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Fighting Neocolonialism: A Case Study of the Selected Novels of Ngugi Wa Thiong'o

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Abstract

My paper excavates the politics of neocolonialism and Thiong'o critique of the same. Neocolonialism is the post-colonial perpetuation of colonial practices in different format. Ngugi's texts like *Matigari* (1987), *Petals of Blood* (1986), *A Grain of Wheat* (1967) and *Devil on the Cross* (1980) encapsulate Ngugi's resistance of neocolonialism under the fine unraveling of fiction.

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It would be too naive to say that with decolonization imperialism has ended; that when the European empires gave up or were forced to give up their colonies during or after the Second World War imperialism had ceased to exist. To use the term 'neocolonialism' is to accept the perpetuation of the imperialist oppression and colonialist domination in a different and essentially new format even after the achievement of independence. Therefore, neocolonialism may briefly be defined as a new form of colonialist oppression that operates in a latent way to continue the imperialist exploitations even after the achievement of independence by the colonies. As a political term neocolonialism was widely used by the late 20th century critics to refer to a mode of exploitation to perpetuate the Empire of colonization, though in a different way. Initially, the term was widely used, particularly in reference to Africa soon after the commencement of the decolonization process. Instead of the formal and direct imperialist control by exerting political exploitation, by implementing administrative structures to rule and dominate the colonized masses, neocolonialism operates indirectly by controlling the economic and cultural dependence of the newly decolonized countries. Therefore, neocolonialism perpetuates the scope to paralyze the economic growth of a decolonized nation for the sake of gratifying the imperialist hunger for resources and labour. It is generally accepted that Kwame Nkrumah, the leader of newly independent Ghana, is one of the pioneers to use the term neocolonialism. In *Neo-Colonialism, the Last Stage of Imperialism* (1965) Nkrumah has offered an in-depth critique of neocolonialism. He argued that neocolonialism is the final and the most perilous stage of imperialism. Since the old-fashioned ways of colonization no more exists, the imperialist powers direct their domination indirectly on the economic system, politics and cultural base of a decolonized nation. His observation on how neocolonialism is exercised may be summed up as follows:

- A neocolonial state is politically governed by stationing the military forces by the imperialist powers. This kind of domination is done in an overt way with the plea to provide military security to ensure peace of the decolonized states.
- In most of the cases neocolonialism is exercised through economic means. The neocolonial states are often forced to import the products manufactured by the imperialist countries barring the import of other competing products from anywhere else. Thus

neocolonialism affects the economic prosperity of a decolonized state.

- The administrative policies of a neocolonial state are often controlled by the imperialist powers for their own benefit. The imperialist countries often invest foreign capital to run the government of a neocolonial state.
- The Non-alignment policy adopted by many nations often involves foreign investment resulting in economic dependence.
- The fabricated notion of Welfare State helps the capitalist countries to survive in the post-war scenario.
- The post-war period witnessed a deliberate attempt by the imperialist countries to break up the colonial territories into small states, so that they may be incapable of independent development and have to rely on greater economic and political powers possessed by the imperialist nations. As a result, the small states have to sell their produce to the capitalist countries dictated by them.

Besides Nkrumah, there are other critics who severely criticized neocolonialism and pointed out many underlying factors. Fanon in his seminal text *Towards the African Revolution* (1970) has pointed out the crucial factors responsible for the birth of neocolonialism as well as those fallacies rooted in it that will inadvertently bring its obliteration in near future. He posits unequivocally that neocolonialism is the result of an indetermination present in the very decolonization process. The indetermination Fanon talks of in *Towards the African Revolution* (1970) refers to the lack of collective nationalist consciousness of the people, formerly colonized, who after many years of suffering were struggling to liberate their nations from neocolonial oppression. The nationalist struggle for liberation from the colonial slavery were wrought with a haziness, a myopia, since it (the nationalist struggle) is “a refusal, at once and the same time, of political non-existence, of wretchedness, of illiteracy, of the inferiority complex so subtly instilled by oppression” (Fanon 121). The colonialist empires give everything to the colonies but in return extort an absolute economic dependence. Fanon underlines that commercial hunger is the most important factor for which the colonialist empires wear the masks of good will and go on exploiting the economy of the nominally sovereign countries. He rightly puts that “In the negotiations on independence, the first matters at issue were the economic interests: banks, monetary areas, research permits, commercial concessions,

inviolability of properties stolen from the peasants at the time of the conquest etc....” (Fanon 121) augmented the insatiable hunger of the west. Fanon points out two important conditions in which neocolonialism operates. The first condition he termed as the “‘Rights’ of the Former Occupant’ (Fanon 120) refers to the ‘false appeal to the common past’(Fanon 120), ‘the persistence of a rejuvenated colonial pact’(Fanon 120) that are put as powerful rights with which the former occupant offers economic compromises to the developing countries and thus diluted their economic growth. The second mechanism is called the ‘Zones of Influence’ (Fanon 122):

