Review

NGUGI WA THIONG 'O and his 'Mathe-logic' of revolution in *Matigari*: Re-introducing militia struggle

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I once heard a story being told to my children by one of my sisters. The story, so simple, is of a man who has an incurable wound and is in search of a cure. He is told of a medicine man whose name is Ndiro, but he does not know the way to Ndiro's place. He encounters different people and asks each one of them the way to Ndiro's. The story depends on a repetition of the song that describes Ndiro. I used the same structure in the construction of *Matigari*, the story of a wanderer in search of social justice in a postcolonial society (Ngugi, 1998).

Key words: Ngugi Wa Thiong, Mathe-logic, post(neo)colonial society.

INTRODUCTION

The Formalist critics, to be precise the Anglo American New Critics, have warned against the orthodoxy of drawing critical assumptions from the extrinsic value of a literary work. Their caution has emanated from the belief that, a work of literary art should be considered as autonomous, and so should not be judged by mere reference to extraneous materials beyond the literature itself. Sequel to the Formalists' scientific critical assumption, several other critical opinions started to find fault in all such critical positions that would submit to the whims of science what science has not produced. For instance, Jacques Derrida had indicated that the meaning of a text may be 'differed' or 'delayed' to signal the emergence of multifaceted kaleidoscope of meanings for a single text. This notwithstanding, we cannot jettison Edward Said's notion of 'circumstantial reality' in the (re)production of meaning from a text. With this mindset of circumstantial reality it may well be difficult to analyze

any text from the canon of African novel except with recourse to the extra-textual environment that surrounds the novel. Hence to Wole Soyinka,

When we talk about language of literature or criticism we assume multiple levels of internal operations of basic cognitives and the triggering social agencies, a matrix of latent and activated meanings which adds to our problems of apprehension by acting in a self-constructing way (134)

According to Nelson Fashina, Soyinka has identified two manifestable meanings retrievable from the text centripetally connected to Africanity. To him, "the 'activated meanings' are those that flicker out of the text as critical rules are being applied or forced on it. The 'latent meanings' are those that are stored in the text by the author" (23). Given the interest of this study in the

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retrieval of the 'latent meaning' we cannot but rely on the pre-literary countenance of the author whose text has been selected for study. This is why Ngugi's assertion, deployed above as the epitaph of this essay is very pivotal in our reading of *Matigari*, his novel which is also considered here as an archetypical blue print of revolution.

Clearly away from the formalist notion, it may be apt to assume in this essay that African literature – in this case the African novel – evolved with the experiences of the producers of the genre. This is why we appreciate the contribution of Tanure Ojaide (2009:1) that "Every literary canon exists in the context of the people's overall experience and aesthetic values. Thus, the African literary canon is related to the African experience, which has strong cultural and historical underpinnings". According to Cecilia Addei, Cynthia Osei, Felicia Annin, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o is among such writers "whose works are characterized by an unmistakable note of criticism against perceived unacceptable social practices". In *Matigari* Ngugi has tried to chronicle the events that took place in Kenya after independence. Within the textual framework therefore, we can observe that life in post-colonial Africa is characterized by a great deal of political disillusionment and social corruption. Addei et al. (2013:21) provide further explanation to the contextual antecedent of *Matigari*:

The post-independence era of Africa is bedevilled with social corruption, autocracy, foreign-dominated economy, as well as the betrayal of human ideals among others. For the masses in many African countries, the post colonial era did not offer them anything too different from the colonial era itself. The only difference, however, is that their white colonial masters have simply metamorphosed into their own natives, the elite few, who have assumed control. In other words it is a period of change of batons where white colonial masters have given way, after independence, to black masters lording it over their fellow black men. To these black masses therefore, the dream of freedom after independence is simply a mirage. African writers can simply not ignore what they see around them and since works of literature are often inspired by contemporary issues, they began to write and the novel therefore, became a vehicle of strong social and political satire.

