for guilt. [...] Guilt comes from one’s own acts or one’s failure to act. It should be emphasized that guilt may occur as readily and as frequently from omission as from commission, from failure to feel or think or act in a certain way at a certain time, as well as from actual feelings, thoughts, or acts that violate moral codes or beliefs. (424)
Izard also adds that guilty people have a strong feeling of “not being right” with the person or persons they have wronged (92). Waiyaki now comprehends that he has wronged his people and has failed in his responsibilities to them by not attempting to reconcile the antagonistic factions.

Waiyaki regrets not having taken an active part in the activities of the tribe. He struggles with strange “forces that seemed to be destroying him” (RB 140). Whenever he feels smothered by moments of self-blame, Waiyaki always consoles himself by thinking he will attempt to unify the people at another time. He tries to convince himself that “Education was the light of the country. That was what the people wanted” (RB 101).

Waiyaki’s insatiable longing for unity between the two tribes, prompts him to attend a service in the Christian Church. His presence there is construed by others in his tribe as a betrayal while Waiyaki himself feels guilty of being “unfaithful to his father’s voice of long ago” (RB 86). In his book Guilt and Grace, Paul Tournier comments, “to believe oneself guilty has exactly the same effect as being guilty” (92). Waiyaki betrays his own father’s injunction and his people’s revered trust in him by offering marriage to Nyambura, the uncircumcised daughter of the Christian convert Joshua. He is now seen by others as a renegade, an impure man who has betrayed and defied his tribe. He is branded a traitor by the Christians and rejected as an outcaste by his tribe. The people accuse him of breaking the oath of the Kiama, which is considered as one of the most serious crimes a man can commit.

When Waiyaki is accused as a betrayer by Kabonyi, the people are only too willing to label him as unclean. It is a period when the villagers find their lands taken...
away, their customs destroyed by the intrusion of an alien religion and themselves burdened by the imposition of heavy taxes. Waiyaki does not perceive that his people craved for a change, for freedom from the alien culture and values. This frustration makes them prone to accuse Waiyaki but immediately after they have denounced him, the people are embarrassed and dismayed at their betrayal of their teacher. Carroll Izard opines that guilt tends to cause people to hang their heads and avert their gaze. “The guilty person generally tries to avoid eye-to-eye contact with other people” (Izard 424). The people after the trial of their teacher are glad that they are hidden by the darkness, “for they did not want to look at the teacher and they did not want to read their guilt on one another’s faces” (RB 152). It is the guilt of the whole community, which they do not want to speak of, which they did not want to know.

In Homecoming, Ngugi speaks of the betrayal of ancient social norms and values brought in by those people who had imbibed the culture of the white man and his God at the Christian missionary schools.

The acceptance of the Christian Church meant the outright rejection of all the African customs. [. . .] The European missionary had attacked the primitive rites of the people, had condemned our beautiful African dances, the images of our gods [. . .]. The early African convert did the same, often with greater zeal, for he had to prove how Christian he was through this rejection of his past and roots. (32)

Joshua in The River Between, represents this rigid and deplorable betrayal of traditional beliefs and values by the new Christian converts. He preaches the new faith “with a vehemence and fury that frightened his own listeners” (RB 30). Joshua is
enamoured of the white man’s power and denigrates his people as ignorant and rejects them as dwellers in the depths of darkness, who are damned to burn forever in hell. He places immense faith in the “unerring white man” who “had called the Gikuyu god the prince of darkness” (RB 29). He is not prepared to question the white man’s god-inspired assertions. A fanatic Joshua demands absolute submission to the alien ideology and condemns all rituals associated with his traditional beliefs. Joshua enforces the church’s morality with intense energy. “All the tribe’s customs were bad. That was final. There could never be a compromise” (RB 84). He repudiates as sinful the ritual of circumcision, which is an expression of the spiritual identity of the tribal folk. Joshua believes in the colonialist’s ideology that “Circumcision had to be rooted out if there was to be any hope of salvation for these people” (RB 56). He abhors anyone submitting to the ritual. Describing the misplaced ardour of the new converts Ngugi states in the *Homecoming*: “They derided the old gods and they too recoiled with a studied horror from the primitive rites of the people” (10).

Joshua’s religious fanaticism and the rigidly uncompromising attitude destroy his daughters. Divided between their father’s new religion with which they cannot completely identify and their ethnic traditions and beliefs which seem to provide succour to their troubled hearts, both Muthoni and Nyambura are plagued by guilt. They feel that by disobeying their father and his new creed, they are betraying him, while by adhering to the alien faith they would be betraying their life-giving traditions and ancient gods. Completely dehumanized by the new religion, Joshua becomes the symbol of the perverted denial of all natural feelings and powers of reasoning. By the suppression of his ethnic nature in the fanatical pursuit of an alien creed and by his absolute
identification with the new faith, Joshua becomes the forerunner of those betrayers who later prove to be 'sell-outs' of their own nation.

*Weep Not, Child* chronicles the dissensions in the community which are accentuated as the villagers are betrayed by their own people who have assimilated the white man's values. As Boro laments, "we black people are very divided" (*WNC* 85). The hapless villagers are caught between the internecine struggle between the black homeguards and the freedom fighters. The incursions of the colonial values and the lack of trust and unity among their own people reduce the once well-knit community to a shattered fragment.

Ngotho is an unfortunate epitome of the demoralizing effect of foreign values on a good and gentle man. He belongs to a generation whose passive attitude to the usurpation of their land was tantamount to a betrayal of their country. Ngotho is rendered powerless and tormented by this sense of failure, for failure can be as divisive as betrayal. Faced with his son Boro's contempt and recriminations, Ngotho is increasingly weighed down by an intense sense of guilt. "The voice of Boro had cut deep into him, cut into all the lonely years of waiting. Perhaps he and others had waited for too long and now he feared that this was taken as an excuse for inactivity, or, worse, a betrayal" (*WNC* 32). The awareness that he has failed his children continues to shadow him. Paul Tournier states: "Long lasting feelings of guilt are [...] continually put into the minds of the weak by the behaviour of others, by their assertions, their judgements, their contempt, even by their most unjust reproaches" (14). Tournier links guilt with remorse, shame, uneasiness and bad conscience. Ngotho is overwhelmed by these emotions when he is accused by his son "because when a man was accused by the eyes of his son who had
been to war and had witnessed the death of a brother he felt guilty” (*WNC* 83).

The frustrated Ngotho crouches in the agony of self-abasement after his wife and son are arrested for breaking the curfew. He doubts if he is a man any longer and accuses himself of cowardice of the worst sort. Tormented by guilt, Ngotho’s psyche disintegrates and he can no longer bring himself to look at anybody straight in the face. This guilt causes Ngotho to see Jacobo as a traitor of his people and is prompted to attack him. “For one single moment Jacobo crystallized into a concrete betrayal of the people” (*WNC* 66). The pitiable death of the guilt-ridden Ngotho symbolizes the sense of failure and powerlessness that is experienced by the community, as it disintegrates under the annihilating effects of the colonialist’s ideology. Tournier observes: “Every failure arouses a sense of guilt, and it makes us brutally aware of our weaknesses and powerlessness, the limitations of our human condition” (94).

Njoroge’s youth, spent in the protected atmosphere of Siriana Missionary School, has made him totally unfit to face the social cataclysm raging in his community. Overwhelmed by the complexity of the problems, Njoroge is prepared to betray the fight for Gikuyuland by choosing to be away from it all. When his family is destroyed, following the murder of Jacobo, Njoroge is entangled in guilt. But the confused Njoroge cannot identify the source of his guilt. He blames himself for having brought disaster on his family by his association with Mwihaki, Jacobo’s daughter. “His family was about to break and he was powerless to arrest the fall” (*WNC* 135). Njoroge felt burdened with the guilt of inadequacy. In *Psycho-analysis*, Edward Glover, maintains that “guilt effects can be manifested by the feelings of mental or physical inferiority” (49).