The concern to maintain the former colony in the yoke of economic oppression is obviously not sadism. It is not out of wickedness or ill-will that such an attitude is adopted. It is because the handling of their national riches by the colonized peoples compromises the economic equilibrium of the former occupant (122).

Fanon argues that the necessity to rejuvenate the former economic stability, the colonialist empires ‘stifle the national aspirations’ (Fanon 123) of the developing country for stable economic base. He has brilliantly pointed out the emerging trends of an essentially humanist concern among the colonized people who now feel the need of stable, non-dependent economic pattern to kick starvation off. This dawning of consciousness now prevents developing countries from playing the role of an ‘inert Panorama’ (Fanon 125) for the sole benefit of the west “And what the West has in truth not understood is that today a new humanism, a new theory of man is coming into being, which has its root in man” (Fanon 125).

In his seminal book *Kenya Today: Breaking the Yoke of Colonialism in Africa* (2005) Ndiranga Mwaura, an author from Nairobi, has pointed out the crucial factors that are directly or indirectly responsible for neocolonialism in Africa. It is needless to say that the primary objects of neocolonial oppression are economic gain. Let us at first concentrate on the economic patterns of the African nations. African economy largely depends on agriculture. Agricultural base in Africa was mainly invested for the benefit of the European nations during the colonial period. The situation did not change even after the African nations achieve flag independence:

Ever since African countries acquired flag independence, most of their economies have experienced retarded and low levels of growth and many times negative growth. The ruling elites in most of these countries have been similar in their incompetence, short-sightedness, and continued failure to recognize the factors that hinder growth (Mwaura 8).

The European strategy of trade and commerce affects African agriculture immensely. Africa's exports are less in value than imports. During the 1970s the African countries started to lose value in exports by 11% (Mwaura). Even the growth in exports has never been translated to better financial gain for the Africans. There are other factors too that ruined the commercial base of the African countries, so that they can never come out of the nightmare. Again, tourism is believed to be another industry to earn foreign currency. In 1994 tourism earned kshas 25 billion (\$ 417 million) (Mwaura). But the huge profit did not better the livelihood of native Africans. There are many game parks and national parks that are till the exclusive property of the European governments and therefore the annual income goes directly to their treasury. Another important factor that keeps African nations continue to bear the yoke of colonialism even after independence was the wrong policy to adopt minor occupation called *jua kali*. Incidentally *Jua kali* means "hot sun" in Swahili. It refers to an informal system of business production, organization and set up. It is low tech and undercapitalized" (Mwaura 8). Mwaura comments: While Japanese children are able to make digital watches, Kenyans busy themselves with the production of pots and pans, repairing shoes, roasting maize and other forms of non-productive work" (13). The defective economy of Kenya contributes much to augment the plight. Mwaura observes significantly that 'the principal producers of wealth acquire the very least but those who provide auxiliary services get the most. An industrial laborer is paid less than a divorce lawyer' (14). Mwaura in an interesting passage has shown how cultural neocolonialism operates in Kenya: "Foreign musicians promote the vulgar culture of Europe and America. One Shabba Ranka simply brought pornography on stage at a show described in newspaper advertisements as a "family

show.” Singers like Coolio show their “coolness” through the profuse use of foul language.”(15)