Glenn (1998:13) also does not mince words about the status of *Matigari* when he asserts that "I want to stress the limits of an overly postmodernists position, arguing that *Matigari* needs to be principally tied to the realities of Kenyan politics and not just to the formally experimental techniques of contemporary Euro-American writing". The true Kenyan reality, in Ngugi's term, is that the country is replete with deceptiveness and what we see is disillusionment towards any idea of an "epistemological

rapture" between the colonial and post-colonial Kenya. Hence, Ngugi's extension of his ideological base in *Matigari* is premised on a profound disillusionment with the concrete socio-economic, cultural and political realities in the 1970s and 1980s from which the novel is generated.

Understanding Ngugi's Mathe-logic of the neo-colonial society

By his own admission, Ngugi had relied on the extant autochthonous mythical material which foregrounds the essence of quest and search. The logic in this piece of mythopoeia intersects with the author's Marxist intent to contrive a revolutionary document intended to provoke the public against the neo-colonial labyrinth within which the Kenyans have been perpetually trapped. Similarly, Ngugi shares in the assumption that African independence is only prominently explainable in terms of the mere 'flag independence' which only differentiates one nationality from the other. Little wonder Monsieur Leon M'ba, a former President of Gabon had said "Gabon is independent but between Gabon and France nothing has changed, everything goes as before" (quoted in Fanon, 1967:52)

Leon Mba's submission on Gabon has universal bearing on almost all the other African countries. For a president to have made such a statement that connotes perpetual servitude of a former colony of France speaks volume of the 'freely-permitted' colonialists' violation of Africa's independence. Hence, post-coloniality within the African context has as its compatible bed fellow, neo-coloniality.

A neo-colonial society, according to Ushie (2012:3), is one "which was once dominated but which economy is still in predatory grip of foreign interest." This type of setting is ineluctably indicative of most Ngugi's settings prevalent from his earliest novels to the latest ones like *Matigari*. Ngugi's brand of Marxism pictures an average Kenyan man as downtrodden, embattled and typically emasculated. This we see in the narratological edifice he erects in his first novel, *Weep Not, Child* in which he creates Ngotho as a man who is unassumingly receptive and complacent even in the face of obvious usurpation of what he had laboured for. Such stereotypical portraiture of the Kenyan man(liness) continues through his other novels and we have, for the benefit of this study, coined the term "mathe-logic" to denote that the author's depiction of the Kenyan native in a neo-colonial era is calculatedly deliberate. We deliberate to evolve a narrative model of revolution which we refer to as 'mathe-logic of revolution' and which the author, perhaps intended to use to make a statement. Hence within the praxis of Ngugi's mathe-logic of revolution, we have evolved the following equation:

$$\begin{aligned} EM &= 1 \\ KM &< 1 \\ KS &(1 + < 1) = 1 \end{aligned}$$

In the equation above, conjured from Ngugi's ideodialectic, EM stands for European manliness. KM refers to Kenyan manliness (by extension the African manliness) while KS refers to Kenyan society. *Ab initio*, the English colonialist has been an avowed racist basically because of his misconception that intelligence is distributed according to skin pigmentation. Hence to him the darker an individual is the more distant he is from basic intelligence. Therefore given the circumstantial society emergent from the situation expressed above, it is possible to evoke a logic which presents the European as the whole being in terms of reasoning especially as the European man sees himself as the complete in all attributive facets. Hence the *mathe-logical* permutation $EM = 1$ (European Manliness is equal to 1, where 1 stands for wholesomeness). By the imperialist's standard, an average Kenyan is nothing more than a working machine manipulatably available at the disposal of Kenyan-based European. The racist agenda of the imperialist indubitably positions the Kenyan as incomplete in terms of reasoning and *intelligence quotient*. Accordingly, within our permutation, $KM < 1$, simply implying that Kenyan manliness is less than 1 (where 1 signifies completeness).

