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**The Use of the Image of the Body to Portray
Corruption and Revolution in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's
*Devil on the Cross***

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for a **Master degree in Literature and
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Dedication

I warmly dedicate this work to the most people I admire

To my parents Kaddour and Nadjwa for I would never be here without his good advice and her shoulder to cry

on

To my wonderful brother Ayyoub, and adorable sisters Selsabil and Khadidja

To the source of inspiration and courage Samira, Cylia, Leila, Maya, and Souad

To my soul mate Feroudja, a sister with whom I had not shared a womb but sweet memories

To my CAPES friend Insaf, it would cost me a whole life to find a friend like you! Thank you for appearing so

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To my best students at Boussebssi Secondary School, Constantine

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To my stubbornness, ambition and will

Yousra

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Abstract

This research examines the portrayal of corruption and revolution in postcolonial African literature and questions the role of the African writer as a social custodian. It puts under study Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's novel *Devil on the Cross* and scrutinizes its use of the image of the body as a literary technique. The author uses this technique grotesquely to highlight corruption and moral degradation of some characters, and authentically to picture revolution and patriotism of some others. This dissertation aims at answering two main questions: How does Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's use of the image of the body as a literary device in *Devil on the Cross* to mirror corruption and revolution in postcolonial Kenya? A second intriguing question is: Why does Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o use the body as a reference to corruption and revolution? The outcomes of the study show that, at a personal level, Ngũgĩ uses this book to avenge for his imprisoned body through authentic bodies and turns the attack against the grotesque bodies of the Kenyan corrupt leaders. The paper concludes that *Devil on the Cross* is a multi-dimensional book where a set of dichotomies are developed: form and content, literature and real life, body and spirit, etc.

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General Introduction

General Introduction

Literature and society are inseparable notions, for society inspires literature and literature portrays society. Society with all its norms, values, beliefs, and culture is always reflected in writers' language, style and themes. This reflection appears in different literary forms and genres such as poetry, short stories, fiction, plays, prose, autobiographies etc. Literature differs in form, style, language, and themes due to the changing spheres of life and society that never remain uniformly consistent. Thus, literature mirrors society in noticeable creative ways. This creativity appears when literature is combined with the culture of its society to present impalpable subjects such as assimilation, rejection, or transformation as well as political and social issues and historical facts (Dubey 84-85).

Among all writings, African Literature is the first by excellence in echoing its society. For Agema, this literature started first by claiming the African heritage, then short after calling for its independence, reaching the present day to call for fighting the evils that threaten the African society. Hence, from the very beginning till today, the majority of African writers such as Chinua Achebe, Ayi Kwei Armah, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Aminatta Forna, and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o have consecrated their writings to portray society; in other words, African literature is a committed literature. In this context, Chinua Achebe stated that, "Art is, and always was, in the service of man" (19). Furthermore, Ama Ata Aidoo explained that the African writer cannot ignore what is happening in his society and dives in his imagination: "I cannot see myself writing about lovers in Accra because you see there are so many other problems..." (19).

African literature is shaped by the events and problems of African societies. The commitment of African writers is so deep that it appears in the themes and language that change over time. However, the style remains the same with its uniqueness and dedication to

African roots. Themes in African literature shifted from calling for independence during the colonial rule, into fighting society's evils and calling for change during the postcolonial era (Agema).

Masolo describes Africa "as a solid rock which has withstood all the storms of history except colonialism because of the deeply political gist of the colonial /postcolonial discourse" (qtd. in Ashcroft 125). In this regard, Ahluwalia argues that, "in the case of Africa, the term post-colonial does not mean 'after independ-ence'. Rather, it is a concept which takes into account the historical realities of the European imperial incursions into the continent from the fifteenth century onwards" (14).

Consequently, postcolonial Africa is afflicted by corrupt political systems and unjust social practices. Corruption is mainly a by-product of colonialism that was intensified posteriorly, especially in terms of leadership flaws of the new alienated African masters who were nothing but pawns of the colonizer. For Africans, the postcolonial era did not provide them anything of substantial change that would distinguish it from the colonial era. On the contrary, the African state's rapidly degenerated and the whole continent was swamped by corrupt practices in all domains. This situation is described by Claude Ake as follows:

At independence the form and function of the state in Africa did not change much for most countries in Africa. State power remained essentially the same: immense, arbitrary often violent, always threatening ... politics re-mained a zero-sum game; power was sought by all means and maintained by all means. Colonial rule left most of Africa a legacy of intense and law-less political competition amidst an ideological void and a rising tide of disenchantment with the expectation of a better life. (6)

This political situation in postcolonial Africa is echoed in African literature where writers have made of Corruption the prevailing theme of their works; the latter serve as vehicle of a strong social and political criticism of the postcolonial era. However, for Nyamndi, describing the situation of corruption in Africa is not enough and a call for change is necessary in order to move society in the right direction (566-578).

In fact, some African writers act as potent agents of change; their major concern is to spread awareness among the masses, make them reject political corruption, and even push them to revolt against it so as to reconstruct Africa. For Kwame Anthony Appiah, this is:

The second stage is the post-colonial stage, where the nation is not celebrated but where novels are engaged in a process of delegitimation, rejecting the nationalist project of the postcolonial national bourgeoisie. Indeed, it is based, as intellectual responses to oppression in Africa, an appeal to a certain simple respect for human suffering a fundamental revolt against the endless misery of the last thirty years. (qtd. in Ahluwalia 8)

Therefore, African writers put pen to paper to criticize the postcolonial situation and to enlighten people and guide them out of the cave to see behind the shadows. Among these writings we can mention, *Mayombe and The Return Of The Water Spirit* by the Angolian Pepetela; *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* and *Fragments* by the Ghanaian Ayi Kwei Armah; *Half of the Yellow Sun* and *A Man Of The People* by the Nigerian writers Chimamanda Ngozi Achebe and Chinua Achebe respectively; *Petals Of Blood* and *Devil On The Cross* by the Kenyan Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o.

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o portrays the problems in Kenya and calls for revolutionary change against the corrupt system that rolls most, if not all, African countries in the postcolonial period. Among the significant works that describe Ngũgĩ as postcolonial writer is James

Ogude *Ngũgĩ's Novels and African History: Narrating the Nation* (1999). Throughout, Ogude portrays Ngũgĩ as the committed writer who consecrates his pen to defend and preserve Kenyan culture that existed centuries before the coming of the white men. Ogude asserts that Ngũgĩ rejects the historical archives put by the colonizer which blurred identity, denied Africanity, and marginalized workers and peasants in African country's narrative history. Furthermore, for him the Mau Mau should carry on inspiring today's fighters to call for struggle and resistance in order to gain freedom and dignity and hence national victory of post independent Kenya and Africa (8-9).

Ogude views that Ngũgĩ goes further than claiming; he uses dramatisation in his postcolonial novels. His commitment towards political and social issues has increased as he portrays heroes far differently from those in his earlier works. In the earlier novels, Ngũgĩ portrays heroes to show us the complexity of issues raised in the narrative. However, the latter novels are characterized by “a more mechanistic allegorising in which human and social issues are articulated through a linear representation of characters and history.” (13).

The above difference can be seen in Ngũgĩ's *Devil on the Cross*. In his book *Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o* (1999), Patrick Williams states that “Devil on the Cross appeared to a number of readers to involve disorienting shifts” (101). For Williams, these shifts are presented at the level of Kikuyu language¹, satirical tone, traditional orature², indigenous proverbs, and the way themes are reflected through the names of characters that function in allegorical labels to indicate their moral status. Ngũgĩ exaggerates while choosing some awful names of evil characters in *Devil on the Cross*; for instance, “Mweri wa Mukirai (self-promoter, son of he who silences people), Kĩhaahu wa Gatheeca (madman, son of glutton), or Gĩtutu wa Gataangũrũ (inhuman one, son of tapeworm).” (102).

Michelle Keown goes further in his recent book *Post Colonial Pacific Writing* (2004), noting that Ngũgĩ uses degraded human bodies to portray political corruption together with some other West African post-independence writers. Thus, Ngũgĩ portrays the wealthy corrupters in grotesquely obese bodies that relates corruption to the consumption of food, “equivalent analogies between consumption and corruption” that is found in *Devil on the Cross* (Sec. 5).

Corruption is not the only prevailing theme in *Devil on the Cross*. As a Marxist Fanonist, Ngũgĩ calls for revolution and change when he states in the novel, “Let me tell you, I’m sure that the system of theft and robbery will never end in this country as long as people are scared of guns and clubs. We must struggle and fight against the culture of fear.”(254). Paolo Abis, in his dissertation *Class Struggle, Elitism and Social Collectivism in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s Devil on the Cross: A Marxist Approach* (2011), argues that the character of Warĩnga illustrates revolution. She struggles with herself and finally could reach liberation and independence; the thing that pictures the collective resistance and struggle of Kenyan proletariat against foreign and local capitalists (17).

Warĩnga used to hate everything about herself, her blackness, her hair, her clothes, and everything that tied her to Africa. She has been transformed in two years time becoming confident and determined. She studied engineering in Polytechnic and becomes a mechanic engineer. She represents female beauty and sensitiveness, as well as intellectual and professional capability. While many critics have seen the transformation of Warĩnga as a revolutionary sign other did not. Florence Stratton criticises Ngũgĩ for masculating Warĩnga through her shift in profession as he sees women working as secretaries and mechanical engineers of equal status (Williams 104).

However, Emily Ann Brumley, in *Wariinga's Got a Gun: Feminism and Revolution in Devil on the Cross* (2007), defends Ngũgĩ by claiming that Ngũgĩ has a radical sense of equality that appeared in his choice of Warĩinga as a female character to be "heroine of labor". The latter, for her, demonstrates Warĩinga's self and social revolution as a female and a worker. By doing this, Ngũgĩ is privileging no females over males but the mother land Kenya which he embodies in Warĩinga. Thus, he is leveling the act of revolution through equalizing gender (1-2).

From this review of literature, one can notice that previous studies have shown that Ngũgĩ in *Devil on the Cross* depicts political corruption and calls for revolution to fight corruption that dominates Kenya and Africa in the postcolonial period. However, the technique of the image of the body and how it is used to portray the above themes has been overlooked. In fact, only a slight attention has been devoted to the grotesque image of the body to portray corruption, while the authentic image of the body to portray revolution has been far neglected.

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o wrote *Devil on the Cross* on toilet paper in a Kenyan prison under detention (Maroukis 58). This novel is an exemplum of his endeavors to unveil corrupt practices in postcolonial Kenya and an invitation for the oppressed people to act. It highlights the writer's total support for colonial abjurers and his rejection of colonial values and their black adherents. Of particular importance, the abjurers are portrayed authentically full of African beauty; however, the adherents are portrayed as depraved characters with deformed bodies. This special graphic description used by Ngũgĩ in *Devil on the Cross* is known as the image of the body. Such a literary device serves as a critical examination of corruption and anti-corruption in postcolonial Kenyan society.

This study aims at showing how Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o uses the human body as an index of moral and political corruption throughout elements of the grotesque on the one hand, and as a sign for societal revolution through the authentic elements on the other hand. Additionally, it attempts to explain why the writer chooses this literary device.

Accordingly, the present research work aims at answering two main questions: How does Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o use the image of the body as a literary device in *Devil on the Cross* to mirror corruption and revolution in post -colonial Kenya? The other question is: Why does Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o use the body as a reference for corruption and revolution?

In order to answer the above questions, this research paper is elaborated on explanatory and qualitative evidence and organized into three chapters. The first chapter is a historical background of postcolonial Africa and Kenya with an emphasis on how corruption, as a colonial inheritance, is effecting and infecting the masses’ living conditions. It also shows how postcolonial African writers put pen to paper to portray this situation. The second chapter reviews Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s biography and presents his piece of art *Devil on the Cross*. Furthermore, it reviews the image of the body technique that Ngũgĩ uses as a literary device both grotesquely and authentically. The third and last chapter builds on theories and information from the first and second chapters and embarks on the analysis of the use of the grotesque image as a means for depicting corruption, and the authentic image as means of portraying revolution in postcolonial African state in Ngũgĩ’s novel *Devil on the Cross*.

Chapter I

Historical and Literary Background of Postcolonial Africa and Kenya

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Introduction

This chapter reviews the problem of corruption in postcolonial Africa and specifically in Kenya. It shows how corruption leads to various problems at political, economic and social levels such as dictatorship, poverty, famines, diseases, and ethnic tension; thereby leading to underdevelopment. It traces back the later problems to the long period of Colonial settlement in the African continent. After that, it demonstrates how postcolonial African writers put pen to paper to portray these problems in their societies and suggest reforms each using different literary techniques amongst the Kenyan novelist Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o.

1. Historical Background of Postcolonial Africa and Kenya

1.1. Corruption as Postcolonial Africa's Greatest Foe: Origins and Drawbacks

Subsequent to the Berlin Conference of 1884, European powers waded massively on the African continent in what was described 'the Scramble for Africa'³. This violent conquest lasted until the decolonization processes were completed with the liberation of South Africa in 1990 (Mwakikagile, *Africa After Independence* 58). Accordingly, colonial contact with its inevitable effects was transmitted from the colonizer to the colonized, and an enduring legacy of colonialist practice continued to take place in Africa under what is known as neocolonialism⁴. Therefore, African history is blurred and its identity is lost as the Marxist

critic Aijaz Ahmad argues, "...all that came before colonialism becomes its own prehistory and whatever comes after can only be lived as infinite aftermath" (qtd. in Ahluwalia 5).

Mwakikagile sees that Western colonialism did not only blur the African history, but it also caused several problems that postcolonial Africans are still facing today. They exploited and are still exploiting African countries across the continent which provokes political, economic, and social troubles for its inhabitants. Yet, the former colonizer has no intention to help; all what matters is the security and promotion of their political and economic interests (*Post-colonial Africa* 273).