Numerous African writers have critiqued colonial and neocolonial practices in Africa. Chinua Achebe, and Wole Soyinka from Nigeria, Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Meja Mwangi from Kenya have always steered their literary trajectory towards reconstituting a community that has become shattered during the fiendish colonial days and attempted to recover the African history buried under debris of the Colonialist Empire. Ngugi wa Thiong'o is a Kenyan novelist who formerly wrote in English though now he is writing in Gikuyu. The unavoidable threat that Ngugi faced as a writer is that of linguistic castration. 'Europhone writing came to be considered the norm' (Ngugi 90) during the colonial days in Kenya and even after Independence it continued to be the popular literary choice. In the neocolonial situation in Kenya literature suffered greatly and the writers faced the problem of subject selection for writing. The writers, as Ngugi observes, were caught in a Scylla and Charybdis situation. They could 'of course adopt silence or self-censorship, in which case he ceases to be an effective writer.' (Ngugi 101) On the other hand they could 'become a state functionary, an option some Kenyan writers have now embraced, and once again cease to be an effective writer of the people.' (Ngugi 101) The second predicament faced by the writers was that of language. If a writer chooses to support the proletariat and the peasantry and writes in English, his voice may not reach the common mass for whom he is writing: 'Isn't the writer perpetuating, at the level of cultural practice, the very neo-colonialism he is condemning at the level of economics and that of political parties?'(Ngugi 101). In the later part of the essay Ngugi has come up with an important suggestion that a writer should choose to align himself with the common mass. He should take part 'in the song the people sing as once again they take up arms to smash the neo-colonial state to complete the anti-imperialist national democratic revolution they had started in the fifties, and even earlier'(Ngugi 102). Ngugi in *Writers in Politics* (1981) wrote: "Cultural imperialism which during colonialism often affected the population and the country unevenly depending on the colonial policies of the marauding powers and the degree of resistance in each country and in different parts

of the country becomes the major agency of control during neo-colonialism.”(5) As a writer Ngugi wrote more against cultural imperialism and neo-colonialism than economic and political one. It is quite obvious that he was much anxious about Kenya’s cultural and literary dilution and exploitation besides economic and political epilepsy. Incidentally, cultural neo-colonialism can be defined as a continuation of cultural imperialism in the colonies by the imperialist powers after the achievement of independence. It is evident that cultural neocolonial oppression gained firm foothold by ideological brain washing of the mass.

Thiong’o’s literary corpus is variegated. Novel for Ngugi Wa Thiongo is a powerful tool not only for writing back to the Colonialist historiography of Africa in general and Kenya in particular but also for enunciating a ‘homecoming’- for forming a nationalist consciousness. Neocolonialism in Kenya has always pained him. The dystopian pitfall of the dreams for independence has threatened his romantic vision projected in the novels like *Weep Not Child* (1964) and *The River Between* (1964). In his lionized essay *Writing Against Neo-Colonialism* (1988), Thiong’o has recorded the sad annals of Kenya’s chronic suffering in the neocolonial situation. The rise of transnational monopolies in the financial sectors in a majority of nations in Asia, Africa, and Latin America triggered the beginning of neocolonialism. The neocolonial regime resorted to IMF and the World Bank as two crucial tools of exploitation. Financial, political and military interference of the colonialist empires, supported by the ruling class of the victimized nations, nullified the significance of freedom stained the unhappy past of anti-colonial struggles: ‘Dependence abroad, repression at home, became the national motto’ (98). Thiong’o has unequivocally traced the watermarks of the watermarks of those unholy relations that collaborated in the decadence of Kenya:

At the beginning of the decade Kenya was a fairly ‘open society’ in the sense that Kenyans could still debate issues without fear of prison. But as the ruling party under Kenyatta and later under Moi cementing the neo-colonial links to the West, the Kenya regime became more and more intolerant of any views that questioned neo-colonialism. (100)

Thiong'o's novels like *A Grain of Wheat* (1967), *Petals of Blood* (1977), *Devil on the Cross* (1980), and *Matigari* (1986) successfully capture Ngugi's attitude to Kenyan neocolonialism. Each of the four novels mentioned above encapsulates Ngugi's rancorous critique of neo-colonisation of Kenya under the fine unraveling of fiction. Ngugi has prescribed certain measures to move the centre from the Europhilia to a pan African linguistic consciousness in order to thwart the operation of neocolonialism. His suggestions may be summed up in three points given below:

- In the schools and teacher training colleges African literature and the literature of African people in the West Indies and America should be principally taught.
- Imported literature should be relevant the African situation.
- A positive critical outlook towards literature should be formed.

His first published novel *Weep Not Child* (1964), published under the name James Ngugi, critiques the British colonial rule in Kenya. It also deals with the historical event Mau Mau uprising in Kenya and the anti-colonial struggles. Interestingly, the novel focuses the disillusionment of Njoroge, a student dreaming of offering enlightenment to the enslaved mass of Kenya as an alternative to armed anti-colonial struggles. His second novel *The River Between* (1964) extends the theme dealt in *Weep Not Child* (1964). It offers a Kikuyu view of the colonial war, the Mau Mau emergency and underlines the importance of a lost heritage of East African through the character Waiyaki. Ngugi seems to emphasize the impossibility of the indigenous Kikuyu culture and the Christian enlightenment negotiation.