Though Njoroge loathes Jacobo as a treacherous enemy, in his bewildered state...
of mind, he feels guilty while he is with Mwihaki, for his family was implicated in the murder of her father. “No, Mwihaki, I must take on the guilt and you have all the cause to hate me” (WNC 150), he tells her. Njoroge’s vacillation represents the dilemma of an individual who has lost his moorings due to the influx of foreign values. In his fervour of self-condemnation, Njoroge finds that the whole pattern of his life has collapsed and that he has to relinquish all that he had previously considered as secure. “That day for the first time, he wept with fear and guilt. And he did not pray” (137). To quote Edward Stein: “Guilt is the peg on which the meaning of ‘man’ hangs. It is also the peg on which man too often hangs himself” (13).

Njoroge’s alien education has trapped him in misunderstanding, despair and a sense of purposelessness. He is aware only of his selfish needs and not of his moral obligations. He has betrayed his people by not taking part in the fight for Uhuru and he has betrayed his family by failing to assume his responsibilities. Unable to achieve a release from his sense of guilt and inadequacy, he decides to seek capitulation in suicide. His sense of helplessness and guilt is highlighted when he feels betrayed by Mwihaki’s refusal to run away with him. Franz Alexander in his Fundamentals of Psychoanalysis sees suicide as an extreme example of an isolated tendency run wild. Aggressive impulses in man may sometimes disintegrate and seek self-destructive gratification if all other outlets are banned. When man is faced with hopelessness and embitterment, he sometimes develops suicidal impulses. Alexander continues, “Hostile influences are inhibited and turned inward. A sense of guilt is predominant. It is aroused by hostile influences, which turn self-destructive” (222-223). Njoroge’s attempted suicide stems from his despair and symbolizes “the guilt of a man who had avoided his responsibility
for which he had prepared himself since childhood” (*WNC* 154).

Jacobo represents the class of African collaborators who become agents of division within their own country. Ngugi scathingly refers to them in *Writers in Politics* as those who “often mortgage the entire country and its future for a few crumbs from the master’s table” (123). Jacobo is the indigenous intermediary through whom the white man Howlands operates among the villagers. An image of a black traitor, Jacobo is overpowered by an insatiable desire to emulate the colonialists and win their approval by betraying his own black brothers. In this attempt he proves to have transformed himself into a man whose exploitative tendencies are worse than those of the British. Kamau realizes this when he tells his brother, “Blackness is not all that makes a man. There are some people, be they black or white, who don’t want others to rise above them” (*WNC* 24).

Jacobo symbolizes the division and betrayal of the black by blacks for self-aggrandizement and stands as a champion of the whites. By instigating Jacobo to act against his people, Howlands attempts to sow discord in the community in the hope that they would destroy themselves in the end. Jacobo frustrates his people’s attempts to regain control of their land. In return for this betrayal, Jacobo gains affluence and power and wins the distinction of being the richest man in all the land around. Totally lacking in conscience, Jacobo does not hesitate to prostitute himself to the white man by betraying his fellow villagers, Ngotho and his family. In his excessive zeal to identify himself with the white man, he fails to realize that he is merely a tool for Mr. Howlands to implement his policy of divide and rule. Jacobo the betrayer, thus wins both the curse of the people and the contempt and derision of Mr. Howlands.
Lewis Nkosi in *Tasks and Masks* describes *A Grain of Wheat* as a novel which is “built around a series of ever-widening concentric circles of guilt and betrayal” (40). Almost all the characters have faltered somewhere or betrayed someone. A novel of betrayal, *A Grain of Wheat* is a profound study of the moral conflicts experienced by the individuals of the village of Thabai, during the Emergency and its subsequent psychological consequences. It is the eve of Uhuru but freedom is not accompanied by a feeling of happiness or peace but more by a disturbing sense of an inevitable doom. The people continue to be dispossessed of their land, and their disillusionment and sense of betrayal is intensified by the land theft demonstrated by their double-crossing M.P. who typifies the condescension and corruption of the new black leaders. Fanon alleges, “nationalism quite simply means the transfer into native hands of those unfair advantages which are the legacy of the colonial period” (*WE* 124). In the novel Gikonyo who realizes that the revolution has been betrayed, states bitterly, “now, whom do we see riding in long cars and changing them daily as if motor cars were clothes? It is those who did not take part in the movement, the same, who ran to the shelter of schools and universities and administration” (*GW* 80). The men at the top of the social ladder are a group of manipulators, who motivated by their lust for power and narrow selfish interests, are attempting to replace colonialism with neo-colonialism. The novel is a severe indictment of the greed of the new elites who appropriate privileges to themselves while the people who bore the burden of the struggle for liberation continue to be deprived.

Individual betrayals in the novel are paradigms of a vast betrayal of a whole society by its new leaders. Ngugi in his epitaph to the novel says: “The situation and the
problems are real - sometimes too painfully real for the peasants who fought the British yet who now see all that they fought for being put on one side” (GW vi). They have to come to terms with the bane of betrayal and self-betrayal that events have imposed upon them. The four characters who had been involved in the events preceding Uhuru are now slaves to the memories of their own personal inadequacies. Arthur Ravenscroft sees the novel as an “orchestration of [. . .] four different but interrelated betrayals and their consequent corrosion of selfhood” (204).

On the eve of Uhuru, all the characters are plagued with guilt, shame and jealousies arising from the constraining circumstances they were subjected to. As one of the villagers asks, “which of us does not carry a weight in the heart?” (GW 203). They are overwhelmed with uneasiness for they cannot even trust themselves. As with betrayal, the individual sense of guilt too epitomizes the collective guilt of an entire society. All those who had refrained from participating in the freedom struggle partake of the guilt. Just as the villager Githua attributes his lame leg to a wound suffered in the war, each one of them tries to invent a meaning for his life.

Mugo is a tormented individualist caught in a highly volatile colonial environment when a society is fast transforming itself from a community-oriented life style to an individual-centred life pattern. Described by Arthur Ravenscroft as “the vilest of Judases” during the period of Kenyan Emergency, he emerges after the rebellion as a soul burdened with a heavy sense of unshared guilt (204). He has always had delusions of grandeur, dreaming that he is Moses, destined to lead the people into the Promised Land of Peace and Uhuru. But the appearance of Kihika in his hut one night reveals his self-deception, for he chooses to be a Judas rather a Moses.
Preferring to live as a self-imposed exile, Mugo values individual survival above everything else. Mugo’s illusions of gaining social recognition through hard work are shattered by Kihika, for he feels that Kihika has ‘everything’ while he, Mugo has ‘nothing’. Kihika enjoys the adoration of his family and the people acknowledge him as their leader, whereas Mugo can only dream of power and success and never bring himself to participate in the freedom struggle. “This thought obsessed him; it filled him with a formless fury, a tearless anger that obliterated other things and made him unable to sleep” (GW221). Franz Alexander avers that inferiority feelings stimulate aggression and one tries to free himself from such feelings by trying to take revenge upon the one who is stronger than or superior to himself (123). Mugo comes to regard Kihika’s entry into his life as an act that will thwart all his dreams and determination to achieve success and therefore, he betrays Kihika.

Public actions are often a rationalization of man’s own fears and aspirations. Edward Stein in *Guilt: Theory and Therapy* speaks of human beings who can be termed as ‘sociopathic’ personalities. Stein quotes The American Psychiatric Association that refers to such a personality as “a person whose behavior is predominantly amoral or anti-social and characterized by impulsive, irresponsible actions satisfying only immediate and narcissistic interests without concern for obvious and implicit social consequences [. . .]” (85). Mugo’s betrayal of Kihika is the logical outcome of his efforts to maintain his personal welfare and an act of revenge on Kihika for shattering his dreams. Mugo bitterly admits to Mumbi: “I wanted to live my life. I never wanted to be involved in anything. Then he came into my life, here, a night like this, and pulled me into the stream. So I killed him” (GW210). For a week after this he wrestled
alone with demons in an endless nightmare. Unwilling to be at the centre of action, Mugo finally chooses to betray Kihika and the people's cause, rather than support it.