As a matter of fact, Westerners are drawn to Africa in order to do business through the exploitation of its natural resources and raw materials. By doing business, African countries are also supposed to end up by having benefits. Yet, in order to have mutual benefits, the exploited Africans and the exploiting Westerners have to work with reciprocal understanding and interest protection. Unfortunately, African leaders make no efforts to draw business arrangement clearly; thus, benefits go to Westerners far more than Africans. Additionally, they act as agents who favor foreigners' benefits upon theirs. By acting so, African leaders have a double benefit; first, being bribed for their services; and second, having protection to steal the small benefits that belong to the Africans masses. This act of using power to make personal gains is known as corruption (Mwakikagile, *Post-colonial Africa* 274).

Corruption is defined in Cambridge Advanced Learners Dictionary as "illegal, bad or dishonest behavior, especially by people in positions of power" ("corruption"). In this respect, corruption is an umbrella that ranges bribery, nepotism, tribalism and all manner of political, economic and social vices which are rare in rich countries but rampant in post-colonial Africa (Mwaura 131). Moreover, Mulinge and Lesetedi agree that corruption includes acts such as the use of public authority and official position, with the intent to gain personal benefits at the

expense of the common good of African masses through violation of established rules and ethical considerations (15).

Additionally, Mwaura views that corruption has reached its highest proportions in all postcolonial African countries, permeating all aspects of life and institutions public and private, as well as, governmental and non-governmental. This endemic corruption causes a breakdown of the ruling law and a loss of state legitimacy. Thusly, people come to depend on connections and favors instead of law, and view the illegitimate use of state resources as an accepted practice (132).

Corruption in postcolonial Africa is manifested at two levels: grand corruption by which government officials collect huge sums of money out of big projects and investments, and petty corruption by which workers request payment at almost every institutional level to perform tasks or provide services which they should do as part of their job (Blundo 46).

At the first level, grand corruption is practiced by democratic leaders who are supposed to lead their independent countries towards development and prosperity. Per contra, they use democracy as a pretext to control high level corruption and escape trials of the illegal accumulation of wealth. Furthermore, Decalo argues that rulers that dominate the rule in postcolonial Africa turn into dictators either through transforming the rule into one party state dictatorship, or through a military coup (Dauda 71-72).

The former rule of one-party state⁵ rose with the aim of stabilizing the ruling system, improving people's living conditions, and developing newly independent African countries. However, it became increasingly associated with dictatorship and totalitarianism⁶ since it served only private interests and accumulation of wealth. As a result, one-party rule witnessed a big failure by leading Africa towards many hardships (McCandless and Karbo).

One example is Guinean President Ahmed Sékou Touré who was elected in 1958. He stayed in rule until 1984 after escaping many assassination and coup attempts (“Top 20 Most Brutal”). Touré used power to declare his party as the only legal party and banned all opposition parties. Henceforth, he used his one and only party ‘Guinean Democratic Party’ to rule the country and to serve his personal interests (Camara 28-29). In 1984, Guineans at home or in exile were happy for his death considering it the end of dictatorship decades. During his twenty-six-year leadership, Ahmed Sékou Touré ruled with an iron hand tolerating no opposition. Also, he was more than a dictator and was accused of abuse of human rights and extrajudicial killings that reached 50,000 executions of workers, intellectuals, and artists (Eyre 97). Besides, he imposed very high taxes on the poor though the rich were earning 2.4 times as much as them. Moreover, Touré was known for using highly drugs which explains his death of heart failure (“The Dictatorship of Ahmed”). In sum, Ahmed Sékou Touré is the best example of a civilian dictator who ruled Guinea for twenty six years. By imposing the rule of his one and only party system to serve better his interests, he made life hard for Guineans who dreamt of a better life the day they had elected him.

In order to rescue African countries from the former corrupt civilian one-party system government, military rule took place as Coup d’Etat⁷. Nonetheless, the latter proved to be more corrupt, oppressive, and inefficient (Pike). Eventually, military rulers have used power to oppress people and to accumulate wealth through unethical arrangements. In relation to this Samuel Decalo writes:

In retrospect, the results of military rule in this vast continent have been very disappointing indeed. Besides being unable to solve the problems, they set out to solve in the first place, military regimes in some cases have created situations that did not exist with civilian governments. Military rule has not necessarily been free of incompetence, corruption and maladministration that

their civilian predecessors were alleged to have encouraged. Soldiers have been known to be more of wealth-seekers, property grabbers and bribe-takers. They have openly engaged themselves in self-enrichment activities through the barrel of the gun and through intimidation. They have become better embezzlers than their forerunners. They have made better smugglers and tax evaders. (231)

One example of the worst military dictator rulers in postcolonial Africa is the Ugandan Idi Amin Dada. He seized power in a bloody military coup in 1971 from Pr. Milton Obote. Dada was best known as the 'Butcher of Uganda' for he showed no mercy in killing both his opponents as well as their families in his infamous killed squads (Campbell 5-7). His hypocrisy was noticeable in loving and hating the same British along two different periods. First, when he served the British Colonial Army in 1946 against Shifita Warriors and MauMau in Somalia and Kenya respectively; and second, when he claimed to defeat the British after they broke off with his regime in 1977. Besides, he gave himself a full title that describes better his brutality 'His Excellency, President for Life, Field Marshal Al Hadji Doctor Idi Amin Dada, VC, DSO, MC, Lord of All the Beasts of the Earth and Fishes of the Seas and Conqueror of the British Empire in Africa in General and Uganda in Particular' (Chigozie, "10 Famous African Dictators").

Idi Amin Dada's dictatorship ended after eight years of rule; that is, until 1979 by the united forces of Obote and Tanzania. His regime was characterized by more than 500,000 extrajudicial killings as well as serious human rights abuses such torture, ethnic persecution, political repression, and corruption. Most of the victims were either supporters of Pr. Obote, or members of the Acholi and Lango ethnic groups whose cadavers were thrown into the Nile River. Dada ended his life fleeing from one country to another until he died in Saudi Arabia in 2003. Ugandan Dada is just one of many cases of African dictators who come to rule by

military force to corrupt their countries at the expense of their personal interests (“The African Dictators”).

Second level corruption is petty corruption that police officers, stationary clerks, messengers, and even school masters practice. Thence, Bayart argues that “contrary to the popular image of the innocent masses, corruption and predatoriness are not found exclusively amongst the powerful” (238). Indeed, petty corruption results out of the pressure exercised by rulers on citizens; the thing that pushes them to see corruption as a matter of survival. For instance, in Malawi in 1992 the grip of economic crises, caused by the World Bank⁸ and IMF⁹ implementation free-market reforms, has lessened the citizens’ salaries to the half in comparison to 1982. People could no more rely on their salaries and became involved in corrupt practices to gain an additional income. Thus, meager salaries justify the corrupt behavior from fraud, theft, bribery, and embezzlement practiced by postcolonial African civilians (Blundo 47).

Furthermore, Mwaura claims that corruption is like an epidemic that becomes incorporated into a country’s culture leading to an anarchic country state. The scene that he describes in his book *Breaking the Yoke of Colonialism in Africa* as follows:

Corruption, unlike wealth, does trickle down and the government’s ranks become increasingly incompetent and inefficient until things come to a standstill. Government employees demand bribes to perform their basic duties. When this point is reached, tyranny and anarchy paradoxically exist simultaneously. Hard economic times cause crime, banditry, robbery, and even lynching become commons. Land grabbing and open plunder of state corporations increase along with murder and mini civil wars between different

ethnic groups. Government inefficiency limits education, health, and services such as street cleaning; anarchy becomes an accepted state of affairs. (131)

Hence, Mbaku claims that due to corruption, the public sector over time becomes characterized by dysfunction. Economically, interests of firms have captured the state instead of serving population's need and enhancing state's welfare. Administratively, employment is based on favors, bribes, and ethnic belongings in lieu of competency and experience. Politically presidents, ministers and principal secretaries are rivalrous in accumulation of power and wealth in order to guarantee a lavish life for their families and relatives. All of the above diminish performance of institutions and derail the wheels of development which deteriorate postcolonial African countries' state into poverty, misery, chaos, conflicts, and social problems (25-26).

Lumumba claims that after independence Africa has stagnated and declined with approximately half of the population living on one dollar a day. Also, the continuous degradation of social conditions made of Africans 30 per cent of the world's poor in the 2000's (18). Furthermore, poverty is imposed on Africa by both overseas and national exploiters that deny masses their rights and push them towards misery. By facing this, people become unable to contribute to the development of their countries and concentrate more on how to survive (Mammo 8-9). Poverty as a social problem can be summarized in the non-availability of homes, low level incomes, famines and high mortality; in short, miserable social living standards (Mammo31).

In fact, Chigozie notes that while the majority of famines that hit postcolonial Africa are claimed to be caused by climate change, the truth is that dictatorship presents a far more perilous threat. For him climate change is dictators' new preferred ideology by which they

avoid detection and accountability of their trade of corruption, and they divert attention from their criminality towards societies (“10 Most Deadly Famines”).

One of the worst famines in Africa took place in Ethiopia because of food deficiency and killed a million among eight million victims from 1983 to 1985. Ethiopians starved to death because of the criminal negligence of their corrupt leaders who deprived them from NGOs'¹⁰ aids; about 240,000 tons of food were consumed by the army and millions of dollars used to purchase weapons and private interests. In this regard, the former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo in 2006 declared at an African civic groups meeting in Addis Ababa that, African leaders “have stolen at least \$140 billion from their people in the decades since independence.” Therefore, the rapacity of power-hunger dictators is the cause of African mass starvation (Alemayehu).

Additionally, chaos and conflicts in postcolonial Africa further destroy its infrastructure and infect people’s social conditions. These conflicts are seen in bloody civil wars and genocides, and can be traced back to the former colonizer. Bethke argues that before the coming of colonialism, African tribes used to live together in harmony which did not serve the former exploitative mission. Subsequently, European nations adopted a technique known as ‘divide and rule’ in their colonies by which they favored one tribe over the other to implant hatred and create rivalries between them. Not only, the privileged tribe had to serve the colonizer with full loyalty and treat other tribes with extreme cruelty, so that to be well rewarded for their servitude (“The consequences ‘divide-and-rule’ ”).

Gekonge claims that such divisions create two groups: super ordinate and subordinate with the former enjoying significant privileges over the latter. Some examples to be mentioned about conflictual ethnic groups are: Kikuyu versus Luos in Kenya; Ndembele

versus Shona in Zimbabwe; Ibo versus Yorube/Haussa in Nigeria; Tutsi versus Hutu in Rwanda; and Shiites versus Sunnis in Muslim Africa (5-6).

Moreover, the association between 'divide and rule' and corruption in Africa is reflected in the creation of regional disparities. The latter resulted from giving rewards with easy access to Western education and government funded economic opportunities to fellow African privileged groups. Such unfair practices planted corrupt behavior seeds that dominated most Africans in the post-independent period (Mulinge and Lesetedi 20).

To illustrate, the Belgian rule in Rwanda developed an alliance with the Tutsi people by promoting them paramountcy because for them they were migrants from Ethiopia and racially superior. Ergo, the Belgian colonizer favored the minority Tutsi over the majority Hutu. Moreover, they introduced identity cards to make it impossible to move from one group to another (Nanjira 202). After independence, Tutsi and Hutu fought for rule until signing a peace arrangement in 1993. However, the airplane shooting in 1994 that killed the Presidents of Rwanda and Burundi, who were both Hutus, broke up a bloody genocide in Rwanda. Both military and civilian Hutu, forming the majority, started hunting the Tutsi and killing approximately 8,000 person a day along 100 days; a total of 800,000 Tutsis that makes it the fastest bloodiest genocide in history. Also, over 500,000 women were raped by "rape squads"¹¹ and the same number of children was abused. At last, the Tutsi as RPF¹² took the rule with the help of Uganda which led about 2 million Hutus to run away out of fear (Shwany).

Consequently, Rwandan genocide, as any conflict, destroyed its infrastructure and infected the social conditions of Rwandans. First, roads, schools, buildings, churches were destroyed and farms were burned. Adding to it, a million of Tutsis were killed and two other million of Hutus fled the country and lived in refugee camps, which left the country with no

workers to start a reconstruction process; thereby leading to the collapse of economy and the expansion of poverty (Neysholoss).

Besides, Scherrer states that in addition to women and children contaminated by AIDS, other diseases spread over Rwanda such as Cholera and Dysentery caused by poor hygiene and sanitation that lead to death in the absence of treatment. Moreover, children and women who survived suffered from traumatic mental problems due to the scenes and abuses they witnessed. They were also widowed and orphaned with no home to sleep, no schools to study, and even no church to cry their pains (67-68).

Rwanda is just a sample of postcolonial African countries full of ethnic and religious diversities that fell into conflicts due to the arbitrary division as well as the implanted hatred exercised by corrupt colonial states. Indeed, colonialism is responsible for rooting corruption deeply in its societies. In this line of argument, Osaba points out that corruption is redeemed as a by-product of fraudulent antisocial behavior that was inherited from British, French and other colonial leaders (Mulinge and Lesetedi 15).

According to NGO Transparency International, postcolonial African countries are very corrupt, the thing that results in underdevelopment and put them at the bottom of the rank of the UN Human Development Index¹³ scale. Only by the elimination of corrupt practices, Africa would mark a beginning of good governance that insures state's development and prosperity (Falola and Mbah 180).

1.2. Corruption as Postcolonial Kenya's bane: Origins and Drawbacks

Localized in Eastern Africa, Kenya is an artificial creation of the British colonial power that put together about 42 unlike ethnic groups in 580 367 km². Correspondingly,

ethnic and religious diversity makes Kenya a difficult country to govern especially by powerful elites that represent conflicting interests (Nangulu-Ayuku 127-128).