The initiative to view a post colonial African society in this manner stems from the idea of *place and displacement* expressed by the post-colonial theorists, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin in their prominent book; *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (1989). According to the trio, a major feature of post-colonial literatures is the concern with place and displacement. In a nutshell, Ashcroft et al. (1989) opine that the displacement of the black from the place he has been placed is the major gestation point for the very venomous problem of identity that has pilloried the mind of the black against the whites irrespective of the robust educational/technological developments that have been experienced through the auspice of colonialism. Rather than emphasizing the likely positive contributions of colonialism to African, the black man has concerned himself with the understanding of the relationship between his new *self* and the *place* in which the reconstructed post(neo)colonial society has put him. As if they had Ngugi's ideodialectics in mind Ashcroft et al. (1989) state [a] valid and active sense of self may have been eroded by dislocation, resulting from migration, the experience of enslavement, transportation, or 'voluntary' removal for indentured labour. Or it may have been destroyed by cultural denigration, the conscious and unconscious oppression of the indigenous personality and culture by a supposedly superior racial or cultural model (1989:09).

The so-called social displacements and cultural dislocations suffered by the Kenyans have been responsible for the dwarfist portrait carved for them and this explains the equa-logical notion that $KM < 1$. The socio-cultural dwarfism prevalent in the Kenyan society gives the radical direction to follow in the eloquent attempt to decolonize Africa and the understanding of the present researcher is that Ngugi's aesthetics is always out to use the genre of narrative to present the obvious in the Kenyan society and in what we are likely to see in the text of focus here – *Matigari* –, the Kenyan society is always governed by the lopsided relationship that puts the Kenyan native on the receiving end and at the verge of total loss of physical possessions and identity. The imbalance status of the Kenyan society has been adequately expressed in the last section of our equa-logic which expresses the Kenyan society in terms of $KS (1 + < 1) = 1$.

Given the lopsidedness of the Kenyan society, indicated in the domineering egoism of the controlling neo-colonial forces of the society, it has become difficult to attain the ideal equilibrant without the application of revolutionary force. These then brings to mind the Marxist idea of the *communal struggle* which pictures the desire of the downtrodden to unseat the over-possessive capitalists who control the socio-political and economic forces of the society. In the equation, KS, Kenyan Society, has the fusion of the white man and the Black man having to co-exist in the post-colonial topography. This means that the neo-colonial facet in Kenya is slightly removed from the regular post-independence norm where the white man is only expected to dictate from his country. Basically because the Kenyan topography offered excellent grazing for wild life and receptacle for tourism, the white man stayed longer than the independence in the country and the Kenyan society is an instance of clashes of authorities. Such clashes pervade the Kenyan post colonial socio-economic topography especially given the background of the panorama of displacement that the then nascent and unholistic democratic demography explained earlier in our mathe-logical permutation. Addei et al. (2013:164) corroborate this when they assert:

Life in post-colonial Africa is characterized by a great deal of political disillusionment and social corruption. The post-independence era of Africa is bedeviled with social corruption, autocracy, foreign-dominated economy, as well as the betrayal of human ideals among others. For the masses in many African countries, the post colonial era did not offer them anything too different from the colonial era itself. The only difference, however, is that their white colonial masters have simply metamorphosed into their own natives, the elite few, who have assumed control. In other words it is a period of change of batons where white colonial masters have given way, after

independence, to black masters lording it over their fellow black men. To these black masses therefore, the dream of freedom after independence is simply a mirage. African writers can simply not ignore what they see around them and since works of literature are often inspired by contemporary issues, they began to write and the novel therefore, became a vehicle of strong social and political satire. Ngugi Wa Thiong'O is among such writers whose works are characterised by an unmistakable note of criticism against perceived unacceptable social practices. In his two novels that have been used for this study, Ngugi has tried to chronicle the events that took place in his country, Kenya after independence

MATIGARI: REVOLUTION RESULTING FROM NGUGI'S MATHE-LOGIC

Little wonder in *Matigari* we experience something like a re-composition of history in its mode of characterization, structural and aesthetic organization; the kind of narratological formulae that it employs as well as the details of its temporal- geographical, and philosophical setting which all point to the fact that the novel was written to conform to the given attributes of the revolutionary society that produced the novel. Briefly drawing from his commitment in his first novel, *Weep Not, Child*, and also from his several other novels that follow, Ngugi has situated the significance of resolute quest in the attainment of socio-political and economic stabilities needed to create an egalitarian Kenya. It is therefore not out of serendipity that he has relied heavily on the mythical material that foregrounds the scenario of quest.