Mugo's confession to the D.O. is his first contact with another man and in this betrayal he discovers the "power and authority of his own knowledge" and a "delicious joy at his own daring" (GW 226). But soon after his betrayal, he is weighed down by the immensity of his crime, and its resultant insupportable sense of guilt. Peter Nazareth in his article "Is A Grain of Wheat a Socialist Novel?" remarks, "Mugo realizes too late that by giving up Kihika he has betrayed his own humanity" (249). Mugo's selfless defence of the pregnant Wambuku who is mercilessly beaten by the guards is an expression of his need to atone for the wrong he has committed. His subsequent numbness and silence at the torture sessions in the detention camps is due to the feeling that he deserves the punishment. Paul Tournier notes that a man who reproaches himself for the cowardly betrayal of a friend who trusted him will never be able to forgive himself. "He is a prey to the remorse which he has never dared confess" (88). He demonstrates a pattern of behaviour which annoys others around him but this is "only a facade behind which he hides his real inner drama" (88). Mugo's silent reaction to constant torture and questionings which irritate the camp authorities is actually his attempt to pacify his guilty conscience. For, as Frantz Alexander states, "self-punishment itself is a primitive defense measure to relieve the ego of guilt" (121).

But, nothing can save Mugo from the guilt and fear that pursues him relentlessly in the form of humiliating memories, visions, dreams and voices. Carroll Izard contends that fear is a prominent emotion in a guilt situation. "For many people a guilt situation is often accompanied by a substantial amount of fear" (425). According to Robin
Cook, Mugo’s guilt comes across as “a gnawing awareness of self-blame” and “creeps into our consciousness on waves of his perpetual terror” (101). His guilt becomes an obsession and haunts him in a series of nightmarish images. Franz Alexander sees a guilty conscience as the motivating force behind an unpleasant dream. A guilty person cannot sleep in peace for “the general method of relieving guilty feelings is to suffer. In dreams with an unpleasant content the patient satisfies the claims of his guilty conscience by imagining some kind of suffering” (Alexander 178). Mugo has dreams of icicles of water drawing closer and closer to him as if they would pierce his eyes while he lies paralysed with fear. Haunted by the burden of his guilt, he imagines eyes spying on him, accusing him all the time. People’s looks and gestures envelop him in fear and suspicion.

Mugo’s heart has been the battleground of an uneasy struggle of repressed guilt and frightened inner conflict since his betrayal of Kihika. This guilt is heightened when he is encouraged by the people to lead the Uhuru celebrations. In his state of extreme psychological stress caused by his guilt and suspicion, Mugo wonders why the people could “have asked him to carve his place in society by singing tributes to the man he had so treacherously betrayed?” (GW 78) and he is choked with fear and self-doubts.

Mumbi’s story of the suffering inflicted on Thabai and its villagers after the execution of Kihika, heightens his burden of guilt. Mugo attempts to evade responsibility and rationalize his guilty conscience by arguing that “Christ would have died on the cross, anyway. Why did they blame Judas, a stone from the hands of a power more than man?” (GW 199). But the tormented Mugo cannot find release from the clutches of his intense sense of guilt for he now seems to see thick blood dripping from the mud walls of his hut.
Mugo is ruined by secret feelings of guilt, for though initially he is a hero in the eyes of others, he is a traitor in his own. Mugo's act of handing over the revolutionary activist Kihika to the British is an act of criminal treachery against the whole community. As General R. says, the betrayer of Kihika has "really betrayed black people everywhere on the earth" \((GW\ 174)\). Having placed a higher value on individual survival than on his loyalty to the society, the isolated individual Mugo's actions are opposed to the voice and need of the community. Jomo Kenyatta affirms that among the Gikuyus, an individualist is looked upon with suspicion and regarded as a wizard, a 'mwenbongia' by others. "The selfish or self-regarding man has no name or reputation in the Gikuyu community", says Kenyatta in \textit{Facing Mount Kenya} (119).

Acts of betrayal of the collective committed by Gikonyo and Karanja in \textit{A Grain of Wheat} represents the prioritizing of personal interests over communal good as in the case of the other characters portrayed by Ngugi. When Gikonyo was arrested for his role in the revolutionary movement, he had walked towards detention with a brisk step for he believed that the day of deliverance would arrive soon. But six years in detention destroys his optimism and his emotions are cracked by physical hardships and pains of waiting. Bare, disillusioned in his hope for an early independence, he clings to the image of his wife and mother as the only unchanging reality. Gikonyo later confesses: "I just wanted to come home. And I would have sold Kenya to the white man to buy my own freedom" \((GW\ 79)\). Gikonyo focuses his mind on Mumbi to imbibe the necessary strength as he proceeds to the screening office to make his confession. As he moves forward, ignoring the silent accusing stares of the other detainees, the sound of his feet on the pavement, seems to him, unnecessarily loud.
Though his mind is clear as he walks towards his act of betrayal, the ‘steps’ seem to follow him all through the detention camps, after he has made his confession. Katherine Greenfield in her article “Murdering the Sleep of Dictators: Corruption, Betrayal and the Call to Revolution in the Work of Ngugi wa Thiong’o” remarks:

Gikonyo’s betrayal of the revolution is [...] perceived by Ngugi as a psychological and moral event: torn by the conflict between building his own hut and risking that personal goal for the elusive objectives of the community, Gikonyo lacks the strength to sustain indefinitely his commitment to the public good. (29)

Gikonyo hopes to ease the pangs of his guilty conscience through his reunion with Mumbi. But when he returns home he is disgusted to find betrayal all around him. “The State of Emergency was not yet over: the white man still coughed and people everywhere danced to the tune, however rough” (GW 136). The atmosphere of betrayal has permeated his home too, for he finds that Mumbi has betrayed him by bearing Karanja’s child. Gikonyo’s rage at Mumbi’s betrayal is fuelled by his own sense of guilt and his realization that he is destined to live with the treachery his renunciation entails, for it has proved to be futile. Karanja himself, who is now a chief, is hostile to Gikonyo as to a stranger. The bitter and disillusioned Gikonyo moans to Mugo, “there is nothing so painful as finding that a friend, or a man you always trusted, has betrayed you” (GW 140).

In his tortured and frenzied frame of mind, Gikonyo is haunted by sordid images of Mumbi responding to Karanja’s overtures. Visions of her treachery corrode his mind as his romantic vision of a home with his wife comes crashing down and he rejects Mumbi.
Six years he had waited for this day; six years through seven detention camps had he longed for it, feeling all the time that life's meaning was contained in his final return to Mumbi. Nothing else mattered: Little did he then think, never thought it could ever be a return to silence. (GW 133)

Gikonyo’s pride and self-esteem are deeply hurt and he now hates himself for his dishonourable capitulation to the prison authorities. Edward Stein maintains that guilt begins in love and the experience of anti-love makes man consider life as ‘hell’. Such a life brings about,

hatred and the worst of all hatred, hatred of self. Guilt is the special form of anxiety experienced by human-in-society, the warning tension of life principles violated, of conditions of human existence transgressed, of socio spiritual reality ignored or affronted, of God alienated, of self being destroyed. (14-15)

Gikonyo dreams of a love-filled life with Mumbi is shattered and life appears to be a ‘hell’. He attempts to reassert his wounded pride by projecting his own guilt onto Mumbi. He refuses to understand the circumstances that led her to betray him. To know all would be to forgive all, and Gikonyo does not desire to forgive Mumbi for he has not yet been able to forgive himself.

Mumbi’s betrayal, his own betrayal and his ensuing sense of guilt arouse in his mind once again, the haunting echo of the ‘steps on the pavement’. Carl Jung has acknowledged in Man and His Symbols: “Symbols, […] do not occur solely in dreams. They appear in all kinds of psychic manifestations. There are symbolic thoughts and feelings, symbolic acts and situations” (41). Gikonyo’s echo of ‘steps’ is a symbolic
manifestation of his irretrievable sense of guilt.

He seemed to hear, in the distance, steps on a pavement. The steps approached him. He walked faster and faster, away from the steps. But the faster he walked, the longer the steps became. He panted. He was hot all over, despite the cold air. Then he started running madly. His heart beat harder. The steps on the pavement so near now, rhymed with his panting heart. \((GW33)\)

He feels that he has to speak to someone and in desperation, he opens out his heart to Mugo. Though this helps to lift the weight in his heart to some extent, guilt of another kind creeps in for he feels that he has laid himself bare, naked before Mugo. The ‘steps’ now keep him awake all night and conspire to undermine his manhood, his faith in himself, and accentuate his shame at being the first to confess the oath. Faced with betrayals in the public and private domains and plagued by his own act of betrayal and its resultant guilt, Gikonyo can no longer find peace and contentment.