Kenya gained independence in 1963 but later few enlightened Kenyans learnt that it was a flag independence only (Onyango 188). Jomo Kenyatta was the first postcolonial Kenyan President who stood for the continuity of colonialist values as an elitist who had been prepared by Westerners to pursue their mission in Africa. This is highlighted by Fanon (1965) as follows:

The European elite undertook to manufacture a native elite. They picked out promising adolescents; they branded them, as with a red-hot iron, with the principles of western culture; they stuffed their mouths full with high-sounding phrases, grand glutinous words that stuck to the teeth. After a short stay in the mother's country they were sent home, white-washed. These walking lies had nothing left to say to their brothers; they only echoed. (qtd. in Okelo 21)

According to Wrong, this Kenyan elitist group continues to protect the presence and investment of the former British colonial power in order to benefit itself starting by Jomo Kenyatta's government to the subsequent governments of Daniel Arap Moi, Mwai Kibaki, and Uruhu Kenyatta. Furthermore, it uses ethnic belongings to exploit Kenya by centralizing factories and investment in their ethnic region as well as privileging their people by giving them lucrative jobs at the expense of other ethnic groups who become far neglected and marginalized. Subsequently, within this framework, greed and corruption dominate Kenya and become manifested in the crises that afflict it (101).

For instance, Kenya in 2015 is ranked 146 out of 188 countries according to Human Development Index by the UNDP¹⁴ which put the country near the bottom of human development category eventually among the top corrupt countries (Woods). Furthermore,

Transparency International¹⁵ conducted a questionnaire in which more than sixty per cent of Kenyans answered that corruption is found extremely in sectors such as military, judiciary, medical, civil servants, and political parties (“Thank you for donating to TI”). For this, Legum states that Kenyatta’s “Regime was clouded by corruption” and the wealth acquired by the ruling classes and their relatives was due to corruption. In fact, it is not difficult to name Ministers in Kenyatta’s Government who live at a higher standard, or acquire more property than their salary as they receive money for services rendered and corrupt straightly public fund (27).

More importantly, the British intelligence services spent a lot of time investigating corruption in Kenya. Further, in 1966 J.I. Pumphrey, the Acting British High Commissioner, submitted a confidential report to London on the matter and in which he wrote:

It is obvious, that at the lower levels of the Administration, particularly in the provinces, there are possibilities of getting what you want, or of getting it more quickly, by greasing the appropriate palm. There are also, deficiencies in financial discipline, which make such practices easier. (qtd. in Maloba 215)

Pumphrey found corruption more prevailing and alarming in Kenya than other postcolonial African countries. He justified his findings by attributing them to the British expatriate officers who continue to serve various capacities in the Kenyan government and act as a restraining influence in addition to successors that were formed by the British missionaries (Maloba 216). Woods goes further in describing these agents and successors as corrupt ruling elites that were “just as rapacious as the British, but even more corrupt inefficient and rotten.”

Eventually, Corruption in Kenya is everywhere, at the higher levels of the civil service, in the business community and even at the Cabinet level spreading rapidly and

affecting the social values of the country as well as political and economic institutions. Corruption does not only push up the Elite towards prosperity and lavishness, but also pushes down the masses into misery and poverty. In this respect Ndirangu Mwaura wrote: “Official high level corruption in Kenya increased at the same rate that poverty increased and the economy collapsed. This means that poverty is an inevitable cause of corruption.” (131-132).

One consequence of the practiced corruption in Kenya is poverty. The latter is very high and remained the same from independence till present day. Eventually, fifty one per cent (51%) of the population live under poverty line by earning less than one dollar a day. Poverty is centralized in rural areas with seventy nine per cent (79%) of Kenyans living there to work in plantations under miserable social conditions. The rich in Kenya depend on the poor to work the land. Yet, they pay them meager salaries and impose on them high taxes pushing them to believe that poverty is a curse for life (Fole 1-5).

Poverty usually goes hand in hand with food shortage and hunger. Hunger rears Kenya’s head for many decades because the majority of population relies on agriculture while corrupt leaders make huge profits by paving the way for foreign industries’ exploitation and investment. In the 1960’s the country went through two incidents that show the existence of corruption at the higher levels. The first was the scandal of purchasing and distributing maize during the drought and hunger of 1965. Later, it was discovered that the maize was not reaching the starving areas but rather sold in the black market. The second, the mayor of Nairobi was buying a Rolls Royce car from the money of the masses, when they were dying out of hunger (Maloba 217).

Furthermore, the majority of poor Kenyans, especially in the capital Nairobi, live in slums side by side to the big villas owned by the rich who usually own several houses as well as comfortable cars. In fact, slums are unfit for human habitation marked by dirty run down

sanitation. With the rapid population growth that tripled in the last 35 years, slums become crowded and contagious diseases appeared and spread rapidly (Mutisya and Yarime 197-198).

Hyg sees that Cholera and Malaria are among the devastating epidemics that were born and grown in dirty water running down slums. In addition to this, the incurable AIDS spread widely due to prostitution especially in Nairobi where it hit about 3 million people by 1992. The above diseases increased mortality and decreased life expectancy especially in the absence of medicaments and doctors (“7 Most Devastating Epidemics”). Accordingly, World Health Organization estimates that there is only one doctor and twelve nurses per 10,000 Kenyans. This shortage of medical professionals is due to poverty and illiteracy caused by corruption (Hyg).

Despite the miserable situation that postcolonial Kenyans are going through under corrupt rule, no one succeeded in making change because of the autocratic leadership. A recent example can be seen in Kenyan elections of 2017 when Raila Odinga rejected the results of Presidency National elections against his rival Uhuru Kenyatta and called the vote rigged. Supporters of Odinga went down street to protest the results. Police quickly intervened and killed one person, the thing that outraged protestors. They became violent and police bullets were shot in every direction reaching an innocent girl playing in the balcony (Tom Odula). Twenty four Kenyan protestors were killed and the Red Cross declared ninety three others injured. The organizational regional director Muthoni Wanyeki declared that: "Everyone has a right to peaceful protest and they must not be hurt, injured or killed for exercising that right" (Karimi).

However, out of fear of this deadly incident, government accused dead protestors of being criminals who wanted to cause chaos in Kenya so that to calm people. President Uhuru Kenyatta forgot the ill state of Kenya and reminded Kenyans about the 2007 bloodshed, the

worst crisis for decades when the vote was claimed rigged and thousands of people were killed in an ethnic violence. He went further to declare: "Fellow Kenyans, elections come and go but Kenya is here to stay. Let us always remember that we are all brothers and sisters. We pledge to finish the work we started. We will rededicate ourselves more to serve this great nation." ("Uhuru Kenyatta").

In fact, Kenyans are not blind they can always see what is happening from betrayal, corruption, oppression and ethnic privileges. Yet, they cannot make change out of fear of tyrants. Jefferson Odiambo a Kenyan Security Officer said: "There is no chance of freedom here"; and an eighteen year old conscious man declared: "We fought for our freedom, the white people ran away, and then we were colonized by our own people in our own country" (Burke).

2. Literary Background of Postcolonial Africa and Kenya

2.1. Postcolonial African Committed Literature

During colonialism, African writers devoted themselves to claim their countries' right for independence and encourage people in breaking revolutionary wars of liberation. By the 1960's, almost all African countries gained independence and postcolonial writers shifted from calling for freedom into rehabilitating African history and culture. This shift took place as a consequence of European denigration of African culture which portrayed Africans in inferior stereotypical ways. Therefore, African writers started correcting the distorted image of Africa as part of their duty by highlighting both folk and national culture (Gover et al 1-2).

Nonetheless, postcolonial writers' mission of rehabilitating the image and dignity of Africans did not last long because the hopes born with independence developed into bitter fruit. They became disillusioned with post colonial realities. This is stressed by Frantz Fanon

as follows: “The apotheosis of independence is transformed into the curse of independence” and “the young African nation is condemned to regression” (qtd. in Osei-Nyame 97). Consequently, African writers engaged into writing against postcolonial situation that is characterized by degradation in social, political, economic and cultural values at all levels, which is by a way or another traced to colonialism (Griffiths 438).

In fact, postcolonial African writers felt obliged to change their roles from cultural custodians of African societies into spokesmen, intellectual awakeners, and social critics to write about effects of corruption in post-colonial Africa. Therefore, they used their writings from poems, plays and novels as weapons to raise consciousness and urge the masses to claim their rights of social change and political freedom; this is known as committed literature (Agho 95).

In this line of thought Sartre suggests that committed writers know that “words are actions” and “to reveal is to change” and that “one can reveal only by planning to change” (qtd. in Marwood 142). In the context of African literature, Emmanuel Ngara comments in his preface to *Art and Ideology in the African Novel* as follows:

Committed African Writers are extremely sensitive to the social problems of their day and are constantly coming to grips with them, hoping to play their part in changing society and endeavoring to develop literary forms that much their social vision.

Fashina claims that African writers like Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe, and Ayi Kwei Armah, Ngugi wa Thiongo, and Micere Mugo devoted their writing to describe problems and challenges that postcolonial African countries faced and are still facing such as dictatorship, corruption, and oppression. Their works show how corrupt politicians manipulate the masses through implanting doubt in them to gain their support and then exploit

them to raise personal wealth. Thus, writers are defending the rights of the deprived masses and suggest change (35).

Writers made of corruption the thematic focus of their writings and struggle against the postcolonial African state. For instance, Achebe's *A Man of the People* (1966) is a post-colonial novel that describes the Nigerian socio-political scene. Through the novel, Achebe criticizes the decadence of social values viewed in corruption practiced by political opportunists. The novel describes how leadership moved to the hand of the Nigerian rulers who turned to be oppressors, greedy, self-interested and corrupt members in the government following the footsteps of white men, and disappointing the masses who have pinned hope on an independent Nigeria and obliging them to fight internal foes (Bhardwaj 122).

In *A Man of the People*, the protagonist Odili, who used to believe that the antagonist Chief Nanga -his former teacher- is working for the benefit of the country, later discovers that the latter is a corrupt politician who is living on self seeking practices. Odili then decides to react by joining a political party founded by his friend Maxell Kulamo, to prepare for contesting the seat of Nanga in the upcoming elections. Indeed, government is in a filthy competition with the other political parties; at last, all political parties loose it because the elections proves dirty and causes chaos in Nigeria (Achebe).

Chaos pushes the army to overthrow the government and send all its members to prison. Thus, Nanga stands for corrupt rulers in Nigeria, and Odili for the masses. In fact, both represent different ideologies and social groups that they come from. Nanga represents the postcolonial elite, who are ready to die in order to serve the former colonizer and gain power and wealth. Odili, on the contrary, represents Nigerians who have been oppressed, exploited, and impoverished by their own men. The novel ends openly with military intervention to overthrow the government which serves as a symbol for abolishment of the corrupt political

regime. However, it is also a sign of uncertainty of what the future is holding for Nigerians under the new military regime. Therefore, the coup takes leadership and makes its own path between two worlds, one of common people and the other of elites in a deep troubled country (Booker 145-148).

Palmer views that Achebe's novel *A Man of the People* is "a rare bird in the corpus of African novel." (72). It questions corruption in the newly emerging postcolonial Nigeria and African countries that experienced crises, contradictions and turmoil under corrupt systems that know very well how to deal with angry-hungry masses. This situation is described by Fanon as follows:

Keep the poor masses hungry for sometime and when they complain throw at them packets of food and generous words that will take them back to their initial stupor. Pacify the rich man and deceive the poor is a principle by which the politicians of the postcolonial world functions. (qtd. in Das 99)

Another example is Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* (1968) in which he is narrating how deep the Ghanaian society is corrupted during Nkrumah's government from ministers to lowliest clerks. Okolo argues that Armah is provoking a critical analysis of postcolonial Ghana and its ills that hinder any development through the use of powerful unusual imagery (31).

The protagonist is an anonymous hero called 'the man', who is struggling against bribery and temptations he faces everywhere in a one day journey. The novel is full of descriptions of old, dirty, filthy, dark, degrading, and decaying conditions in Ghana as a result of corruption and bribery practiced by members of society from all classes. Corrupt rulers have been educated by missionaries and prepared to be Elitists to pursuit the mission of their

former colonizer as Armah puts "There is no difference ... at all between the white men and their apes ... [the] Party men" (89).

Party man Koomson is one of the apes that symbolize corruption in Ghana. However, 'the man' is still resisting temptation and rejecting assimilation by avoiding materialistic life, the same position that Armah takes and that caused him problems with his family. In 1966, a military coup took place to overthrow Nkrumah. Consequently, chaos and fear spread everywhere and 'the man' became hopeless about the future (Wright).

Interestingly, when the protagonist arrives home, he found Koomson waiting to be rescued. 'The man' helps him escape through the Latrine- again as a sign of poor, filthy, and decayed conditions in Ghana and as a message for rulers that corruption is a self-repeating and self-renewing (Nnolim 83). This is described by Armah in the following words:

He [the man] could hear Koomson strain like a man excreting, then there was a long sound as if he were vomiting down there. But the man pushed some more, and in a moment a rush of foul air coming up told him the Party man's head was out...(168)

After the coup, military regime takes place and the man is about to pin hope on until he walks to work in the next morning and sees the driver of a new bus bribing the policeman. This ending brings the novel into the opening scene of bribery. On the back of a car that the policeman has stopped, a sentence written inside a flower "*The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*". The latter is the title of the novel with an unusual spelling of the word 'Beautiful' to mean evil in postcolonial Ghanaian society. Armah intends to use this word to mock those who are born beautiful but by engaging in filth, they destroy themselves and turn to be Beautiful (Shaban).