In 1967 came his one of the most popular novel *A Grain of Wheat* that severely criticizes the native predators like Mugo who receives kudos from the innocent natives but connived at the demolition of Kenyan anti-colonial movement by betraying Kihika, a freedom fighter to the imperialist power. Fanon in "The Pitfalls of National Consciousness" (*The Wretched of the Earth*) has significantly criticized these native middle class who embodies the limbo of national consciousness:

The national middle class which takes over power at the end of the colonial regime is an underdeveloped middle class. It has practically no economic power, and in any case it is in no way

commensurate with the bourgeoisie of the mother country which it hopes to replace. In its narcissism, the national middle class is easily convinced that it can advantageously replace the middle class of the mother country. But that same independence which literally drives it into a corner will give rise within its ranks to catastrophic reactions, and will oblige it to send out frenzied appeals for help to the former mother country. (149)

Ngugi's embracing of Fanonist Marxism in the novel aptly points out his maturation process as a novelist who is no more interested in the literary barometering of the armed anti-colonial movements in Kenya but longs for a deeper investigation into the psyche of the nationalist consciousness. The retrospection of the past, the conscientization of the 'pitfalls of national consciousness' (Fanon) and the thrilling divulging of Mugo's secrets undoubtedly anticipate his stepping into the realm of neocolonialist criticism. The time frame Ngugi used in the novel is that of four days leading up to Kenya's Independence in December 1963. The novel faithfully captures the Post-Emergency period in Kenya (The Emergency was declared in 1952 to suppress the Mau Mau rebellion). Very surprisingly, despite the promise of freedom (Uhuru), reflected on the cornea of every Kenyan, to be achieved at last just after four days, the expected jubilation is diluted with suspicion, guilt and anxiety. Mugo is the central character of the novel who seems to love to be confined within his private space of silence. Mugo becomes a hero after his suffering in the detention camp as a colonial victim. Mugo is a recluse who turns away from company and tills his land silently. On the contrary, Kihika is the man of spirit who knows how to sacrifice himself to the cause of his country. Kihika had fled into the jungle to join the Mau Mau. After assassinating DO Robson, Kihika had taken refuge at Mugo's but was captured and hanged in Rung'e market. It is gradually revealed that for Kihika's capture Mugo was responsible. It was Mugo who had betrayed him to the imperialist power: You asked for Judas', he started. "You asked for the man who led Kihika to this tree, here. That man stands before you, now. Kihika came to me by night. He put his life into my hands, and I sold it to the white man. And this thing has eaten into my life all these years" (218). Mugo's betrayal can be described as one of the 'cracks in the edifice which show the process of retrogression, that is so harmful and prejudicial to national effort and national unity' (Fanon 149).

In *Writers in Politics* (1981) Thiong'o made a significant comment regarding his novel *Petals of Blood*:

No country, no people can be truly independent for as long as their economy and culture are dominated by foreigners! ... This was what I was trying to show in *Petals of Blood*: that imperialism can never develop our country or develop us, Kenyans (96-7).

Ngugi in his phenomenal work *Something Torn and New: An African Renaissance* has pointed out the chromosomal factors that played crucial role to pave the way for neocolonialism in Africa in general and Kenya in particular. Mugo in Ngugi's *A Grain of Wheat* is such a character who received hero worship from the common mass but connived at the obliteration of the anti-colonial struggle. Ngugi has repeatedly complained against the African consciousness that put 'whiteness' at the centre and denied the class. In other words, the senility of the African people got overpowered by the youthful vigour of the Europeans who always attempted to 'augment its national coffers (82).' Ngugi in his theoretical works like *Writers in Politics* (1981) has belched his anger for the recent linguistic exploitation in Kenya and other African nations. In *Detained* (1981) he continued the same revolting attitude against the neocolonial felony conglomerate:

In a neo-colonial country, the act of detaining patriotic democrats, progressive intellectuals and militant workers speaks of many things. It is first an admission by the detaining authorities that their official lies labeled as new philosophy, their pretensions often hidden in three-piece suits and golden chains, their propaganda packaged as religious truth, their plastic smile ordered from abroad....(12)