The exigencies of the Emergency have reduced the once vibrant and beautiful Mumbi into a tired and hardened woman. Mumbi’s weariness signifies the lassitude that has engulfed the whole of Kenya due to colonial exposure. Mumbi’s guilty secret, which burdens her heart, has origins in the extenuating circumstances of the Freedom Movement. Under the pressures of the Emergency, Mumbi’s resistance slowly crumbles before Karanja’s relentless pursuit of her. It is when Mumbi has given up all hopes of ever seeing Gikonyo again that Karanja calls her to his office. As she recalls to Mugo: "My heart was full of fear and hope. I would have done anything to know the truth" \((GW171)\). When Karanja reveals to her that Gikonyo would soon be able to join her,
she surrenders to him in submissive gratitude. She suffers for this adulterous act of betrayal by losing the love of Gikonyo. Her guilt, sense of helplessness and bitterness comes out in her words to Mugo, “when they took him away, I did nothing, and when he finally came home, tired, I could no longer make him happy” (GW 55). Mumbi’s act of betrayal and her subsequent unhappiness epitomizes the fact that colonialism often compelled the native Africans to demonstrate negative aspects of behaviour which ultimately lead them to intense trauma and agony.

Colonialism has not simply depersonalised the individual, it has colonized; this depersonalisation is equally felt in the collective sphere, on the level of social structures. The colonised people find that they are reduced to a body of individuals who only find cohesion when in the presence of the colonizing nation. (WE 238)

This assertion made by Fanon is strikingly evinced in the character of Karanja. He exhibits the typical mentality of the colonized African who believes in the invincible superiority of the white man. To Karanja the white man’s power is unmovable like a rock. Ngugi has often expressed his repugnance for such people in Kenya who embrace the tradition of ‘sell outs’ and for whom collaboration with the British seems the easiest route to post-colonial power and wealth. They follow “a traitorous tradition whose highest expression was in the actions of the homeguard, loyalist collaborators with the British enemy” (MC 97).

Karanja’s conviction of the superior power of the white man leads him to betray the Mau Mau oath and uphold white authority against his own people. This collaboration with the enemy enables him to experience, “that power, which also ruled over the souls
of men, when he, as a chief, could make circumcised men cower before him, women scream by a lift of his finger” (GW 177).

Karanja uses his influence with the white bosses to enhance his prestige among his countrymen and is apprehensive of the day when the British regime in Kenya would come to an end. He fervently hopes that “the coming of black rule would not mean, could never mean the end of white power” (GW 45), for he lives on the name and the power that the white man brings him. Karanja’s behaviour is consistently motivated by the perception that the ultimate power lies with the Europeans. The sense of self-preservation that this provokes along with his obsessive love for Mumbi forestalls any involvement in the freedom movement. He is determined to pursue his own selfish interests since his vision of life is one of universal selfishness and callousness. Karanja feels that if freedom means ending up a hanging corpse like Kihika and being separated from Mumbi, then he wants no part of it.

Karanja’s first job after he confesses the oath is in a hood. “During the screening operations, people would pass in queues in front of the hooded man. By a nod of the head, the hooded man picked out those involved in the Mau Mau” (GW 261). Karanja enjoys the power of betrayal that the spying on his people brings him. But his activities as a homeguard and chief are more ruthless than in the hood. Having completely absorbed the white man’s values, Karanja’s criminality, as Fanon suggests is “not the consequence of the organisation of his nervous system nor of characterial originality, but the direct product of the colonial situation” (WE 250). Ngugi projects the absolute dehumanization of natives by the colonial machinery through the character of Karanja. While a homeguard, Karanja had shot down many freedom fighters.
Then, somehow, he had not felt very guilty. When he shot them, they seemed less like human beings and more like animals. At first this had merely thrilled Karanja and made him feel a new man, a part of an invisible might whose symbol was the white man. Later, this consciousness of power, this ability to dispose of human life by merely pulling a trigger, so obsessed him that it became a need. (*GW* 260)

Prompted purely by selfish interests and having abandoned all values of his community, Karanja is denied the peace and the hope that others have gained by their acts of sacrifices. When Uhuru dawns, Karanja is haunted by the memories of his traitorous activities and imagines “many angry eyes watching him in the dark” (*GW* 262). He is at first unwilling to come to terms with his sense of guilt. Jung posits a sense of guilt as arising from a refusal to accept oneself wholly, to integrate into consciousness that unpleasing part of oneself which Jung calls the ‘shadow’ (qtd. in Tournier 65). Eventually, Karanja realizes that with the coming of black rule there will be no place for a traitor like him. Karanja is now plagued by the image of the hooded self hovering vividly in front of him. Magda B. Arnold states in *Feelings and Emotions*: “Guilt presupposes a capacity to feel either fear of another or sympathy for another” (196). Karanja’s fear of black power combined with his trepidation over the departure of the white man weighs him down with guilt and he banishes himself from his village. The night seems to grow darker for Karanja who is now left a broken and self-defeated man. White values have instilled in him an immense sense of racial inferiority that makes it impossible for him to identify himself with his own people. He remains a black man thirsting to become a white man.
“Of all African novels, it probably presents the most comprehensive analysis to date of the evils perpetrated in independent African society by black imperialists and capitalists” contends Eustace Palmer about *Petals of Blood* (*The Growth 287*). The novel situates the tradition of betrayal in the contemporary political scenario. The levers of power in independent Kenya are held by the elite of African comprador bourgeoisie who govern the country with the aid of the exploitative ethics and the Mercedes culture of the white colonialists. The facets of colonialism continue to maintain itself in the new guise of neo-colonialism, “the bloodsucking serpent changing only the colours of the poison” (*PB 124*). Fanon affirms that the national bourgeoisie do nothing to transform the nation, but are content to be “the transmission line between the nation and a capitalism, rampant though camouflaged, which today puts on the masque of neo-colonialism” (*WE 124*).

The villagers of Ilmorog are exposed to untold misery and suffering imposed on them by the insensitive, callous and insatiable greed and ambition of their own elite. The traditional value system of the community and its spiritual and cultural essence have disappeared or been eroded and replaced with the ruthless and exploitative ethics of urban capitalism. The commercialization of the traditional drink, Theng’eta symbolizes the transfer of tradition by the new leaders for their own self-aggrandizement. Ngugi in *Barrel of a Pen* alleges that rampant urbanization and industrialization destroy the harmony of values embodied in tradition whose repository is the rural community (79). The lawyer who is Ngugi’s spokesperson states bitterly that the present leaders have accepted the priesthood of capitalism and sold their souls to the monster god who has “decreed only one ethical code: greed and accumulation” (*PB 163*).
The title suggests the decay that has spread to the core of the society. The rottenness of the core is represented by the worm-eaten bean flower with red petals that appear to be overflowing with life-giving blood. This is a world where “Hearts are hardened; emotions are coarsened; minds are enslaved; the psyche is depraved” (Cook and Okenimkpe 95). The whole village of Ilmorog has metamorphosized into a major tourist resort and tourism itself has turned into a national religion and shrines of worship are built for it all over the country. This confirms what Fanon has stated: “The national bourgeoisie organizes centres of rest and relaxation and pleasure resorts to meet the wishes of the Western bourgeoisie. Such activity is given the name of tourism” (WE 125).

The injustice, oppression and acts of betrayal inherent in the system unleash demoralizing and negative forces whose repercussions produce cracks in the time-honoured institutions. This world thrives on “the survival instincts of dwellers in a Darwinian jungle” where “healthy human relationships” are distorted (HC xviii). *Petals of Blood* presents a sensitive insight into the minds of the characters to reveal the motivating factors behind their actions and their anxieties. The outer struggle in the society is mirrored in the inner turmoil that takes place in the hearts and souls of the individuals.