The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born describes how deep corruption is in postcolonial African countries. Ghana is an example of a state that is losing hope and sinking into socio-political problems. So, Armah uses of vulgar language to describe better the miserable social conditions that masses are living in as a consequence of being exploited and impoverished by corrupt rulers (Amuta).

Another outstanding postcolonial African committed writer that is worth to be mentioned is Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. As an essayist, playwright, and novelist, Ngũgĩ's writings are influenced by the turbulent atmosphere of African colonialism, independence, and post colonialism. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o joined the team of postcolonial African committed writers and remained concerned with the problems of his society despite the detention and exile that did not break his will, but made it stronger. He did not only describe the corrupt state of postcolonial Africa and Kenya, but also called for a violent revolutionary change through the use of variant literary techniques amidst the body's image in *Devil on the Cross*.

Conclusion

It has been shown throughout this chapter that the postcolonial period in Africa and specifically in Kenya represents another facet of colonialism. It is characterized by corruption and foreign dependency, the thing that hinders development and progress and causes rather underdevelopment and backwardness that can be embodied in poverty, hunger, epidemics, and ethnic conflicts. This bitter reality is best echoed in African literature by writers like Chinua Achebe, Ayi Kwei Armah and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o along with others. Ultimately, Ngũgĩ's *Devil on the Cross* (1966), with the technique of the image of the body he implies in, zooms better postcolonial Africa and Kenya that will be further discussed in the following chapters.

Chapter II

Devil on the Cross **Text in**
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Introduction

This chapter opens on Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's biography in order to show how his entourage affects his writings. Then it provides historical and literary context as well as the plot overview of *Devil on the Cross*. The novel is presented as a scathing criticism of the evil of corruption in Kenya in post-independence era through an artistic representation. Finally, it goes into the use of the image of the body in literature as a literary device both grotesquely and authentically.

1. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's Biography

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, originally James Ngũgĩ, was born in 1938 in Limuru, Kiambu district, North Nairobi, Kenya under British colonialism. He joined primary education in 1946 in missionary school and later in Karinga Independent Kikuyu School. After that, in 1954 and 1959, he entered Alliance High School and Makerere University College in Uganda respectively. By 1964 he received his B.A. from Makerere University and won scholarship for postgraduate studies, M.A at University of Leeds UK.

Ngũgĩ witnessed the brutality of the British colonizer towards the Mau Mau movement activists that started in 1952, as members of his family were tortured at Kamiriithu home guard because of his half brother engagement in Kenya Land and Freedom Army. The movement ended in 1963 and Kenya was declared independent. All of the above agitation of

colonialism, independence, and post independence disillusionment influenced and is still influencing Ngũgĩ as it is pictured in his writings; and that's why he has been acknowledged as foremost novelist of East Africa (Alemu 15).

The Kenyan writer was influenced by the Caribbean thinker Frantz Fanon's works and ideology, and the philosopher Karl Marx who advocated the fight against Capitalism and the support of the protests of the masses. Due to his Fanonist and Marxist embrace, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o became best known for his radical change that characterized both his personal life and literary career. He started to see Western culture and civilization including religion and languages as a sign of colonial influence and continued domination. Thus, he changed his name from 'James Ngũgĩ' to 'Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o' in 1977. Besides, he abandoned English as a linguistic medium and started to write only in the language of his ethnic group: Kikuyu. For him the one and only authentic voice for Africa is African-language literature as he applied his thoughts through writing only in Kikuyu or Kiswahili.

Ngũgĩ's works are full of socio-political criticism of post-colonial Kenya and Africa. In particular, *Ngaahika Ndeenda (I Will Marry When I Want 1977)* was his first play written in Kikuyu. Through this play Ngũgĩ passed an important message to the exploited masses by urging them to take arms and fight for their rights against Kenyan government. *Ngaahika Ndeenda (I Will Marry When I Want 1977)* was considered as a social threat and drowned Ngũgĩ in endless fights with corrupt government that imprisoned him for four years without trial in 1978.

After being freed, Ngũgĩ was harassed together with his family during Moi presidency and were obliged to live in exile for 22 years. After Moi was voted out of office in 2004, he returned to Kenya with his wife and they were monstrously assaulted in their home. The latter attack by some unknown politicians did not stop Ngũgĩ to carry on his pen to paper mission.

Ngũgĩ's criticism of colonial oppression and postcolonial corrupt Kenyan regime has gained as much admiration as well as support from people. As a rebel writer, he focuses on the role of the artist in giving moral directions for the masses to fight exploitation. In his works, Ngũgĩ has frequently focused on post-independence Kenyan politics, colonial and postcolonial exploitative regimes, and the suffering of the exploited Kenyan citizens. He says in an interview with Michael Pozo:

Like any artist, I am interested in human relationships and their quality. This is what I explore in my work. Human relationships do not occur in a vacuum. They develop in the context of ecology, economics, culture, and psyche. All these aspects of our society affect those relationships profoundly. These aspects are inseparable. They are connected. The most intimate is connected with the most earthly. As an artist, you examine the particulars to explore the interconnection of phenomena to open a window into the human soul. The material of life open out into spirituality of human life.

Accordingly, Ngũgĩ explores the interrelatedness of different phenomena to open out a gate into the spirituality of human life; more importantly, to make people see the truth and enlighten their paths.

Ngũgĩ proved to be a fearless revolutionary writer whose writings are committed to defend the people exploited by postcolonial regime in Kenya and Africa, and to call for revolutionary change throughout his books, essays, plays, and memoirs. Ngũgĩ's assumption is confirmed in his own words which he confessed in various occasions: "Fear not those who kill the flesh, but fear those who kill the spirit. They cannot kill my spirit even if they kill me as they have killed others, they will not kill the determination of this country to remain free." (qtd. in Alemu 6).

Ngũgĩ started his career with a play entitled *The Black Hermit* in 1962. Shortly after, he wrote his first novel *Weep Not Child* (1964) that was the first novel written in English by an East African writer. He carried on writing in English in *The River Between* (1965) that represented the Mau Mau rebellion context. A year after, a third novel was published *A Grain of Wheat* which marked his radicalization and divorce with both Christianity and English language. Yet, he wrote *Petals of Blood* in English in 1977 to show how harsh life in postcolonial Kenya was, and turned back to his mother tongue in the same year by writing his first play in Kikuyu *Ngaahika Ndeenda (I Will Marry When I Want 1977)* that unveiled corruption and call for revolution. The latter play led to his imprisonment where he wrote his first novel in Kikuyu *Caitani mutharaba-Ini (Devil on the Cross 1980)*, a work produced on toilet paper in Kamiti Maximum Security Prison. He carried on writing other essays, plays and novels that showed his determination and commitment; *Matigari* (1987) for instance focuses on the criticism of neo-colonialism and Kenyan corrupt society.

By publishing *Wizard of the Crow* (2006) that represents his endeavors to describe Africa of the 21st century, Ngũgĩ was harassed again but this time in a San Franciscan Hotel, USA. As a writer who suffered a lot, he did not find a haven safer than writing. His most recent works are a collection of essays *Something Torn and New: An African Renaissance* published in 2009, and two autobiographical works *Dreams in a Time of War: a Childhood Memoir* (2010) and *In the House of the Interpreter: A Memoir* (2012). Ngũgĩ is actually living in USA as a distinguished Professor of English and comparative literature at the University of California, Irvine.

Ngũgĩ makes of corruption and the need for revolution to free the exploited masses the main focus of *Petals of Blood* (1977), *Devil on the Cross* (1982), and *Matigari* (1987). In these novels, he brings out some forms of injustices and corrupt practices in the Kenyan society; a society where people's attempts for revolution are always silenced brutally. He

records instances of authority's merciless exploitation of the masses, portrays the sufferance of the Kenyans in the post-colonialist state, and their will for revolutionary change and freedom. The above themes are captured uniquely by Ngũgĩ throughout the use of different literary theories such as social realism and Marxism, and literary techniques such as the image of the body both grotesquely and authentically for the expressive scenes in postcolonial African literature.

In *Petals of Blood* (1977), Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o uses social realism to portray realistically the situation in postcolonial Kenya. He uses this technique as means to condemn the ruthless exploitation of the masses by those corrupt rulers in Kenya. He demonstrates and criticizes the impact of neo-colonialism on the workers whom Ngũgĩ considers as major agents in the movement towards independence. The novel depicts the abuse of human rights at all levels. Among peasants, for example, Ngũgĩ presents oppression at its worst where a whole family is paid only a hundred shillings for its labor.

Moreover, one of the companies is obliging workers to abandon their lands and ordering the rest to stop planting food crops and to grow sugar that record low revenues. Consequently, poor workers become poorer. In addition, trade union failed to serve the poor workers because of their corrupt leadership composition. Accordingly, revolution was the only solution to fight corruption as workers decided to surround the city and ask for their share. However, they were detained and treated brutally (Addei et al. 164-171).

In *Devil on the Cross* Ngũgĩ uses artistically both the grotesque and the authentic image of the body to portray corruption and revolution respectively. Corrupt rulers are depicted in very ugly disgusting bodies. However, the revolutionary figures are captured in very beautiful idealistic bodies.

Through the use of these literary techniques, the writer aims at drawing a real picture of the ills and injustices in postcolonial Kenyan and African societies. Furthermore, Ngũgĩ wants to make the reader closer to the postcolonial situation and convey appropriately the message to the people for a better enlightenment and decolonization of the mind.

2. *Devil on the Cross*: Text in Context

2.1. Historical and Literary Context

Devil on the Cross is Ngũgĩ's first book written in 'Kikuyu' in 1980 as *Caitani Mutharaba-ini*, and later translated into English in 1982. It is a landmark in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's life and career. What makes it unique is its birth in detention in one of the largest prisons in postcolonial Africa, the Kamiti Maximum Security Prison. *Devil on the Cross* was written "with blood, sweat and toil" on toilet paper (Ngũgĩ 3); the writer explains that he devoted himself to a hard task by writing to Kenyan people who are struggling against the neo-colonial form and stage of imperialism¹⁶ (8).

Ogude highlights that *Devil on the Cross* demonstrates the enactment of violence through the capture and isolation of the body under the pretense of the public security order basically inherited from the colonial system (4). As it belongs to the postcolonial literary movement (1950's- 1990's), the novel stands as a challenge and resistance to the post-colonial Kenyan compradors¹⁷ that put the writer in detention to turn his mind "into a mess or rot" (Ngũgĩ 10).

As a matter of fact, the book helped Ngũgĩ to keep his sanity because by writing it, he refused to join the dictated exploitation and violence by which the post-Kenyan system usually silences brutally all its opponents. Hence, for Ngũgĩ the novel becomes his peaceful

weapon for preserving his body and soul, as well as for overcoming the state of fragmentation imposed by the system (Ngũgĩ 10).

What Ngũgĩ and post-colonialist writers in general are doing during the postcolonial literary movement is as significant as what fighters for independence did during colonialism. Eventually, they take the mission of erasing wrong assumptions and enlightening the minds of the masses from the evils that colonialism has implanted in and struggle to reform their societies. So, the battlefields of postcolonial writers are the minds as it is time to tell the real story of Kenya and Africa (“Decolonization Struggles”).

Simply put, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s *Devil on the Cross* is a satirical novel that portrays corruption, racial discrimination, and social injustice in postcolonial Kenya, practiced by the common core of the Kenyan ruling class and the capitalist bourgeoisie. Furthermore, it pictures struggle, critical thought, courageous action and even revolution against the post-independence ills by enlighteners and patriots of mother Kenya in order to re-assert the identity and the indigenous culture.

2.2. Plot Overview

Written in Kikuyu, the author dedicates the book “To all Kenyans struggling against the neo-colonial stage of imperialism”. Even after its translation to English by the same writer, the book is still condensed with Africanity in terms of orality, names, traditions, symbols, and idioms. Thus, *Devil on the Cross* is an African piece of art by excellence.

Devil on the Cross opens on a devastated and disillusioned young woman, Warĩnga, who has lost both her job and boyfriend and tried to commit suicide to flee modern Kenya. Just before at school, Warĩnga has always seen, in her nightmares, the devil being crucified

instead of Jesus. Warĩinga as a modern woman is fired from her secretarial work after rejecting advances from her boss Kihara. Unfortunately, after telling the story to her lover, John Kimwana, he doubts and then jilts her. Since then, the problems start with Warĩinga who can no more afford the rent and is evicted from her shack. As a solution, she decides to head back to her village, Ilmorog. Swept off by her thoughts, Warĩinga faints in the middle of the road in high traffic. Fortunately, a young good man comes and saves her. It is here that Warĩinga receives a card invitation to the Devil's Feast which takes place in Ilmorog, her home town and actual destination.

On the way to Ilmorog, Warĩinga joins a Matatũ taxi driver, Mwaura, with other travelers, Mũturi, Gatũiria, Wangarĩ and Mwieri wa Mukirai. Through this journey, the truth of most of the passengers is revealed. First, the taxi driver Mwaura is a greedy person who worships money and his lust for wealth made him kill hundreds of innocents during the emergency. Second, Mũturi is a former worker at Champion Construction Company who loved his country a lot and sees the evils but needs courage and company to act. Third, Wangarĩ is an aged patriot woman who devoted her life to the struggle for a new Kenya. Yet, the state of the new Kenya disappointed her. Fourth, Gatũiria is the son of a wealthy man but he is disowned because he did not study Business as his father ordered him. Instead, he chose to study arts and works in music with the will to compose a national Kenyan song using Kenya's own instruments.

All passengers make their way to Ilmorog discussing many political and social issues such as: Nairobi, the Mau Mau, and the modern Harambee. At last, the protagonist, Warĩinga, discovers that they are all mysteriously invited to a Devil's Feast, where thieves and robbers of Kenya will compete for the election of the seven professional and cleverest thieves and robbers.