It is evident from Ngugi's comment that as a writer he has journeyed a long path. His earlier novels dealing with his scathing critique of colonization widened his literary scope to criticize neocolonialism in Kenya in particular and Africa in general. The political vision of Ngugi reflected in *Weep Not Child*, *The River Between* and *A Grain of wheat* was being oriented towards the contemporary neocolonial situation in Kenya. If *A Grain of Wheat* captures the ambivalence of nationalism in Kenya, *Petals of Blood* caricatures the myths of Independence in the post-Independence arena. Banking heavily on flashback technique the novel deals with multiple themes like the malice of

capitalism, modernization and neocolonialism, the Post-Independence crisis and disillusionment and finally the exploitation of women. Set in Ilmorog, an underdeveloped village suffering from grinding poverty, *Petals of Blood* (1977) is a heart rending tragedy of four characters, Munira, Karega, Wanja and Abdulla. Abdulla, the demystified Mau Mau rebel runs a wine shop, an occupation that is ironic to his past heroism. Both Munira and Karega are untrained organised teachers at the New Ilmorog Primary School. Karega is the only character who speaks the author's voice. It was Karega who organized the mammoth journey to the village MP in Nairobi to seek respite for the impoverished villagers. Wanja is the only female character of the novel that is given a voice. Her marginalization is ambivalent. She works at the wine shop of Abdulla as a barmaid. Clearly, Ngugi used Wanja as a representative of thousands of Kenyan women. Two men, Munira and Karega play significant role in her life. Her romantic or rather anti-romantic trysts with both of them fall flat. Disillusioned she opened a brothel. Wanja is Ngugi's symbol of Kenya itself suffering under the yoke of a new disease, the cankerous neocolonialism. Brendon Nicholls in "Paternity, Illegitimacy and Intertextuality", figuring in *Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, Gender and Ethics of Postcolonial Reading* has commented: "The novel's generic predicament and its ideological predicament both emerge out of its gendering of the nation. Its privileged model of Gikuyu femininity is 'mother Kenya', and its subordinate construction is of the Gikuyu woman as a fallen woman who translates a prostituted economy" (122). Wanja, 'equipped with an extremely durable vagina' (Boehemer 193) symbolizes the 'ravaged state of Kenya' (Boehemer 47). The voyeuristic desires of both Karega and Munira for Wanja are telescoped into the male chauvinism that has ever privileged culture over nature. Despite her individuality as a woman she fails to rise above the androcentric system and ended up accepting the role of a prostitute. Ngugi has made a significant comment in the 'Preface' to *Detained: A Writer's Prison Diary* (1981):

In a neo-colony, foreign capital aided by a corrupt bourgeoisie becomes so arrogant that it even pokes its fingers into the noses of fledgling national capital and growls: 'Out of my way, fellah! Let me and me alone exploit the labour of your workers.' When some of the nationals complain, the owners of foreign capital,

i.e., the imperialist bourgeoisie or their spokesmen, act hurt and uncomprehending: 'What's wrong with some of you?' (xv)

Devil on the Cross (1982), written during Ngugi's days of solitary imprisonment, critiques the fossilization of Kenya and Kenyan people. The title words parody the Christian myth of sacrifice and at the same time anticipates poetic justice for the devils of neocolonialism. The main action of the novel centers round a journey undertaken by a group of six protagonists by a *matatu* taxi to Ilmorog. The protagonists, namely Wariinga, Wangari, Gatuiria, Muturi, Mwireri and Mwaura, gradually discover that they have been mysteriously invited to a Devil's feast arranged for the election of seven cleverest thieves and robbers. The local thieves, the Kenyan natives, collaborate with their foreign allies to loot and rob the country. The portrayal of the grotesque in depicting the physical deformity of the devils caricatures the institutions of neocolonialism.

In *Moving the Centre: The Struggle for Cultural Freedom, Studies in African Literature* Ngugi records his return to linguistic nativity by choosing Gikuyu language and abjuring English to write *Matigari*:

Then in 1983/4 I wrote *Matigari*, a novel of return, in the Gikuyu language, and I felt a sense of belonging such as I felt when in 1978 at Kamiti Maximum Security Prison in Cell No. 16, I had written *Caitani Mutharabaini* (*Devil on the Cross*) as an attempt to reconnect myself to the community from which I had been so brutally cut by the neo-colonial regime its Kenya (124).