Munira of *Petals of Blood* is weighed down by a multiple sense of guilt and betrayal. The contradictions in his character are rooted in his upbringing by a conventionally pious father who had collaborated with the British during the Emergency. He had always been ridden with guilt that he had betrayed his nation by taking the stance of an outsider in the national liberation movement. His lack of determination to take an
active role against collaborators like his father, leaves him with the guilt of omission. Any mention of forest fighters heightens this sense of guilt. "He always felt this generalised fear about this period of war: he also felt guilty, as if there was something he should have done but didn’t do. It was the guilt of omission" (PB 62). In order to expiate this guilt, Munira rejects the norms and conventions of his bourgeois father and conventionally successful brothers and becomes an active rebel against the system, while at school. But here too he fails the test, because the alien values of his family and his education have fostered in him, a supreme lack of confidence. He gets dismissed from school and wins the scorn and contempt of his father and brothers for being a non-achiever. This sense of not being able to achieve anything plagues Munira with an intense feeling of betrayal and guilt.

John Rickman observes that disobedience to parental injunctions gives a pang of conscience or guilt and also produces a fear of retribution (120). But assenting to his father’s imperialistic values only creates in Munira a sense of disobedience to the dictates of his own conscience. He can neither identify himself with the oppressor nor associate himself with the oppressed. Paul Tournier contends that the true embryo of guilt lies within a sense of inferiority. Criticism between members of a family plays a significant role in creating secret feelings of inferiority and guilt. “True guilt is precisely the failure to dare to be oneself. It is the fear of other people’s judgement that prevents us from being ourselves, from showing ourselves as we really are” (15,17).

Frantz Alexander, a professor of Psychiatry, remarks that the hostile attitude exhibited by one’s brothers and father provokes guilt feelings and fear of retaliation in individuals. It also creates severe feelings of inferiority, hurts his male pride and leads
to aggressive behaviour which makes him demonstrate a tough, independent, stubborn and unyielding attitude. He is driven to commit acts which give him the appearance of toughness and power. "This attitude becomes a new source of guilt feelings that lead to new inhibitions which again cause inferiority feelings and again stimulate aggressive behaviour" (126). The hostile attitude demonstrated by Munira’s father and brothers generates feelings of inadequacy and guilt and provokes him to indulge in activities that would give him the appearance of toughness and power. He becomes a rebel at school but his failure here compounds his already existing sense of guilt and prompts him to a more aggressive stance. Munira’s second attempt at aggressive behaviour follows his visit to a whore. This visit is prompted by a need to overcome the sexual inhibitions created in him by his strict Christian upbringing. But after his encounter with the prostitute, Munira is once again engulfed by guilt. He attempts to exorcise himself of his guilt by setting fire to an image of the whorehouse. But he feels as if his father knows his secret and this adds to his consciousness of guilt. D.L Mosher reasons that individuals who violated a religious, moral or ethical code would be significantly influenced by fear of external punishment or guilt. Mosher defines guilt “as an expectancy of self-mediated punishment for violating or failing to attain internalised standards of proper behavior” (162).

Failure to achieve in the new society heightens the sense of alienation and as Erich Fromm observes in *The Sane Society*, one “result of alienation is the prevalence of a feeling of guilt” (204-205). Munira’s failure alienates him from his family and in order to experience a sense of belonging he marries Julia but her silent prayers before and after making love arouse in him a sense of having sinned. He is duped into a
participation in the tea-drinking ceremony, which is actually an act of national betrayal and exploitation. After his involvement in this "gigantic deception being played on a whole people by a few who had made it, often in alliance with foreigners" (PB 106), Munira finds it impossible to still the inner voices of guilt.

Munira's awareness of his own acts of betrayal combined with his realization that he has been constantly betrayed at home, at school and everywhere else infuses in him a conviction of his irretrievable mediocrity. Erich Fromm emphasizes "Not to be like the rest, not to be totally adjusted, makes one feel guilty" (205). Under the pressure of a guilty conscience, a person may become inhibited and afraid to face the world. Munira always tries to escape the tyranny of the past, for the past haunts him with guilt. "He felt guilty about being propelled by a whirlwind he had neither willed nor could now control. The consciousness of guilt, of having done a wrong, had always shadowed him in life" (PB 71). He is impelled by a need to establish a connection but does not have the courage to do so. Munira's sense of betrayal and guilt induces in him a desire for a withdrawal into self and prompts him to seek refuge in the remote village of Ilmorog.

Munira avoids any active involvement in the life of the community at Ilmorog and seeks to find personal solace and peace in his love for Wanja. His association with Wanja reveals the cracks in his personality. Paul Tournier asserts:

We are responsible for the anger, for the personal defeat, the inability to be master of ourselves and to keep our personal integrity. There is a divorce within ourselves, between the rational and well-disposed part of ourselves, and the passionate part, on the hunt for something or someone
to hurt. The terrible power of these hidden forces is plain. So if, any guilt sets in operation mechanisms for secrecy, self-justifications, accusations directed against others and bitterness [...] all this springs to life in anger, and anger in its turn leads on to wickedness and guilt. (150)

Overwhelmed with inferiority and guilt, Munira attempts to transfer his guilt on to Wanja. He feels betrayed and is angry at Wanja’s growing intimacy with Karega. Under the strain of jealousy and anger, Munira’s principles fail him and he betrays Karega’s trust by getting him dismissed from his job. As R.D. Laing points out in The Divided Self, a person who feels he is worthless may long for companionship. This evokes “a welter of conflicting emotions, from a desperate longing and yearning for what others have and he lacks, to frantic envy and hatred of all that is theirs and not his, or a desire to destroy all the goodness, freshness, richness in the world” (91). Later Munira is weighed down by guilt, as if he had contributed to Wanja’s degradation and Karega’s deterioration. As a final act of atonement for this sin, as well as for the original sin he had committed with a bad woman, Munira burns down Wanja’s whorehouse.

Wanja, one of the betrayed in the novel, is a product of her father’s betrayal of the Mau Mau revolution and the resultant rift between her parents. She becomes a victim of her father’s philosophy that one should blindly obey the orders of the white man and die fighting for the king. He ardently believes that money is the true secret of the white man’s power. He says:

Money makes the world. Money is time. Money is beauty. Money is elegance. Money is power. [...] Money is freedom. [...] Instead of this suicidal talk of guns and pistols and oaths of black unity to drive out the
white man, we should learn from him how to make money. With money we can bring light into darkness. (*PB* 233)

Wanja's seduction by an older married friend of her father and her subsequent pregnancy brings about the final rupture in her parents' already cracked relationship, as her mother accuses her father of introducing her to a debased man.

John Rickman pronounces that "It is hard for a child to grow up in a broken home or a potentially broken home without acquiring an extra burden of guilt. Because of its ambivalence a child will always feel some responsibility unconsciously for the broken home" *(126)*. The accusations levelled by her mother and the ultimate estrangement between her parents engulfs Wanja in deep guilt for she feels herself responsible for it. Her subsequent confrontation with the married man, who rejects her, compounds her guilt and shame. Shame and guilt are related emotions, conceptually connected with general, moral notions of behavioural patterns. As Carroll Izard acknowledges, "The two emotions are often experienced in the same or similar situations. Both emotions tend to make people want to conceal something or to set something right" *(422)*. Her sense of guilt and shame induces her to conceal her newborn baby by throwing it into a latrine. This sense of intensified guilt haunts her for the rest of her life. Wanja admits, "this guilt sits on me" (*PB* 292). Unable to bear the atmosphere at home, Wanja leaves for the city, but the intrigues of unscrupulous black imperialists throw her into prostitution.

Wanja later seeks refuge in her ancestral home at Ilmorog. But here too, she is unable to liberate herself from the guilt of murdering her child. The sights and sounds of young children make her heart ache with pain and agony. Paul Tournier professes
that when a woman is pursued by guilt and remorse, she seeks to gain reassurance. “She needs the attentions of men whom she cannot really love and who take advantage of her” (88). In an attempt to expiate her guilt, Wanja flits from one relationship to another. A restless and lonely soul, Wanja longs to hide the past even from herself. Her life is “a tortured soul’s journey through valleys of guilt and humiliation and the long sleepless nights of looking back to the origins of the whole journey” (PB 40). She seeks solace and companionship to release the ‘knot’ in her life. Wanja’s desire for a lasting relationship with Karega is thwarted by the machinations of a jealous Munira. She is now once again forced into becoming a mistress of a flourishing whorehouse as a form of revenge and as an attempt to repress the pain in her heart.