The patriots Wangarĩ, Mũturi, Warĩinga and Gatũiria seem to share the same vision about who are those thieves and robbers and what should be done to them. Hence, they find each other to finally consolidate and act. However, Mwereri wa Mkiraai has a different point of view saying that those thieves and robbers are modern heroes. In the Devil's Feast competitors as Ndaaye wa Kahuiria, Gĩtutu wa Gataangũrũ, Kĩhaahu wa Gatheeca, Mwireri wa Mukiraai, Nditika wa Nguunji, and Kĩmendeeri wa Kanyuanjii come forward to show everybody how they have engaged in this game of modern theft and robbery.

These seven representatives are the compradors of powers indulging in the wicked corrupt, embezzled, bribed, illegal practices. Each one puts on shirts made of paper money of their respective homelands and reveals his grabbing of the Kenyan economy. They take away all that is for all Kenyans by swallowing the natural resources of mother Kenya and exploiting of workers and peasants. In sum, they deprive the masses from their rights at the expense of personal wealth and interest.

Once in the cave, Mũturi and Wangarĩ decide to revolt and put an end to the Devil's Feast by sharing the mission. On the one hand, Wangarĩ goes to invite the police to the cave to arrest robbers and thieves who are exploiting the masses. However, to her surprise, she discovers that the police are the servants of one class only, the compradors class. Consequently, she has been accused of threatening stability, chained, and led out by the police to the prison.

On the other hand, Mũturi chooses another path; he gathers the oppressed masses of peasants, workers, and students and tries to enlighten them. At the end, he succeeds in mobilizing a mammoth sized crowd ending bitterly the Devil's Feast that witnesses a very ironic fled of the robbers and thieves and announces an honorable victory. Yet, the victory

dance has not last long; the police and the military invade the gathering and arrests Mūturi and the leader and places them under detention at an unknown place.

Warĩnga and Gatũiria are silent watchers at the scene, but rebellious thinkers and later actors. The experience at the Devil's Feast makes them fall for each other, opens their minds, shapes their personality, pushes them towards success, and strengthens their will for revolt and change. Warĩnga returns to school, studies engineering course as the only girl in a promotion of boys, pays her way through the course by working part time as a mechanic. More importantly, she who used to hate her blackness has restructured with herself. She is no longer ashamed of her Africanity. On the contrary, she is proud of it and shows it through her outfits as if she is saying 'No' to imperialism, which is an act of revolt.

Gatũiria on his own scores finally a classic music, telling the story of Kenya full of authentic lyrics and played with Kenyan instruments. As Kenyan traditions necessitate, Gatũiria plans to introduce Warĩnga to his parents to have their blessing. Surprisingly, Warĩnga's shock is indescribable after finding that the Old Rich Man is her future father-in-law. The latter is the one who has exploited her during her adolescence, impregnated her, and then left her destroyed. He is the same father of her girl Wambũi and the father of her lover Gatũiria.

The Old Rich Man starts begging Warĩnga to leave his son, be his flower again, and save his name and family. As for him, he would give her anything that she would desire except marriage. Per contra, if she refuses she would lose everything even her life. Warĩnga already decides to put an end to the exploitation of her mind and body. She takes the gun that Mūturi handed her after the Devil's Feast, the secret that she holds with her everywhere she goes, and in a blank of an eye she shoots the Old Rich Man, leaving him dead, and taking her revenge. As she walks out, she meets with two of the robbers and thieves that competed in the

Devil's Feast two years earlier, and shoots them. Warĩinga walks confidently knowing that many things are coming and that the war has just started.

Throughout the novel we can notice that the writer is trying to portray nothing but the bitter truth of the corrupt situation in post-colonial Kenya. At the same time, he is suggesting a revolt against these unethical practices. The technique Ngũgĩ uses to portray corruption and revolution in *Devil on the Cross* is known as the image of the body. The latter is explained in the following section.

3. The Use of the Image of the Body in Literature

Body Image in general, as put by Cash, is “the multifaceted psychological experience of embodiment, especially but not exclusively ones’ physical appearance.” (1). That is to say, one can have a beautiful body appearance but murderous deeds. The latter can be seen as evil by others because they have perceived him psychologically and not bodily and vice versa (Acevedo).

For instance, in European literature, precisely during the second half of nineteenth century, the image of women with long thick hair reflected their femininity, sexuality and passion (Yavneh 136). However, the women’s hair could turn to be an agent of damage itself, like in myth Medusa with an overload of compensatory phallic snakes instead of hair. Her phallic hair caused fear and threat in men’s souls as she used it to gain power and privilege which were once in males’ hand (Kegan).

Accordingly, Ofek notes that there are two body’s images in literature: authentic and grotesque. The first image about women is an authentic body image that shows how women were seen full of femininity at that time. On the contrary, the second image is a grotesque

body image that shows how some women, at the same time, were full of evil and lust for power.

3.1. The Grotesque Image of the Body

For Baldick, the Grotesque is both an artistic and literary technique that ranges a number of several qualities. It aims at presenting distorted and deformed images of the body in an exaggerated way sometimes to be funny and other times to be frightening. Thus, it is a hesitation between horror and comedy. According to the Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms, the grotesque is characterized by the bizarre distortions, especially in the exaggerated or abnormal depiction of human features.

In literature, the grotesque focuses on human body and how it can be misshaped in humorous or scary way. Its main aim is to elicit empathy and disgust simultaneously. The grotesque bases its creativity on the unfamiliar, unreal, fantastic, and imaginary (Gremlin). One example of the literature of grotesque to be mentioned is *The Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka of a man who one day wakes up and finds himself transformed into a person-sized insect. Another example is *The Nose* by Nikolai Gogol which turns round a man whose nose ran away and walked around Russia in a police outfit ending up arresting his owner. Both works involve freakish caricatures of people appearance and behavior (Czachesz 207-230).

Terminologically, grotesque is traced back to the 1500's after the discovery of fantastical hybrid images in the excavation of Nero's *Damus Aurea* outside Rome. The images were located in caves underground 'grottoes', but soon this naming had been attributed to the paintings themselves. What attracted attention is that in one painting there was a fusion of humans, animals, and vegetables (Czachesz 207-230). The walls of these

rooms were decorated with “graceful fantasies, anatomical impossibilities, extraordinary excrescences, human heads and torsos” (qtd. in Seim and Økland 207).

Gremlin Grinning explains that the drawers of these paintings were not respecting the norms of art at that time. Therefore, Italians viewed them with disgust considering them to be vulgar and comic art, and that’s why the modern conception of the grotesque is either disgusting or funny.

The term grotesque was first used in literature in the sixteenth century in France but it has not been used regularly until the eighteenth century, during the Age of Reason, when it was used for satire and caricatures since anything exaggerated was considered to be comic. The use of the term in the eighteenth century is different from its use in the nineteenth century and so is the case for its present use (Gremlin). Two central works that discussed the topic deeply in the 1960’s are Mikhail Bakhtin’s *Rabelais and his World* 1962, and Wolfgang Kayser’s *The Grottesque in Art and Literature* 1963.

For Bakhtin, a Russian scholar and critic, the grotesque image of the body is essentially a degraded one. Degradation is the lowering of all that is high, spiritual, ideal, abstract, and transfer it to the material level. The emphasis is put mainly on parts of the body that are open to the outside world like the open mouth and the potbelly; that is to show that the body is considered as pure while the outside world is not. Thus, parts of the body that permit elements inside the body out are seen and used as an exaggeration of the grotesque. Bakhtin redeems the grotesque image of the body as the dominant tradition of the nineteenth century and as a specific genre on its own; exaggeration, hyperbolism, excessiveness are generally considered fundamental elements of the grotesque style that he sees as a comic art (29).

However, Wolfgang Kayser, a German scholar and critic, studied the term both through critical evaluation and aesthetic analysis concluding that the grotesque is the expression of the alienated world. In other words, the familiar world is seen from a strange perspective that can be either comic, terrifying, or both. Thus, he introduced the grotesque as an anti-world horrifically turned upside down, with “human bodies reduced to puppets, marionettes, and automata, and their faces frozen into masks” (183). For Kayser, animism¹⁸ is a basic grotesque technique. He argued that people have a deep fear of human-like objects such as puppets which he considers as a source of fear and a loss of substance in the world.

Moreover, Philip Thomson argues that a classic experience of the grotesque is “the experience of amusement and disgust, laughter and horror, mirth and revulsion, simultaneously” (25). He went further to give the different variations of the grotesque as it can be terrifying, comic, abnormal, satiric, playful, extravagant, or exaggerated. These variations evoke different reactions for the reader some will find delight in the unusual, while others will condemn it as offensive. The grotesque can be disturbing and comical at the same time.

3.2. The Authentic Image of the Body

Calman claims that the ideals of beauty in a body are influenced by cultural and societal norms. Some can perceive the body as to be perfect while others can see the same body as the reverse. What matters most is not how people are seeing it, but being authentic- i.e., original and genuine. Many artists were interested in describing bodies authentically so that to keep an idea for the future generations of how their society norms used to be. Writers, precisely traveler writers, insisted on the faithful and authentic description of characters in their narratives so that to show how a culture can affect the body shape and clothing.

The best example about how the use of the authentic image of the body describes a specific era, culture, and society can be seen in the Victorian age. During it, social rules and guidelines about how the female body should look and be dressed like were established firmly in addition to many other rules and codes of femininity and social belongings (Aspinall).

For instance, different representations of the hair in the Victorian culture hold a symbolic meaning since strict rules were dictated on how the hair should be worn. Many writers described women's hair with considerable detailed characteristics from length, texture, color, style, and curliness. This fascination was related to its constant display in comparison to other parts of the body-except the face. How the hair is worn shows the social class of women, a woman with loose hair is a depraved woman, with bound hair is a married woman, with covered hair is a genteel woman, and with long thick hair is a passionate woman full of femininity (Aspinall).

Another rule with symbolic meaning was the women's waists during that era. The majority of women wore corsets on a regular basis to have an ideal feminine shape with a wasp waist. The obtained silhouette reflected a delicate femininity, appetite's self-regulation, high social standing, and guaranteed virginity; all of which were idealized by Victorian man (Erkal 109)

Moreover, Aspinall agrees that fashion enslaved women at that time since none was allowed to wear dresses, such as open short colorful dresses, that were not allowed by regularities of the era or did not reflect her social class. He illustrates by referring to the nineteenth century, where many writers were using the above images in their popular novels to describe the authentic image of the body like Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), and *Persuasion* (1817); Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* (1847); and Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* (1850).

Candelaria explains that the use of the authentic image of the body in art started in painting and sculpture by the Greeks around the 5th century BC. Painters and sculptors attempt to glorify heroes or to embody people of unusual beauty by producing authentic pieces of art. Later, the authentic image of the body was introduced to literature with the same above aims. Besides, it was meant to describe society and culture. Sometimes, the authentic image of the body is used appropriately by having the writer describing it objectively. However in some other times, it is used in an exaggerated way by hiding reality. The aim behind exaggeration is the pride and subjectivity if not megalomania of the writers.

In a nutshell, some images of the body are contaminated by ethnical, cultural, gender, class, and racial stereotypes that dictate whether bodies are beautiful or ugly (Siebers). Due to the influence of colonialism in Africa, there is the belief that the black race is the inferior ugliest race. Thus, many Africans give up their culture and traditions and imitate the white race's clothing, etiquettes, and governing system. Since society is better echoed in literature, Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o in his novel *Devil on the Cross* uses both images of the body: Grotesque and Authentic. The grotesque image of the body is used to portray corruption practiced by oppressors in Postcolonial Kenya and Africa. However, the authentic one is used to show how some Kenyans and Africans are fighting these corruptors to gain real independence and to restore their lost identity and culture.

Conclusion

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's biography shows that he is a committed writer who devotes himself to describe socio-political problems in Kenya as well as in Africa. One of his outstanding works is *Devil on the Cross*, a satirical novel in which he pictures the corrupt practices in postcolonial Kenya and the need to fight it through revolution. The final section

moreover sheds light on the use of the image of the body in literature in order to pave the way for the following chapter which will attempt to show how and why Ngũgĩ in *Devil on the Cross* uses both the grotesque and authentic images of the body to describe his society and to call for revolution respectively.

Chapter III

The Use of the Grotesque

Image of the Body and the

Authentic Image of the Body

in Devil on the Cross

Chapter III

The Use of the Grotesque Image of the Body and the Authentic Image of the Body in

Devil on the Cross

Introduction

This chapter shows how Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o in *Devil on the Cross* relies on the image of the body to examine and criticize the corrupt conditions in postcolonial Kenya by means of grotesque description. It also demonstrates that he does not remain at sidelines and calls for revolting against the ill situation by means of authentic description. Focus is placed on how Ngũgĩ uses extraordinary deformed images, especially at the level of the mouth and belly of the compradors, to allude to their corrupt nature on the one hand; and how he uses African authentic pictures to show how some people are proud of their Africanity, aware of the illegal practices, and ready to start revolution on the other hand. In addition, this chapter tries to explain why Ngũgĩ uses specifically this literary technique in *Devil on the Cross*.

1. The Grotesque Image of Body to Portray Corruption

Ngũgĩ attributes the grotesque image to the local thieves at the cave and the devil in Warĩnga's nightmare by shedding light on their bellies and mouths. He displays them in degraded and deformed shapes to draw the image of lust for wealth, power and corruption practiced on people. The 'comprador' class is conveyed satirically by Ngũgĩ who doubts their borrowed power, and captures it in a graphic description of the devil and the thieves especially Gĩtutu, Nditika, Kĩhaahu, Kĩmendeeri.