As Ngugi writes in the notes on the English edition of the novel, Matigari develops via the scaffolds of a common Gikuyu myth or oral lore of a man looking for a cure for an illness. He is told about an old man Nduro, who can cure his illness, but he does not know how to get to him. So he undertakes a journey of search. He meets different people on the way and to each he sings the same description of the old man Nduro:

Tell me where lives old man Nduro who, when he shakes his fool, jingles. And the bells ring out his name Nduro; and again; Nduro (p.VII)

Like the mythical man searching for a cure for an illness, Matigari begins a quest presumed to be a very simple one bereft of any complication at the beginning only to discover that there are more psycho-physical detours to grapple with than he had thought of. When Matigari sets out of the woods, having girdled himself with *the belt of piece*, to use his expression, he runs into a "riderless horse" which "stopped, looked back at him then disappeared into the woods" (3). That the horse is without

a rider seems to us Ngugi's way of expressing a leaderless society. In a nutshell, Ngugi's ideal leader is this man, Matigari just stepping out of the forest into uncertainty, albeit with a very wrong notion, to enjoy a relative peace going into the city with a self-designed terms of reference: "It is good that I have now laid down my arms....I shall go back to my house and rebuild my home" (p.5). Little does Matigari know that his calculation is severely faulty, typically unaware of the fact that the equation that determines the societal structure is in itself faulty and will always produce wrong answers. He had thought of his own house and his immediate family, presumably, as his target quite oblivious of the greater revolutionist mandates of guiding the leaderless society that the riderless horse wandering around the woods logically signifies.

In the novel, Matigari, the hero returns to the country on the dawn of independence from the forest after a successful battle, only for him to discover that the syndromic vices that occasioned his escapades into the forests and mountains to fight are still very much active, even in worse profile. Sequel to their multi-faceted corruptions, Matigari discovers that the Kenyan elites have betrayed the Mau-Mau initiative for which so much blood was shed, especially in their collaboration with western capitalists to bring back colonization once again. Settler Williams and his servant John Boy with whom Matigari had fought in the forest have been replaced by their sons who are now partners in "reaping what they do not sow" (P12) – Settler Williams has been replaced by Robert Williams, and John Boy Snr. replaced by John Boy Jnr. Matigari observes that most of the things he (Matigari) had fought for especially the land and the house, which are the central issues in most Ngugi's novels, still remain the property of the imperialist and their African capitalist counterparts. Hence through *Matigari* Ngugi resonates the message that *it is not yet Uhuru* if by uhuru it is meant independence. Ngugi pursues the image of the labourer who is denied the reward of his labour. The hero goes about singing a revolutionary song for a redress. Although there are enough contraptions of oppression designed to silence people like him, he remains undaunted in his agitation for justice for the oppressed.

The result of matigari's struggle is violence and at the end it turns out as the case of struggle passed on to the incoming generation. No wonder at the end of the novel we see the young Muriuki taking over the struggle after the disappearance of Matigari.

Under the mugumo tree, Muriuki dug up all the things that Matigari had hidden. He took out the pistol and cartridge belt. He counted the bullets. Then he took the AK 47 and gazed at it. He dug up the sword and laid it to one side.

He put on the cartridge belt across his chest, over his left shoulder, so that it hung on his right side. He passed

the strap of the sword over his right shoulder and across his chest so that the sword lay on his left side (175).

Matigari portrays the African continents as one which has been robbed, raped, and sentenced to perpetual servitude by the so-called leaders, right from the colonial period to the post colonial era. The emergent African leaders do not help matters. They exploit the peasants and the workers who are regarded as the masses in Marxist parlance. The ruling class, represented by his Excellency, Ole Excellence of the Ministry for Truth and Justice, has devised several draconian laws to suppress the few courageous ones like Matigari, the teacher, the student, Ngaruro Wa Kuriro- the leader of all the workers.