Karega accuses her of choosing the side of the enemy and Wanja is once again ridden with a deep sense of guilt. “Had she not, like her father before her, also chosen her side in the struggles because she had latterly opted for her thing to love: money and money-making?” (PB 336). She feels she has betrayed her people as well as herself. Wanja plans her revenge for her sordid past by killing her seducer. By this aggressive act, Wanja is finally able to atone for her guilt-ridden life.

Abdulla epitomizes the marginalization and betrayal of the Mau Mau freedom fighters in independent Kenya. His crippled leg is an eloquent symbol of the sacrifices made by the fighters for liberation. Inspired by the vision of redeeming his land, Abdulla had endured thirst and hunger and briars and thorns in scaly flesh, during the Emergency. Cook and Okeninkpe see Abdulla as a testimony “to a betrayed generation of honourable men who forsook the comforts of home and braved the hardships of the forest in order to rescue their homeland from shameful oppression” (92). On his release from
incarceration, he is shocked to find only “massacres of hopes and dreams and beauty”  
(\textit{PB} 104). His naive hopes that the people’s aspirations will be realized are soon  
shattered, for soon he finds that nothing has changed in the new dispensation. He is  
unable to identify himself in this world where the collective blood of a people flows  
into just a few hands. The sense of betrayal is made more acute when he comprehends  
that the few hands possessing the wealth of the country belong to black people - his  
own countrymen. With a nagging sense of guilt, he realizes that he too “would have  
liked to own one of those farms himself” (\textit{PB} 166). He is plagued by the sense of guilt  
that he has forgotten his oath, as he has been busy looking for money.

Abdulla has been a witness to the betrayal and murder of his close friend by one  
of their own during the revolution. He had sworn to avenge his death and is now  
overwhelmed with guilt at his inability to do so. Franz Alexander points out that “the  
death of a ‘buddy’ and the resultant guilt reaction were more common traumatic  
experiences than exposure to physical strains and injuries” (241-2). Karen Horney is  
of the opinion that a feeling of guilt arises when moral codes are violated. When one is  
unable to help a friend one succumbs to this sense of guilt (237). The guilty and  
disillusioned Abdulla feels “as if he was losing the last shreds of manhood” (\textit{PB} 315)  
and decides to become ‘deaf and dumb’.

Abdulla’s attempts to rehabilitate himself in the new society are met with  
humiliation and sometimes with indifference. Left with a sense of unavenged loss, he  
decides to seek self-exile in the rural village like Fanon’s nationalist militant, who had  
fled from the town in disgust at the demagogic and reformist manoeuvres of the leaders  
there (\textit{WE} 117). He admits, “I wanted to go deep, deep into the country where I would
have no reminder of so bitter a betrayal” (PB 255). He is compelled to exist, nursing a
live wound, for in the new destructive society wedded to capitalism, Abdulla loses even
his humble shop and bar. Abdulla represents the fate of a Mau Mau revolutionary in the
annihilating atmosphere of neo-colonialism.

The theme of betrayal is treated in its most extreme form in Ngugi’s portrayal
of the neo-colonial elite who luxuriate in their illegitimate wealth and affluence.
They are responsible for the betrayal and active exploitation of their own people.
They offer examples of the leaders, who turn their backs more and more on the
people and travel in big American cars, holiday on the Riviera and spend weekends
in neon-lit nightclubs (WE 141). These hypocritical and vicious elite are individually
and collectively, responsible for destroying the lives of their countrymen. They
bask in their ill-gotten prosperity while the multitude squirm in perpetual squalor
and poverty.

Ngugi constructs a strong nexus between Christianity, colonialism, and the
imperialists, by which they dupe the masses. This nexus is epitomized in a photograph
that occupies the pride of place in Ezekiel Waweru’s house. It shows brother Ezekiel
wearing a sun helmet, dressed in a jacket, chain and riding breeches and also holding
a Bible. “Tall and mean in his austere holiness” (PB 13), Waweru propagated a morality
that is rooted in property and church. He had persistently sided with the oppressor and
had become an early convert to Christianity. He ardently believes in the dictum
“Christianity, Commerce, Civilization: the Bible, the Coin, the Gun: Holy Trinity” (PB
88). He rejects the ideals of his patriotic father and “divests himself of every robe
from his heathen past” (PB 90). He is lured by the sweet sound of the tingling coins
and shamelessly pursues his farming interests by exploiting his labourers. His unsympathetic attitude converts his son into a tortured soul and drives his daughter to suicide.

The Reverend Jerrod, a wealthy African priest is presented as utterly callous and unconcerned about the problems of the poor. In *Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon contends:

> The colonialist bourgeoisie is helped in its work of calming down the natives by the inevitable religion. All those saints who have turned the other cheek, who have forgiven trespasses against them, and who have been spat on and insulted without shrinking are studied and held up as examples. (53)

When the Reverend Jerrod is approached for help by the famished and ailing villagers, he gives them a lengthy sermon on God and His compassion and sends them away empty-handed. He embodies the corruption and betrayal of the clergy of the neo-colonial era. He owns several acres of land while the ordinary man moans for a single shamba to live in.

Nderi wa Riera, a prototype of the greedy and power hungry politician, has sacrificed his nationalist ideals for personal aggrandizement. At first, a man of the people, Nderi wa Riera had championed populist causes. But as soon as he became the director of several foreign-owned companies, he dropped out of circulation in small places. He uses the money from his constituents to buy himself shares in companies and membership in special clubs. Fanon speaks of leaders who transform the real needs of the people into a trade union of individual interests and exhibit an “aggressive anxiety
to occupy the posts left vacant by the departure of the foreigner" (WE 130). Behind the facade of a hypocritical behaviour and a hollow rhetoric, he uses his political office for purely selfish and material achievements.

Hawkins Kimeria is perhaps the most odious of this group. Totally lacking in conscience, he ruthlessly pursues power and money. He had amassed his ill-gotten wealth by transporting bodies of Mau Mau victims killed by the British. He seduces Wanja and throws her into a life of humiliation and is largely responsible for the disintegration of old Ilmorog.

Raymond Chui represents the transformation of “a popular hero into a tyrant who thought that his power came from God and foreigners” (PB 198). At school, he is the leader of the student strike, agitating for better school conditions. But the colonial education policy inculcates in him, a morbid contempt for his own people and their culture. After a foreign trip, he returns totally conceited and conditioned into the cult of materialism. He is now a black replica of the previous white headmaster and outdoes his predecessor in implementing an alien culture and educational system in his school. He no longer wants to hear any “nonsense about African teachers, African history, African literature, African this and that” (PB 172). In his unstinted pursuit of wealth and status, he becomes more ruthless than any white man.

These people betray Kenya’s anti-colonial heritage and prove to be ‘sell-outs’ to imperialism. They remain essentially traitors to the people during and after the Emergency and independence.

Ngugi has always been conscious that British colonialists indoctrinated some Kenyans to look at Kenyan history with the eyes of the British. He contends that, “This
attempt to bury the soul of Kenya's history of struggle and resistance and the attempt to normalise the tradition of loyalism to imperialism has continued into neo-colonial Kenya. The loyalist colonial homeguards of yesterday are the neo-colonial Mbwa Kalis (guard dogs) of imperialism today" (MC 98). Ngugi’s Devil on the Cross and Matigari provide the fictional realization of this tradition perpetrated by the loyalist collaborators and watchdogs of the imperialists. The people believe that “Independence is not tales about the past, but the sound of money in one’s pocket” and that “modern Harambee is for the rich and their friends” (DC 40).

The hold of the black bourgeoisie class is stronger in Kenya than ever before, for they derive this power from foreigners in exchange for prostituting their nation. The ruthless arrogance of the Kenyan bourgeoisie to their own people is contrasted with the abject grovelling they exhibit before their foreign masters. The title Devil on the Cross, which is an inversion of Christ’s crucifixion, is emblematic of Ngugi’s concept of the Christian world in today’s Africa where religion is used as a pretentious mask to hide self-seeking opportunism. It is now the Devil, ruthless expert of the cash nexus who after being crucified by the workers and peasants, is taken from the cross and nurtured towards resurrection by the wealthy and the powerful. These people live by Satan’s creed and prosper as he prospers for the capitalist power magnates and their acolytes worship the Devil and sing his praises.