1.1. The Devil on the Cross

Ngũgĩ writes in *Devil on the Cross*¹⁹ that “The Devil, who would lead us into blindness of the heart and into the deafness of the mind, should be crucified” (7). Therefore, the title *Devil on the Cross* is clearly manifested in Warĩinga’s nightmare in which she saw how the Devil of the white colonialist is crucified by the masses: “Near the Cross he began to tremble and turned his eyes towards the darkness, as if his eyes were being seared by the light. He moaned, beseeching the people not to crucify him, swearing that he and all his followers would never again build Hell for the people on Earth” (13).

The Devil is a reference to political independence that is rescued by the local comprador. Importantly, his shape has been degraded in a very specific way to pass a clear message: he “had two mouths, one on his forehead and the other at the back of his head. His belly sagged, as if it were about to give birth to all evils of the world. His skin was red, like that of a pig” (13). This devil’s grotesque image is used to show that he is ready to bribe, cheat, and even kill to swallow as much wealth and gain as much power. Thus, two mouths are better than one, and a big sagged belly to keep safe the stolen treasure.

Consequently, the Devil has granted the same image to those “dressed in suits and ties” who saved him, and turn to be subservient to his interests since “they knelt before him, and they prayed to him in loud voices, beseeching him to give them a portion of his robes of cunning” (13). So, the devil rewards his saviors after they prayed him by fattening their bellies, “And their bellies began to swell, and they stood up, and they walked towards Warĩinga, laughing at her, stroking their large bellies, which have now inherited all the evils of this world....”(14). Surprisingly, Warĩinga’s nightmare becomes true when a “Devil’s Feast” is arranged by the local “Thieves” to commemorate a visit by foreign guests

“particularly from America, England, Germany, France, Italy, Sweden, and Japan” as part of “The International Organization of Thieves and Robbers” (78).

1.2. The Thieves

The Thieves are compradors who saved the Devil and prayed him to get a portion of his cunning for better oppressing methods over the masses. As a consequence, their bodies get deformed as the Devil’s is. The following thieves are the best, the expert, and the cleverest competitors in “The Devil’s Feast” competition in modern theft and robbery.

1.2.1. Gītutu wa Gataangūrū

Gītutu is a dull court clerk in the state of emergency, and the son of a loyalist who “grabbed other people’s land without fear and became a big landowner” (101). Later, he becomes like his father “the young of a goat steals like its mother”, from whom he inherited three things: “literacy, words of wisdom from his mouth, and the letters he used to get from his European friends” (101). After mastering “a man-eat-man society” commandments, and following his father’s words: “A career of theft and robbery is the only one for anybody who calls himself an adult” (102); he becomes a big landowner and billionaire. Gītutu is one of the best illustrations that show Ngũgĩ’s satirical attack against the ruling comprador bourgeoisie.

The selection of the name ‘Gītutu wa Gataangūrū’ reflects a deep meaning in its community readers. In Kikuyu, ‘Gītutu’ refers to a ‘big jigger’; while ‘Gataangūrū’ refers to “a belly infested with tapeworms which produce a bloating effect” (Ndīgīrīgī 195). Therefore, Kikuyu readers will imagine the body’s grotesque image of Gītutu before reaching its

description. In the novel *Devil on the Cross*, Gītutu's physical shape appears like the graphic illustration of the jigger:

Gītutu had a belly that protruded so far that it would have touched the ground had it not been supported by the braces that held up his trousers. It seemed as if his belly had absorbed all his limbs and all the other organs of his body. Gītutu had no neck at least, his neck was not visible. His arms and legs were short stumps. His head had shrunk to the size of a fist. (99)

This description demonstrates Gītutu's human body in an act of becoming another body: "it is continually built, created, and builds and [it in turn] creates another body" (Bakhtin 317). It is a body that, figuratively speaking, devours the world; a monster like in a typical grotesque hyperbole. His belly is about to have all human functions and threatens to separate itself from the body and lead an independent life. Obviously, Gītutu's body transgresses itself. His neck, arms, legs and head have been metamorphosed into a grotesque animal shape; it is, as Bakhtin states, "a phenomenon in transformation, an as yet unfinished metamorphosis, of death and birth, growth, and becoming" (29).

The physical features of Gītutu- 'tiny head', 'pot-belly', and 'short limbs'-are placed in complete juxtaposition to the physical features of a jigger. But if we dig deeper, the above features do not underline the shape of jiggers more than their parasitical nature. Hence, Gītutu represents the parasitism of the ruling class in the post-colonial state. He believes that "cunning was more profitable than hard work" and "hunger multiplied by thirst brings about mass famine, and mass famine is the source of the wealth of a cunning grabber" (Ngũgĩ 103-105).

Gītutu uses the lives of workers and peasants as his host that he exploits; which is in his basic trait as a jigger or parasite that does not produce, but lives on the best that others

produce. Figuratively, therefore, Gĩtutu’s size is resulted from the exploitation of the people and feeding on their ground flesh. This expounds Gĩtutu’s plans of selling land in pots and tins to the poor, plans that are meant to exploit the people’s quest for land. Nevertheless, he gains the love of those people as he is seen “a child imbued with love of the people” (105).

Furthermore, Gĩtutu’s hands have almost disappeared because he has no work to do: “Today I saunter down smooth, wide avenues, one without thorns, or stones, or sweat. Can’t you see that my hands have almost disappeared?”. Moreover, his “belly is becoming larger and larger because it is constantly overworked” (100). Satirically, he confesses that he spends more time eating than working and his body-precisely his belly-has become a 'wasteland' or a 'shitland' as his name invokes: the appropriate breeding place for tapeworms.

Gĩtutu does not stop at gaining money from the pocket of people through buying and selling tins and pots of soil. He goes further on greedy plans to trap the air and deny it for people so that they will spend whatever money to get it. It can be deduced that Ngũgĩ portrays the body of “the king of thieves and robbers”, “the king of kings in the kingdom of cunning” (108) in a very ugly and distorted image, to a shocking degree, to show people how corrupt the post-colonial compradors are.

1.2.2. Nditika wa Ngũn̄nji

Nditika is a former loyalist who becomes an insider-dealer and an overseas smuggler. He is another comprador whom Ngũgĩ ridiculed in the novel. Nditika has not even finished his primary school; however with money, he is employing arts graduates as his clerks. For him acquiring “International experience in the art of stealing” is far better than having an Oxford degree. Nditika wa Ngũn̄nji mocks shamelessly the people who fought for Kenya’s freedom because they end up working the land for few shillings. He justifies his position by

claiming that both him and they “fought for freedom in different ways, for different sides” (177).

His name ‘Nditika’ refers to one who carries heavy burdens and ‘Ngũn̄nji’ refers to one who folds. Combined, the two names refer to an essentially indelicate and indiscriminate character who carries anything and everything, one who selfishly keeps to himself anything he acquires (Ndĩgĩrĩgĩ 194). In the novel, Nditika is delineated by Ngũgĩ as follows:

Nditika wa Ngũn̄nji was very fat. His head was huge, like a mountain. His belly hung over his belt, big and arrogant. His eyes were the size of two large red electric bulbs, and it looked as if they had been placed on his face by a Creator impatient to get on with another job. His hair was parted in the middle, so that the hair on either side of the parting looked like two ridges facing each other on either side of a tarmac road. (176)

The previous passage demonstrates Ngũgĩ excessiveness in portraying Nditika’s body in a degraded exaggerated way. Significantly, the belly is deformed to show Nditika’s implied eating habits, as he confesses: “I can never get enough of food” (176). These habits are the defining characteristic of the pro-colonial type due to material well-being. Nditika’s huge size emphasizes his acquisitive inclination and implies a tasteless, avid eater.

Additionally, Nditika takes up another sphere of exploitation applying “The Holy Trinity of theft: Grabbing, Extortion, and Confiscation” (177). He is concerned with business in promiscuous manner that spread out over hoarding, smuggling, poaching, and export and import; as well as the goods, and hikes up the prices of basic commodities through black market. These corrupt practices betone the exploitation of the African masses by the African imperialists; “if you find anything belonging to the masses, don’t leave it behind” (177).

Moreover, Nditika shows steepness toward monstrosity, which raises his deformity as a sufficient sign of elite greed. He argues for spare human parts because he is not satisfied with having ordinary organs like those of the poor. He wants additional organs to be noticeable from the poor, “So, seeing that I have only one mouth, one belly, one heart, one life and one cock, what's the difference between the rich and the poor? What's the point of robbing others?”, in time that he has “enough money to buy fifty lives if lives were sold in the market” (180). As a consequence, he utters loudly for having a factory of human organs producing as it is stated in the novel:

It was revealed to me that ... we should have a factory for manufacturing human parts.... This would mean that a rich man who could afford them could have two or three mouths, two bellies, two cocks and two hearts. If the first mouth became tired of chewing, and his belly could hold no more, then the spare mouth and belly could take over.... We could coin some new sayings: a rich man's youth never ends..... a rich man never dies. (180)

Nditika wants a world that would allow the few rich to ensure their immortality through the purchase of spare organs of the human body, thus leaving death as the sole prerogative of the poor (180). The few rich feel advantage to have additional human parts as a result of neo-colonial patronage. Ngũgĩ succeeds in portraying the future corrupters’ bodies, with additional organs to guarantee the swallowing of the masses money, in a grotesque image.

1.2.3. Kīhaahu wa Gatheeca

Kīhaahu is a former Primary School teacher who becomes a school owner, then ascends the social ladder to become a County Councilor and a politician after series of

bribery, kidnap and threat. He represents another illustration of Ngũgĩ's criticism of the ruling comprador bourgeoisie. He plays first on people thirst for education that "oppressed the masses". Hence, he makes big profits without shedding "a single drop of sweat or swallowing" any dust from chalk and dusters" (111-113). After, he discovers a strongest thirst "People's thirst for houses", he takes a vow to "never abandon theft and robbery that is based on housing" for "there's nothing on this Earth that generates as much profit as people's hunger and thirst for shelter" (116-118).

Kĩhaahu's name refers to "the one who scares" and Gatheeca stands for "the one who pierces". Kĩhaahu might be derived from the Kikuyu name for the kingstock (Ndīgĩrĩgĩ 194). Ngũgĩ uses this cultural aspect in his ironic description to Kĩhaahu in the novel as follows:

Kĩhaahu was a tall, slim fellow: he had long legs, long arms, long fingers, a long neck and a long mouth. His mouth was shaped like the beak of the kingstock: long, thin and sharp. His chin, his face, his head formed a cone. Everything about him indicated leanness and sharp cunning. That day, Kĩhaahu was dressed in black-and-grey striped trousers, a black tailcoat, a white shirt and a black tie. Standing on the platform, he looked like a 6-foot praying mantis or mosquito. (108)

This delineation points out how grotesque hyperbolism is used to mock the different parts of Kĩhaahu's body. It demonstrates how each part of his body is described in an exaggerated way to show his tallness and leanness, "tallness is not a misfortune, and a hero is not known by the size of his calves" (109). Significantly, Kĩhaahu's mouth is compared to the beak of the kingstock bird, a very tall long-legged bird with a heavy bill; known for its rigid stance and as a tyrant flycatcher (Koussouhon and Amoussou 283). Kĩhaahu's individualism

is emphasized by this image and confirmed through the Kikuyu proverb that says, “A bird that has a beak does not pick up grains for another” (Ndīgīrīgī 194).

Of equal importance, Kīhaahu advocates active support of neo-colonialism. With all his cunning and wealth, Kīhaahu pictures that the pinnacle of his achievement would be in becoming a conveyor belt for international finance capital. Kīhaahu’s endorsement of neo-colonialism is shown to underscore his then implicit pro-colonial sympathies.

Kīhaahu is shown in the novel as an anti-democratic “democracy is nonsense” (117), and a representative of the individualism of the local bourgeoisie “watchdogs over other watchdogs” (109). He amasses his fortune largely from breaking ranks and taking advantage of members of his own class to whom he is grateful for “their blindness, their ignorance, their inability to demand their rights” (117). His practices are largely predatory and carnivorous, qualities that are invoked at by his names and in his confessions “man-eater” (117), and in his grotesque body’s image put by Ngūgī.

1.2.4. Kīmendeeri wa Kanyuanjii

Kīmendeeri becomes a Permanent Secretary after climbing the administrative ladder during independence. However during colonialism, he was a District Officer (D.O.) who used to be an active and cruel enforcer of colonial laws. This is indicated by the violence implied in both the sound and the meaning of his name as Kīmendeeri refers to as “the one who smashes or grinds” (qtd. in Ndīgīrīgī 195). In the novel, Ngūgī explains that Kīmendeeri was given the name during the emergency “because of the way he used to grind workers and peasants to death.... He used to make men and women lie flat on the ground in a row, and then he would drive his Land Rover over their bodies” (187). In the novel, Ngūgī contrasts this brutality with

an ironical description of Kĩmendeeri's body in an attempt to deform local compradors' image. He delineates him as follows:

Kĩmendeeri wa Kanyuanjii's mouth is shaped like the beak of the red-billed ox-pecker, the tick bird. His cheeks are as smooth as a new-born baby. His legs are huge and shapeless, like giant banana stems or the legs of someone who is suffering from elephantiasis. But his disease simply the grossness that comes from over-eating. His neck is formed from rolls of fat, like the skin of the hairy maggot. But this astonishing body, these legs and neck, have been completely covered by a white suit and a bow tie. (186)

The above description demonstrates how Ngũgĩ uses grotesque hyperbolism to ridicule different parts of Kĩmendeeri's body, and show each delineated part in an exaggerated way to accentuate the distortion of his physical features. The aim behind the deformation is to present a monstrous nature of Kĩmendeeri. This accounts for Gatũiria's short description of him, as he describes, "Kĩmendeeri wa Kanyuanjii was certainly there, but it was difficult to tell whether he was a human being or a fat, hairy worm with a beak" (196). Importantly, his mouth is formed like the beak of the red-billed ox-pecker- the tick bird who catches the insects that disturb the mammals' hooves, to allude to Kĩmendeeri's inclination toward blood and cannibalism.