The publication of *Matigari* (1986), as Ngugi records in the selfsame text, triggered astute controversy. Rumours spread about the fictional protagonist *Matigari* that he is a real life hero- a representative of millions of Kenyans. President Moi ordered *Matigari*'s arrest and "Matigari was 'arrested' and removed from all book shops in Nairobi and from the publisher's warehouse" (175). *Matigari* opens with a utopian dream that every Kenyan must have dreamt during the sooty colonial days- the dream of Kenya as a land of joy, brotherhood and emancipation. *Matigari* came out of a dense forest with a hope that 'the last of the colonial problems had disappeared with the descent of Settler Williams into hell' (3). Needless to say, the irony of *Matigari*'s hope constitutes neocolonial Kenya. Njoroges' dreams (*Weep not, Child*) did not turn to be true after the achievement of flag independence.

However, Matigari buried his arms under a huge *mugumo*, a fig tree and wore the girdle of peace to 'go back to my house and rebuild my home' (5). Home and homecoming become the chief motif of the novel and the possibility of homecoming is deferred eternally to suggest the impossibility of nationalist negotiation. Ngugi was evidently rebuilding his dream of real independence on a symbolic aspect- with the reconstruction of the myths of home and homecoming. An important remark from Thiong'o's *Homecoming* is worth mentioning: "We must in fact wholly Africanize and socialize our political and economic life. We must break with capitalism, whose imperialistic stage- that of colonialism and neocolonialism"(12). Ngugi's call for Pan-Africanism is firmly rooted in his vision of home and homecoming. In *Matigari* home becomes a trope- a desire of return: "He tried to visualize his home. In his mind's eye he could see the hedges and the rich fields so clearly. Just another climb, the final climb, and then he would be home- his home on the top of the hill" (2). But the possibility of Matigari's homecoming is threatened by the marks of neocolonial oppression and exploitation visible everywhere he visits. The cultural and economic death of the Kenyans is sarcastically telescoped into the death of language. If *Petals of Blood* is chiefly founded upon physical action and journeys to survey the post-colonial Kenya, *Matigari* is a search for the 'imagined communities.' The reiterated references to the 'Voice of Truth' (Thiong'o's satire is palpable!) construct a postmodern simulated space of the imperialist power that rules remotely not only with capitalism but with voices also: "...This is the Voice of Truth... All gatherings of more than five people have been banned by a decree of His excellence Ole Excellence. No explanations were offered for the ban." (7) The use of cacophony becomes a significant motif in the text. Ngugi was freely using phonetic discordance probably to paint a typical neocolonial situation in Kenya, when human voices of truth are over shrouded with multiple synthetic and simulated voices of power. The palimpsest of sound is woven brilliantly within the corpus of the novel to critique neocolonial cultural hegemony, to protest the theft of voices by the imperialist powers.

Matigari's search for the home space constitutes Ngugi's nostalgic vision of nation myths. His innocent bafflement to see the bare bodied children suffer annihilates the dream of cultural, economic and linguistic emancipation: 'But why are the children running away from the tractor? My

children...!' (10) The struggle of the children in the rubbish heap for patches of clothes, bits of rubber, shoe soles, leather etc. distinctly indicates the perpetuation of colonial exploitation even after Kenya's independence. Matigari's love for the children is almost maternal. His dreams of home are severely castrated by the anti-Oedipal threats of neocolonialism. Besides Matigari the representation of Guthera attracts much critical attention. Guthera is a prostitute who hates the policemen since they are responsible for the death of her father. But in the course of the novel she sleeps with one to free Matigari from the prison. The presentation of Guthera may seem to be objectionable but it is a common fate with many women in the neocolonial situation. Guthera symbolizes the 'prostituted economy' (Nicholls) of Kenya terrible dependent on the imperialist powers.

All the four novels namely *A Grain of Wheat* (1967), *Petals of Blood* (1986), *Matigari* (1987), and *Devil on the Cross* (1980) capture Ngugi's nationalist vision brilliantly. Fanon's criticism of the nationalist bourgeoisies and their neocolonial mentality find an impetus in these four novels by Ngugi in which he has critiqued neocolonialism in unequivocal tone. He has catapulted caustic criticism against the middle class of Africa who derived power from the common people during the anti-colonial struggles and after independence derived it to 'form a cozy relationship with the western bourgeoisie' (Ngugi 81).

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