The affluence of the Devil’s creed is dramatically opposed to the exploitative environment of the poor man in Kenya, for there is no corner in the whole of this country where he can escape from poverty. The leaders are “preoccupied with filling their pockets as rapidly as possible” as the “country sinks all the more deeply into
stagnation”, says Fanon (WE 134). While the rich reside in sheer opulence and magnificence, the poor live in shacks made of tin, old tarpaulin and polythene bags. Here, “the rich stagger because they over-eat and the poor because they are starving” (DC 51). Any sign of dissent from workers, is immediately accompanied by policemen armed with guns and batons. A presidential decree bans all strikes. This is a modern form of democracy where “theft and robbery are the measure of a country’s progress” (DC 79) and the local thieves have to prove their worth by attempting to beat foreign thieves and robbers in grabbing money and property. The culture of modern Kenya is reflected in their adoption of the alien tongue and in the dress and jewellery of the women. The conditions of Devil on the Cross prove Fanon’s analytical insight that, in countries where independence is newly won, the greatest wealth is surrounded by the greatest poverty.

The strength of the police force and the power of the army are proportionate to the stagnation in which the rest of the nation is sunk. [. . .] scandals are numerous, ministers grow rich, their wives doll themselves up, the members of parliament feather their nests and there is not a soul down to the simple policeman or the customs officer who does not join in the great procession of corruption. (WE 139)

The motif of the second part of the novel is a Devil’s feast, a competition to elect experts in thefts and robbery. With incisive satire Ngugi describes this “festival of misrule” (Cook and Okenimkpe 120), where villains exult in their villainy and acts of betrayal, destroying the progress and well-being of their own people. Each contestant narrates his prowess in theft and robbery and elucidates on methods to develop
partnership between foreigners and themselves so that they can hasten their ascent into the heaven of foreign commodities and other delights. They attempt to prove their skills as ‘international’ robbers, “who steal because their bellies are full” (DC 95). Once again we hear echoes of Fanon when he speaks of the new regime which loses its values as it “disappears with its soul set at peace into shocking ways” (WE 122).

The Kenyan master of ceremonies declares that they are willing slaves to foreigners, in return for a few handouts. The competitors acknowledge the unity that exists between them and their foreign masters, “They eat the flesh and we clean up the bones ... The dog that has a bone is better off than the empty-handed ...” (DC 86). They have sold themselves as frontmen for the white businesses and provided black masks for the white faces to deceive the masses and continue their exploitation. Ngugi in Moving the Centre, states that under neo-colonialism, the cultural and psychological aspects of imperialism become even more important as instruments of mental and spiritual coercion (52). The words of the leader of the foreign delegates enunciate this aspect of mental and psychological coercion:

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 ours, 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 at 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)
The participants regale the audience with details of their affluence, as they compete with each other for being crowned as the king of thieves and robbers. The symbol of a man’s identity is his car and his worth is measured by the number of vehicles, houses and mistresses he possesses. The people’s thirst and hunger for land is exploited by selling very small plots at exorbitant prices. One of them foresees a time when soil can be sold in tins and pots and the very air, bottled and sold to the masses for breathing. Another participant desires to make portable tents which can be sold to the people to enable them to shelter their heads at nights. Nditika suggests the marketing of human organs for transplants so that the elite can “purchase immortality and leave death as the prerogative of the poor” (DC 180). Kimeenderi, with sadistic pleasure, envisages the herding of workers into barbed-wire compounds where their blood and sweat can be pumped and packaged and sent out by pipeline to foreign markets. The donors can be kept in a submissive frame of mind by means of conditioned religion, education and pseudo-culture, and if necessary by armed police. As Ngugi has commented in Detained, “it was the culture of legalised brutality, a ruling-class culture of fear, the culture of an oppressing minority desperately trying to impose total silence on a restive oppressed majority” (34).

The thirst for an alien system of education is ridiculed when schools with an indigenous syllabus are shown to be failures. It is only schools with westernized syllabus and fraternity that can survive here. The chairmanship of committees can be achieved by rigging elections and by resorting to bribery. But when Mwiereri wa Mukirai reveals how multinational companies are actually destroying the local products, he is seen as a militant and orders are secretly sent out for his elimination. Katherine Greenfield
comments: “As a group, they co-operate in sharing insider information, bribery and favors, all of which are necessary to lubricate the wheels of commerce and justice in Kenya. They are the personification of evil and the agents of neocolonial exploitation” (38-39). Together they join hands to grab, to extort money and to confiscate. They form “The Holy Trinity of theft: Grabbing, Extortion, Confiscation” (DC 177).

Wariinga’s story of sexual exploitation and betrayal demonstrates the exploitation perpetrated all over the country. Oliver Lovesay remarks: “Wariinga’s sexual exploitation is a metaphor for the nation’s neo-colonial seduction. The nation is now pregnant, the product of the incestuous relationship of the capitalist and his motherland [...]” (154). A brilliant student and daughter of freedom fighters, Wariinga’s dreams of becoming an engineer “vanished into thin air like the morning dew after sunshine” (DC 144). Her whole life is undermined by her self-seeking uncle and shattered by a rich old man. The vision of the devil being lifted from the cross by his worshippers, appears to Wariinga in a dream. C.W. Valentine points out in his study, *Dreams and the Unconscious*, that in sleep, repressed thoughts and impulses express themselves in “some disguised form, often through mysterious symbols” (91). In *Black Skin White Masks*, Fanon too acknowledges that psychic traumas which are often expelled from one’s consciousness continues to exist in the unconscious. “It is on watch constantly for an opportunity to make itself known and it soon comes back into consciousness, but in a disguise that makes it impossible to recognize” (102). Wariinga’s trauma of sexual exploitation and her fear of the world of betrayal around her are expressed through her dream.

Gatuiria embodies Ngugi’s comment in *Detained*, “Intellectual slavery masquerading as sophistication is the worst form of slavery” (143). He is an intellectual
who has assimilated the values of the western world. But Gatuiria, after passing through the first stage of development enunciated by Fanon in the *Wretched of the Earth*, now goes through the second or ‘disturbed’ phase of cultural remembering and rediscovery. He feels guilty for having immersed himself in a foreign language and culture and for not having made an attempt to identify with his native values. But Gatuiria’s sophisticated attempts to reject this alien life-style through his music proves to be futile for he cannot get over this intellectual slavery which has been ingrained in his psyche.

Ngugi’s narrative in *Matigari* shows how the struggle for independence and the post-colonial struggle for decolonization are made more problematic by the acts of betrayal of the new ‘black’ elites. Speaking of the collaborationist relations between the black Kenyan nationalists and the white colonialists, Kwadso Osei-Nyame, Jr. maintains: “Such relations transcend the Manichaen world of good blacks and evil whites, and expand the discourse of elite collaborationist Kenyan nationalists, on the one hand, and the dispossessed peasants, servants, and the ‘wretched of the earth’, on the other” (131). Though a satire on contemporary Kenyan society characterized by fear and betrayal, the political paradigms which the book offers is nevertheless very close to actuality. The link with the governments of Jomo Kenyatta and Arap Moi can be easily comprehended from the ban that has been imposed upon the book. In this thinly veiled allegory about post-independent Kenya, the protagonist Matigari, a fighter who has returned from the forest, journeys through his country and experiences different forms of betrayal. He had expected the crystallization of his people’s hopes after independence but he finds that it has been derailed, as colonialism has reincarnated itself in neo-colonialism.
The ‘black’ John Boy’s family has been elevated from their status of servants to that of the elites during the post-colonial era as a reward for their collaboration with the colonialists in manipulating and betraying their own countrymen. The ‘white’ settler Williams and the ‘black’ John Boy are “like twins born out of the womb of the same ogre” (MG 65). Ngugi observes in Homecoming that nurtured by the social position they had attained under the colonial system, some of the African intelligentsia “wanted to wear the same clothes and shoes, get the same salary, live in the same kind of mansions as their white counterparts” (12). This neo-colonial psychology is clearly illustrated in the novel.