As the Voice tells Warĩnga in the novel, Kĩmendeeri intends to poison and wash the brains of the masses through "the churches, the schools, the poetry, the songs, the cinema, the beer halls, the clubs, and the newspapers"(189); in which they will be shown "only two worlds, that of the eater and that of the eaten" and will be convinced that "the system of drinking human blood and eating human flesh has always held sway since the world was created and will always hold sway until the end of the world, and that there is nothing people

can do to put an end to the system” (188-189). In this instance, Kĩmendeeri advocates that the practice of drinking human blood and eating human flesh is deeply rooted in history and will prolong till the end of the world. Also, he undermines any attempt from the part of people to end it.

Kĩmendeeri’s predatory nature is accentuated in his call for a scientific basis and outline to the art of modern theft and robbery, which largely lies on the “drinking of the blood of the workers, milking of their sweat, devouring of their brain” (187). He wishes to invest these ideas in setting up a research farm. He intends to “fence off the farm with barbed wire” (187), just like the one used during the state of Emergency in colonial Kenya. He wants to “pen the workers in there like animals. He will then fix electrically operated machines to their bodies “for milking their sweat or the energy that produces the sweat, their blood and brains” (187). These three commodities need to be exported to foreign countries to feed industries there. Evidently, he plans to own the company that will handle the exportation operation and to call it “Kenyo-Saxon Exporters: Human Blood and Flesh” (187).

2. The Implication of the Grotesque Image of the body

In *Devil on the Cross*, corruption and moral degradation are denoted through the grotesque image of the body. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o uses this literary device to lower all what is high from spirituals, ideals, and abstracts, and transfer it to the material level. Specifically, degradation includes parody and other forms of discourse which ‘brings down to earth’ authoritarian elite through mocking them. If the objective of the regime is to break Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o and to reshape his body, in *Devil on the Cross*, he turns this endeavor upside down. Instead, it is to the depraved body of the postcolonial system loaded by its ‘impotence’, that Ngũgĩ orients the reader laughter by making it a subject of mockery.

Ngũgĩ uses the grotesque image of the body to envisage corrupt postcolonial Kenya and Africa to the reader. He implies different images that are stronger than abstract words. These images most often embody degradation, exaggerations, and a fusion of incompatible parts in a non harmonious way within one body. His major aim is to approach the audience, the Kenyan and African masses, through embodiment and simplification. He wants to stir in the reader feelings of disgust, ridicule, and laughter through associating corruption and moral degradation to the impure parts of the body that are exposed to the outer world.

Devil on the Cross is an 'experimental novel' in which Ngũgĩ targets communication with Kenya's underprivileged majority. He employs aspects of Kikuyu oral tradition, which are plentiful with stories about ogres so as to reach a mass audience. In one of Kikuyu Folktales, Ngumbu Njururi records several tales about "the one-legged, two-mouthed cannibalistic ogres of East African tales" (qtd. in Kabir 23).

Ngũgĩ creates his ogre-like characters through the use of the grotesque body's image in order to draw attention to their predatory nature. For instance, wherever the middle-class bourgeoisie are mentioned in the novel, eating, swallowing, dominating, devouring, violation, and devastation are always emphasized. They are represented as sharks always in a state of "ravenous greed" (175). Their high incentive for both food and women corresponds with their insatiable lust for the material advantages they extract from the economic exploitation of the Kenyan masses. As the exploitation is seen in relation to the "drinking of blood of workers... milking of their sweat [and] devouring of their brains" (187), it is no surprise that the Kenyan bourgeoisie should also be depicted as a class of flesh eaters and blood drinkers who resulted in physical and emotional wounds on the weak masses with total impunity.

Ngũgĩ in the novel is asking the Kenyan masses to compare the middle-class elite with the "one-eyed ogres" (37) in Kikuyu folktales. Particularly, only when Kenyan masses

compare, they would then see the crimes of the corrupt thieves, who are as cruel as the ogres. Thus, they will courageously attempt to fulfill their socio-political struggle.

Depending on the grotesque image of the body, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o could examine and censure the corrupt conditions of postcolonial Kenya by means of graphic description. Deformed images of the compradors are provided to allude to their corrupt nature. He introduced them as thieves attributing to them ogre-like features especially at the level of the mouth and the belly.

3. The Authentic Image of the Body to Portray Revolution

As Ngũgĩ attributes the grotesque image of the body to the Devil and thieves, he describes revolutionary characters, as Warĩĩnga, Wangarĩ, Mũturi and the masses peasants and students, in an authentic image. He depicts them in very perfect and original shapes to draw the image of mother Kenya, and her eagerness to restore the original culture through revolution with its different types. The conscious revolutionary few are conveyed beautifully by Ngũgĩ who relies on them to bring back from corruptors what once belonged to Kenya; thus, spreading consciousness among the masses since power lays on their hands and “care should be taken that” the devil’s “acolytes do not lift him down from the Cross to pursue the task of building Hell for the people on Earth..” (7).

3.1.Wangarĩ

Wangarĩ is an old woman “wearing a kitenge upper garment” and carrying a “sisal basket” (35), which is typically African in a time that people are proud of following Europeans fashion. As her name refers the name of one of the daughter of Kikuyu Legend and

means leopard (“Wangari”), she is a symbol of both armed and peaceful revolution. She admits that she fought for the independence of Kenya only when the driver is about to throw her out of his “Matatũ Matata Matamu Model T Ford” because she does not own money to pay. She says that when they were fighting as “patriots under Mau Mau....We took the oath, swearing: I’ll never eat alone...” (38). She feels sorry for the loss of humanity in her homeland, for Mau Mau fighters used to spread humanitarianism and “offer their lives in defense of children and the disabled”(39). Wangari goes on describing how courageous she was: “I the Wangari you see before you, was a small girl then. But these legs have carried many bullets and many guns to our fighters in the forest ... And I was never afraid, even when I slipped through the lines of the enemy and their home guard allies.”(40). She expresses her patriotism, together with her brothers and sisters who belonged to the People’s Movement, openly arguing that it was not for money but for Kenya that “gave our young men courage to face the prospect of being mowed down by enemy bullets- and they would not let go of the soil” (40). The revolutionary songs, for her, are both bittersweet memories and the only haven:

Kenya does not belong to you, imperialists!

Pack up your bags and go!

The owner of the homestead is on his way. (47)

Wangari pursues the tale by describing the reward she gets after fighting fiercely for independence. Like the majority of workers and peasants, she has lost her land after having a loan and failing to pay it. Thus, she moves to Nairobi to look for a job as she used to believe that Nairobi is for all Kenyans; unfortunately, the truth is that she needed a permit to enter it. Also, she was ill treated and considered as a vagrant because of her loud Africanity; “I, Wangari, who offered my life for my country! I, the Wangari you now see before you dressed

in a kitenge garment and carrying a basket, spent three nights suffocated by the stench of shit and urine!”(43). In the court, she defends herself, and all peasants and workers clothed in rags. Besides, she offers help to catch robbers and thieves in her home town Ilmorog, believing that policemen and government are there to clean Kenya from corruption which is a revolutionary act by Wangarĩ.

Wangarĩ discovers that mother Kenya is deeply corrupted only after it has been late. She agrees with Mũturi to divide the awakening process, so that he goes to his people “Peasants, Workers, and Students” to lead them to the cave where robbers and thieves holding their competition; and, she courageously goes to the police, “shepherds of peace”, as she promised to help them in arresting the robbers and thieves in the same cave of Ilmorog. She arrives and enters first to the latter and silences the whole cave “with the power of her eyes.. as if they were flames of fire” and denounces the thieves in a strong voice:

These are the men who have always oppressed us peasants, denying us cloths and food and sleep. These are the men who stole the heritage bequeathed to us by Waiyaki wa Hinga an Kĩmaathi wa Waciũri, and by all brave patriots who have shed their blood to liberate Kenya. These are the imperialist watchdogs, the children of the Devil. Chain their hands, chain their legs and throw them into eternal jail where there is an endless gnashing of teeth! For that’s the fate of all those who sell foreigners the heritage of our founding patriarchs and patriots! (196-197)

As a consequence, the defenseless Wangarĩ is attacked by police on the spot who chain her hands and throw her in a Black Maria, after accusing her of “spreading rumors and hatred and planting seeds of conflicts in a country that is committed to peace and stability”(195). The noble act of “the Heroine” of the nation is a proof of nothing but

patriotism and revolution running in her bloodstreams. She is far from being shut up despite her old age, she keeps singing for Kenya and peasants who fought for their soil.

Ngũgĩ portrays Wangarĩ in a very beautiful and authentic image. Her outfit is purely African with garment made of “kitenge” and a basket made of “sisal”; sometimes, he describes her wearing in rags and decorating her body with bullets instead of flowers out of patriotism. Wangarĩ body’s parts are emphasized as: her feet that carried weapons for patriots; her hands that fought, worked the land, and even in chains formed a necklace of courage; her powerful eyes flamed in fire and her courageous voice echoed in the cave; all can be imagined by the reader in the most sublime image, she was shining like a meteor who is showing people the right path;

Oh, Wangarĩ was beautiful, I can tell you. Oh, yes, Wangarĩ’s face shone as she stood before us all, and it looked as if her courage had stripped years from her body and given her new life. It was as if the light in her face were illuminating the hearts of all those present, and her voice carried the power and the authority of a people’s judge. (197)

Ngũgĩ uses the disgust of Wangarĩ over the stench of shit and urine in the cell to show that she is a woman of principle who would rather die of hunger rather than being involved in corrupt deeds; she loves her country, she is Wangarĩ the Heroine of Land, the Heroine of mother Kenya.

3.2. Jacinta Warĩnga

Jacinta Warĩnga is the protagonist that Ngũgĩ builds his novel around. At first as we start reading *Devil on the Cross* we can notice that she is affected by imperialism as she hates

most “her blackness” and considers “her appearance “ as “the root cause of all her problem”. Warĩinga sees the West-look as perfectness, so she starts to imitate them by disfiguring “her body with skin-lightening creams like Ambi and Snowfire”, straightening her hair “with red-hot iron combs”, hiding her teeth because they “were not as white as she would like them to be” (11).

As the majority of women in Kenya, Warĩinga was exploited by a Rich Old Man during her adolescence, the thing that broke her entirely and did not allow her to realize her dream to study in the Polytechnic. Thus, she ends up typing for bosses- like Boss Kĩhara, who does not stop teasing her until she gets fired because she refuses to be his sugar girl. When she decides to return to her mother village Ilmorog, Warĩinga meets with revolutionary figures as Wangarĩ and Mũturi, and attends the Devil feast of robbers and thieves. Both of the above push Warĩinga to question her consciousness, and to gain faith in herself; as the voice in her nightmare claims:

The trouble with you, Warĩinga, is that you have no faith in yourself. You have never known who you are! You have always wanted to remain a delicate flower to decorate the lives of class of Boss Kĩhara. Warĩinga, Jacinta Warĩinga, look at yourself. Take a good look at yourself. You have a young boy. The joys of life are all before you. If you hadn’t taken to singeing your hair with hot combs and your skin with lightening creams like Ambi, the sheer splendor of your body would have been pulling a thousand and one heart behind it. The blackness of your skin is smoother and more tender than the most expensive perfume oils. Your dark eyes are brighter than the stars at night. Your cheeks are like two fruits riper than the blackberry. And your hair is so black and soft and smooth that all men must feel like sheltering from the sun in its shade. (192)

Until then, Warĩinga realizes that she loses her Africanity as “a borrowed necklace may lead to the loss of one’s own” (20); fortunately, she decides to restore it for “a stone hardened by age is never washed away by the rains” (32). After two years of the cave incident, Warĩinga has already started the revolutionary act by going on strike by her own against the Boss’s bedroom because her tights become her own property; entering to the Polytechnic to study engineering, to make her dream come true; attending judo and karate classes, to defend herself and stand on her own; working as dissertation typist of hairdresser to sponsor her studies, to not accept the loan proposed by Gatũiria and be self-reliant. Therefore, she changes body and soul and “Warĩinga heart acquired new wings, ready to fly”:

This Warĩinga is not the one we met two years ago. This Warĩinga is not the one who used to think that there was nothing she could do except to type for others; the one who used to burn body with Ambi and Snowfire to change the color of her skin to please the eyes of others, to satisfy their lust for white skin...Today’s Warĩinga has decided that she’ll never again allow herself to be a mere flower, whose purpose is to decorate the doors and windows and tables of other people’s lives, waiting to be thrown on a rubbish heap the moment the splendor of her body withers. The Warĩinga of today has decided to be self-reliant all the time, to plunge into the middle of the arena of life’s struggles in order to discover her real strength and to realize her true humanity. (216)

Warĩinga decides to take side against corrupt rulers and their imperialist ideology; she turns to be proud of her culture, identity, and mother Kenya. She is no more ashamed of her African body “that now dictates how she’ll dress”; or, clothes which “fit her beautifully”. More interestingly, she revolts against the image of African and Kenyan women who are seen only to fit for making food and love; Warĩinga the mechanic engineer rejects men’s negative

point of view about both intelligence and intellectual capacities of women for “her tights are hers, her brain is hers, her hands are hers, and her body is hers” (218).

Ngũgĩ intends to pick the name ‘Jacinta Warĩinga’ for the protagonist of his novel because of its deep significance; ‘Jacinta’ stands for a precious stone, and ‘Warĩinga’ refers to the traditional Kikuyu woman who wears rings made of copper ornaments as adornments (Ndĩgĩrĩgĩ) . Thus, he aims at portraying Warĩinga’s body in ideal authentic image that holds a “heart rages with the courage of a rebel” as she is the “daughter of the Iregi rebels” (Ngũgĩ 222). Gatũiria, her intended husband, is never tired of her beauty; he describes the difference between old and new Warĩinga as follows:

Since the Devil’s feast, it’s as if you have been transfigured, body and soul. Your skin has a depth of blackness that is softer and more tender than the most expensive perfume oil. Your dark eyes shine more brightly than the stars at night. Your cheeks are like two fruits riper than the blackberry. Your hair is so black and soft and smooth that all men feel like sheltering from the sun in its shade. Your voice is sweeter than the sound of a thousand and one musical instruments. Warĩinga, my love, you are the music of my soul. (225)

Thus, Warĩinga becomes proud of her black roots. As she goes to have the blessings of her parents and futures-in-law, she dresses typically in the Kikuyu way first in “A long kitenge dress of red and white flowers”; and second, in a long brown cloth that fell to her ankles “folded over a little at the top, had been passed under her left armpit, the two ends gathered together and held at the right shoulder by two flower-shaped safety pin, so that her left shoulder was bare”. Her hair naturally “long, and black and soft”, and her feet in “Leopard-skin sandals”. Warĩinga wears accessories, a white wool belt around her waist, a

“Nyori-like earrings”, and “necklaces of white, red and blue beads, which sat beautifully on her breasts”.

This picture drawn by Ngũgĩ pushes us to question whether really “a simple length of cloth really turns out to be so beautiful?”. As she walks, Gatũiria sees her as “the child of beauty, mother of all beauties, just created by the creator of the twins elegance and beauty” (242). On their way to Ngorika, many people stop to watch her fascinating beauty. Warĩinga starts to feel guilty by decorating her body in a time that revolution should take place, but her lover reassures her that “the struggle for national cultures” is still a revolutionary act.

When the couple arrives to Ngorika, they find guests wearing in the way imposed in the invitation card: Men in dark suits and Ladies in long dresses, hats, and gloves. Out of surprise, they gaze at Warĩinga disgustedly for they deny their African culture and worship the culture of imperialists; hence, it is a white feast-like attended by blacks.

Even traditions shift to modernity so that “The owner of the homestead had to be the first to receive the bride of his only son” (247). As Warĩinga and Gatũiria advance in the courtyard, their eyes meet the thieves’, the bus driver’s, and the uncle and aunt of Warĩinga. They could not comment out of shock, but the biggest surprise is yet to come. Warĩinga’s future father-in-law is the Rich Old Man who once exploited her body and threw her, the father of her daughter Wambũi. He immediately asks his son to go out and leave him alone with his future daughter-in-law so that they “could get to know each other” (248). The Rich Old Man “knelt on the carpet in front of Warĩinga” begging her to save him, his name, his house, his property, and his son in return to offer her all that she desires. He could not gaze at her because of her fearless, blazing, and dark eyes; yet, her beauty charms him as he claims: “I have never seen beauty that shone with such brilliance” (253).

Warĩinga refuses to save the Rich Old Man; however, she decides to save the masses- i.e. children of Mother Kenya. She “opens her handbag, take out the pistol”, which Mũturi gave to her two years ago on the Devil’s feast, and shoots The Rich Old Man’s body with three bullets. People from outside run to see what happened, Gatũiria asks Warĩinga what happened and she answers with coldness pointing at his father: “There kneels a jigger, a louse, a weevil, a flea, a bedbug! He is mistletoe, a parasite that lives on the trees of other people’s lives!”(254). She goes out and sees Kĩhaahu wa Gatheeca and Gĩtutu wa Gataangũrũ who she shoots too as revenge for her awakens Mũturi and Wangarĩ. Gatũiria is paralyzed unable to think or react, and Warĩinga heads to the exit without turning back; “but she knew with all her heart that the hardest struggles of her life’s journey lay ahead...” (254).

In sum, Ngũgĩ describes authentically the body and the clothes of both Wangarĩ and Warĩinga to portray their patriotism and eagerness for revolution in Kenya and Africa in order to fight corruptors, awaken the masses, and restore the Kenyan authentic identity.

4. The Implication of the Authentic Image of the Body

In *Devil on the Cross*, the authentic image of the body is used to denote revolution and patriotism. As Mc Calman argues, culture can affect the body shape and clothing, Ngũgĩ uses the authentic image in order to heighten all that the imperialists are trying to erase from national identity, culture, and Africanity by transferring it to the revolutionary level. Therefore, the originality is seen in the use of similes, metaphors and folk expressions and poetry that the writer uses to awaken the masses and push them to question their lost African culture, identity and thus social political and economic systems of governance.

A picture is more eloquent than a thousand words, for this Ngũgĩ applies imagism. The images often embody the originality, authenticity, and folkloric description of

revolutionary bodies and outfits. His main aim of using embodiment and signification is to put the reader, the Kenyan and African masses, in the picture. He wants them to feel nostalgic and proud of what they used to be, and thus revolting to restore it. Ngũgĩ relates revolution to all parts of the human body, eyes, brain, mouth, hands, skin, and feet so that people should see the reality, decolonize their minds, spread consciousness, and decorate their bodies with folk outfits and accessories and carry arms if necessary in the long walk to freedom.

Devil on the Cross is a novel for the underprivileged majority of Kenyan people, that's why the aspect of Kikuyu language, traditions, and culture are used so as to reach a mass audience. In Kikuyu language, Wangarĩ means Leopard and Warĩinga refers to the traditional Kikuyu woman who wears rings made of copper ornaments as adornments; moreover, many folk tales, poems, songs, outfits and accessories are used to make the novel Kikuyu-nian by excellence.

Ngũgĩ creates his leopard-like characters through the use of the authentic body's image in order to draw attention to their revolutionary nature. They are full of will to fight imperialist watchdogs, who are exploiting and corrupting their Mother Kenya; and restore the original culture, the culture of living in a community as brothers and sister so as "if a bean falls to the ground, we split it among ourselves" (39-40). This class made of peasants, workers, and students is depicted as patriots who are struggling against bourgeoisie to heal their emotional and physical scars.

In the novel, Ngũgĩ is urging the Kenyan non-moneyed elite as Warĩinga and Gatũiria to contribute to the decolonization of the masses' minds; only then, the masses would see the truth and will attempt to decolonize Kenya socio-politically.

Depending on the authentic image of the body, the rebellious writer advocates the role of some peasants and workers as Wangarĩ and Mũturi, as well as, students and non-moneyed

elite as Warĩnga and Gatũiria in struggling against corrupt conditions of postcolonial Kenya. He described the patriots beautifully in a way that reflects their noble mission.

Conclusion

To sum up, this chapter builds on theoretical background and embarks on the literary text. Ngũgĩ uses the image of the body as a literary technique in his outstanding novel *Devil on the Cross*. He aims at unveiling the corruption in postcolonial Kenya by describing the devil and the thieves grotesquely. Also, he calls for revolution by picturing Wangarĩ and Jacinta Warĩnga in an authentic way. Further, some explanations about why Ngũgĩ employs this technique are highlighted in the chapter.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

This research is set to investigate the use of the image of the body to portray corruption and revolution in Ngũgĩ's *Devil on the Cross*. To reach the study's aim that consists of showing how and why the author uses the above literary device in his novel, this paper has first shed light on the historical context under which the novel is written together with other contribution in the literary field. It has been shown throughout the first chapter of this research that corruption is a matter of fact in postcolonial Africa and Kenya leading the continent into underdevelopment, poverty, epidemics, ethnic tension, and endless problems. Thusly, postcolonial African committed writers are acting as potent agents of change by consecrating writing to describe their societies and awakening their masses through unveiling the corrupt ruling system.

The second chapter is concatenated to the first one. It highlights Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o as one of the committed writers who could not remain at sidelines and call for revolutionary change. He does so in *Devil on the Cross*, that both its historical and literary context and plot overview are presented in this chapter. Also, the use of the image of the body in literature both grotesquely and authentically has been given an equal importance.

The third and last chapter of this research paper builds on both parts and embarks on the analysis of how and why does Ngũgĩ use the image of the body both grotesquely and authentically in order to portray corruption and revolution respectively in *Devil on the Cross*. Therefore, Ngũgĩ could not be assimilated, but rather intellectually armed himself to fight for his cause by using literature.

In *Devil on the Cross*, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o establishes a sound relationship between literature and reality. The book confirms the strong ties between the politics of literature and its aesthetics, the interrelatedness of content and form. In his attempts to unveil corruption of

rulers and to awaken the masses for revolution, Ngũgĩ deliberately introduces characters to the readers with unbeautiful corrupt or beautiful authentic revolutionary bodies respectively.

By using the grotesque image of the body, on the one hand, Ngũgĩ delineates the thieves in the novel as depraved characters with deformed bodies. He portrays the devil, Gītutu, Nditika, Kīhaahu, and Kīmendeeri in a satirical and ridiculous manner. They are endowed with ogre-like features especially with their dull faces and outstanding mouths and bellies.

By using the authentic image of the body, on the other hand, Ngũgĩ marks out revolutionary figures in the novel as beautiful characters with well shaped bodies . He pictures both Wangarĩ and Warĩinga in an honorary and straightforward way. They are begifted with heroic and Kikuyu like features especially with their bodies decorated with typically Kenyan original outfits and jewelries.

This peculiar graphic description aims at mocking the Kenyan compradors and concretizing their corrupt practices, as well as, appraising the awakened masses and visualizing their revolutionary acts. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s allegorical use of both images of the body is an audacious endeavor to accentuate the social and moral degradation of the black compradors and the will of the masses in rejecting and fighting them.

Through the use of aspects of Kikuyu folkloric traditions as a Kenyan cultural heritage, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o wants to approach the underprivileged Kenyan masses to the hidden truths about socio-political realities in postcolonial Kenya. This, in fact, shows the centrality of the masses in Ngũgĩ’s vision for change. Of equal importance, he uses grotesque and authentic images for he wants to implant the seeds of rebellion in the minds of the masses through the use of images that are more compatible to their socio-cultural background.

Evidently, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o uses the images instead of dry words because they can be better perceived by all categories of readers, especially the underprivileged Kenyan masses.

As a matter of fact, *Devil on the Cross* by using the body as a reference for corruption and revolution draws a lot on the writer's biography. The arbitrary imprisonment of Ngũgĩ was an attempt from the Kenyan regime to silence him and constrain his body in a solitary detention. Nonetheless, the writer has refused to succumb and composed his novel as a therapy to preserve his sanity after the confinement of his body. Thus, the book is utilized to avenge for the imprisoned body.

Devil on the Cross is, consequently, a book of various dimensions. At the centre, there is the interconnectedness of the theme of corruption with the form of the grotesque image of the body, and the theme of revolution with the form of the authentic image of the body. This in itself reflects the eternal relationship between literature and reality. The novel particularly highlights the effectiveness of the body as a signifier of moral and spiritual values, a relationship that can be summarized into corporealism.

Endnotes

Endnotes

¹ Kikuyu language or Gĩkũyũ is the Bantu language spoken primarily by Kikuyu people of Kenya.

² Orature is a body of poetry, tales, etc., preserved through oral transmission as part of a particular culture, especially a preliterate one.

³ The Scramble for Africa, also called Partition of Africa or Conquest of Africa, is the occupation, division, and colonization of African territory by European powers during the period of New Imperialism between 1881 and 1914.

⁴ Neocolonialism is the use of economic, political, cultural, or other pressures to control or influence other countries, especially former dependencies.

⁵ A one-party state also single-party state, one-party system, single-party system is a type of state in which one political party has the right to form the government, usually based on the existing constitution.

⁶ Totalitarianism is a system of government that is centralized and dictatorial and requires complete subservience to the state.

⁷ Coup d'Etat is a sudden decisive exercise of force in politics, especially the violent overthrow or alteration of an existing government by a small group.

⁸ The World Bank is an international financial institution that provides loans to countries of the world for capital projects.

⁹ The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is an international organization headquartered in Washington, D.C., that consists of 189 countries working to foster global monetary

cooperation, secure financial stability, facilitate international trade, promote high employment and sustainable economic growth, and reduce poverty around the world.

¹⁰ NGO's are usually non-profit and sometimes international organizations independent of governments that are active in humanitarian, educational, health care, public policy, social, human rights, environmental, and other areas to effect changes.

¹¹ Rape squads were formed from hundreds of patients in hospitals who were suffering from AIDS. The intent was to infect and cause a slow inexorable death.

¹² RPF: the Rwandan Patriotic Front is the ruling political party in Rwanda. The party has governed the country since its armed wing ended the Rwandan genocide in 1994.

¹³ Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite statistic (composite index) of life expectancy, education, and per capita income indicators, which are used to rank countries into four tiers of human development. A country scored higher HDI when lifespan is higher, the education level is higher, and GDP per capita is higher and vice versa.

¹⁴ UNDP: United Nations Development Programme advocates for change and connects countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. It provides expert advice, training and grants support to developing countries, with increasing emphasis on assistance to the least developed countries.

¹⁵ Transparency International (TI) is an international non-governmental organization which is based in Berlin, Germany, and was founded in 1993. Its nonprofit purpose is to take action to combat global corruption and prevent criminal activities arising from corruption.

¹⁶ Imperialism is an action that involves a nation extending its power by the acquisition of inhabited territory. It may also include the exploitation of these territories, an action that is linked to colonialism.

¹⁷ Compradors are native agents or factotums, as of foreign business house.

¹⁸ Animism is the belief that all natural things, such as plants, animals, rocks, and thunder, have spirits and can influence human events.

¹⁹ Thiong'o, W.Ngugi. *Devil on the Cross*. Portsmouth: Heinman Educational Books Ltd., 1982. All the subsequent references to the text will be cited parenthetically.

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