A white man and a black man sat on horseback [...]. Their horses were exactly alike. Both had silky brown bodies. The riders too wore clothes of the same colour. Indeed the only difference between the two men was their skin colour. Even their postures as they sat in the saddle were exactly the same. The way they held their whips and the reins - no difference. And they spoke in the same manner. (MG 43)

John Boy Junior, the native child who had been sent abroad by the people to gain knowledge and deliver them from slavery, now actively participates in betraying them. “He is like those dogs that are said to bark louder than their masters” (MG 61). He now invests an unquestioning faith in the colonial notions of individualism and imposes upon his people the need to accept and adopt the colonial culture over their communal modes. He says:

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'. White people are advanced because they
respect that word, and therefore honour the freedom of the individual,
which means the freedom of everyone to follow his own whims without
worrying about the others. Survival of the fittest. But you black people?
You walk about fettered to your families, clans, nationalities, people,
masses. (MG 61)

He is a representative of the new leaders who remain defenders of a system destructive
to the soul of their communities

Ngugi's criticism of Christian hypocrisy reaches its peak in his portrayal of the
priest who trembles with terror as he hears rumours of Christ's second coming. The
student, the teacher and the priest are all representatives of the prevalent system of
betrayal. Guthera is a symbol of the exploited womanhood of the country. She is tortured
by guilt that she was responsible for the death of her father when he was detained. She
had refused to compromise on her dignity and succumb to her father's jailor. John
Rickman asserts: "We feel guilt when we do or intend an injury to a loved person" (121). Guthera feels that by her misplaced faith in the Christian God she had brought
injury to her father. "The thought that she might have perhaps saved her father's life
tormented her" (MG 36). Christ gives her no answer for her problems and she is forced
to walk the streets to feed her family.

Silence and fear are the weapons deployed by the new leaders who have "hearts
as cold as that of a Pharaoh. Or even colder than those of the colonialists. They can not
hear the cries of the people" (MG 53). The conditions in neo-colonial Kenya remain
the same as before as massive impoverishment of the ordinary people becomes the
hallmark of the nation. Ngugi, in *Barrel of a Pen*, describes the conditions prevailing in his country after independence. Hunger, disease and ignorance become chronic as the ruling regimes become more and more detached from the people. They maintain their power by jailing and murdering their opponents, ruthlessly suppressing voices of dissent and terrorizing the entire nation through the military (72). Fanon has apprehended that after independence, the once-colonized countries become inhuman in its poverty. “The mass of the people struggle against the same poverty, flounder about making the same gestures and with their shrunken bellies outline what has been called the geography of hunger” (*WE* 76).

The Minister of Truth and Justice exultantly emphasizes the government’s reliance on multi-nationals and neo-colonialists and the immense pleasure with which gifts are received from Settler Williams and John Boy. The minister intends to make the workers realize that the country’s welfare and stability are dependent on three kinds of people. “The wealthy, the soldier, the leader - that’s all we need” (*MG* 116). He argues that it is those who joined hands with the colonialists that brought about independence while the revolutionaries and their children are still shouting meaninglessly at the bottom of the ladder. The truth of this as evinced in present day Kenya is revealed by Ngugi in an interview: “Moi of Kenya, during the colonial days was working with British colonial settlers to prevent independence for Kenya. [...] Yet now, in post-independent Kenya, he is the one who is wielding power [...]” (Cantalupo 215).

The neo-colonialists are sycophants who excel each other in flattery and self-adulation. Ngugi has stated in *Decolonising the Mind* that the final triumph of a system
of domination is when the dominated starts singing its virtues (20). Truth is labelled as
fiction and 'Parrotology' is the much acclaimed philosophy of the neo-colonialists.
The Professor of 'Parrotology' and the editor of 'Daily Parrotry' exemplify those
intellectuals who have sold their souls to the devil of neo-colonialism. The Radio,
'Voice of Truth' travels through the country echoing His Excellency's voice, which exhibits
the 'wilful narcissism', alleged by Fanon (WE 122). "I am the soul of this government I am
the soul of this nation. I am the light in the dark tunnel. I am the torch of development
[...] the law abides in me" (MG 102), the voice claims. It announces that the government
has banned the Opposition Party and resorted to one party rule. As Fanon affirms, "The
single party system is the modern form of dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, unmasked,
unpainted, unscrupulous and cynical" (WE 133). The system is a repressive one where
law and order are maintained by 'Instant Justice' and the 'Hooded Truth', sustained by
loans from foreigners.

In Barrel of a Pen Ngugi reveals that top government ministers like Charles
Njonjo have asserted in the Parliament that since African women breed like rabbits,
parents with more than three should be penalized (24). In Matigari, the Member of
Parliament goes a step further and declares that "the main cause of poverty is that
women breed like rats. [...] People should have children according to the size of their
pockets. [...] No more children for the poor!" (MG 119). He continues that the
government has declared a ban on dreams and desires among the poor. This is a
hypocritical world where the indigenous elite is made rich and powerful by political
and economic back up from foreign powers. Using this influence they facilitate the
continued alienation of land and perpetrate acts of betrayal on the masses.
The emphasis placed by the imperialistic culture, on personal and individual well-being over communal welfare, generates acts of betrayal from within as well as from without. The assimilation of the professed superiority of the white culture generates in the Africans, an intense sense of inadequacy and helplessness. The feeling of inferiority often compels some to acts of betrayal while others are transformed into ineffective symbols of procrastination.

Having betrayed their people by placing their individual welfare over the needs of their communities, both Waiyaki and Njoroge are tortured by an acute sense of guilt. Munira’s attempts at overcoming his sense of inadequacy and guilt merely succeed in deepening his mental agony, for he always places his personal welfare above that of his society. Gatuiria, who has assimilated the values of the West, turns out to be a ‘betrayer’ as he cannot forget his personal well-being and choose sides with the people.

Intense psychological turmoil arises in the psyche of sensitive souls exposed to the alien culture and religion. Faced with the dichotomy in values, Nyambura and Muthoni are overcome by a sense of betrayal and guilt. Mugo’s act of betrayal which reduces him into a mental wreck, is a result of his efforts at maintaining his individual welfare. The agonizing experiences of the Emergency lead to acts of betrayal and its resultant mental trauma in Gikonyo and Mumbi. Abdulla’s failure to establish himself in the post-colonial society wedded to capitalism, burdens him with an intense sense of inadequacy. Wanja, Wariinga and Guthera, forced to succumb to the neo-colonial forces are ridden with guilt, shame and a sense of having betrayed their people and their culture.

While these individuals are forced into acts of betrayal and later burdened with intense guilt, others like Joshua, Jacobo and Karanja willingly succumb to an
absolute depersonalisation of their ethnic selves by the colonial machinery. The racial inferiority inflicted in them induce these natives to deceive their own in return for power and prestige.

The world of Ngugi's later novels exposes us to the 'betrayers' who conceal "compromise under nationalists slogans" (BP 14). Ngugi's criticism of Christian priesthood is highlighted in his portrayal of Brother Ezekiel and Reverend Jerrod who use their piety as a facade to amass wealth. Nderi wa Riera and Kimeria provide examples of the power-hungry and ruthless ruling elite while Chui and John Boy Junior epitomizes the corruption and degradation that has set in among the educated who actively participate in the great drama of betrayal perpetrated on their people.

Both Devil on the Cross and Matigari demonstrate a political scenario where colonialism has reincarnated into neo-colonialism. Today's Kenya is a world of self-seeking opportunists who live by the creed of Satan and amass wealth while the masses sink more and more into destitution and poverty. The comprador bourgeoisie strengthen their alliance with the erstwhile white masters and desecrate their nation.

Ngugi rationalizes the betrayal of the collective in terms of individual emotional needs and desires. The individuals have to discover and come to terms with the tragedy of betrayal and self-betrayal that the colonial and neo-colonial environment forces upon them. Loneliness, betrayal and concealed guilt create intense bitterness but most of the characters make attempts to overcome them. Karen Horney, in New ways in Psychoanalysis, notes that guilt feelings are often "accompanied by a serious wish to make amends or to do better" (237). While some imbued with the materialistic philosophy of the colonialists continue to betray their people with alacrity, other sensitive souls genuinely attempt to make amends.
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