Ngugi's vision in *Matigari* stems from his own proclivity for a completely socialized economy collectively owned and controlled by the people. However, he knows that the realization of this dream does not come so easily, stating clearly that "until democratic-minded Kenyans, workers, peasants, students, progressive intellectual and other unite....things will get worse, no matter who sits on the throne of power" (2006:104). Ngugi wants us to believe that the minority grossly oppresses the majority and the former profits from the enslavement and torture of the majority.

This spectacle is adequately portrayed in the incident where certain officials collect money from derelict children to allow them access to the rubbish site to pick what they need for survival. It is very baffling and the narrator could not have painted the situation better than he has done in the following queries.

So these five were busy dividing among themselves the money they had taken from the children? So handful of people still profited from the Suffering of the majority, the sorrow of the many being the joy of the few? (p.12)

Matigari reflects Ngugi's Marxist misanthropist standpoint against the ruling class and its oppressive socio-political and economy machinery which has been programmed to manacle the masses in Africa's political economy.

Consequently, the novel catalogues the pathetic African experience at the hands of the black and White leaders in a post-colonial Kenya. This commitment has therefore raised questions bordering on truth and justice especially in the administration of the people and the methods of distribution of the national wealth by the leadership of the neo-colonial Kenya. This is why Ngugi's protagonist goes solo all over the society asking questions that appear eccentric to the people. Matigari walked into a restaurant and sat down. He ordered a cup of tea.

'My friends! Tell me where in this country where one can find truth and justice.'

People raised their heads. Who was this who interrupted the sweet tale about Matigari?

'Who are you, Mr Seeker of truth and justice?'

'That is who I am,' Matigari answered. (p.75).

The irony in this excerpt stems from the facts that people talk about their hero – Matigari – and unfortunately when he steps in to ask questions they shout him down because they presume that a commoner like the haggard looking man asking abnormal questions in a coffee shop can certainly not be Matigari.

Moving toward his aesthetic goal designed for the novel, Ngugi makes use of the Mau-Mau struggle to project his thematic preoccupation. The character typology of Matigari the hero is patterned after the guerilla hero who operated with the pre-independence illusion that things would be all right for the colonized people after the defeat of colonial lords.

This serves as the basis of Ngugi's argument in *Matigari* against the new overlords in most African countries. The colonial settlers have only exchange roles with their African counterparts in the business of pivoting the cultural and economic life of the African continents. Against this background, Ngugi canvasses for a revolution;

...spread the message: settler Williams is dead. John boy is dead. We must go home, light the fire and rebuild our home together (pp.23-24).

Steven Tobias (1997) explains that:

Throughout *Matigari*, Ngugi employs a Marxist yet distinctly African perspectives, to critique and expose both the overt and sub external socio-political structures that exist in many post colonial African states (p163)

Quite calculatedly, the novel presents a dystopian and dysfunctional Kenya already bastardized by the corrupt practices of both the white and black people of the community. The resultant disequilibrium seems to have been pictured by Ngugi himself when he avers in his Note to *Homecoming* (1972) that the neo-colonial era has created two tribes of the people: the "haves" and the "have nots":

Now there are only two tribes left in Africa: the "Haves" and the "Have Nots) what goes for tribalism in Africa is really a form of civil war among the "haves" struggling for crumbs from the masters tables. The masters sit on New York, London, Brussels, Paris, Bonn and Copenhagen, they are the owners of the oil companies, the mines the banks, the breweries the insurance institution- all the moving lovers of the economy (P.XVII).

Alluding again to our *mathe-logical* paradigm of the societal imbalance pictured in our equation above, the whites have been apotheosized to a celestial height and what we get from *Matigari* is ridiculously mind-boggling. No excerpt paints a better picture than the one captured below.

This is the Voice of Truth....A special announcement. The police are continuing their search for a group of mad men who escaped from a mental hospital. The police are also looking for a woman and a boy who were earlier seen taking food to one of the patients. The police have appealed to the boy and the woman to present themselves at the nearest police station, in order to help in their investigation (p133).

This is the Voice of Truth....This is another special police announcement....The public are requested to report to the nearest police station anybody found speaking like a madman or dressed in rags like a madman, or anyone with unkempt hair like a madman's or anybody seen asking awkward questions like a madman, or doing things which only a madman would do. The police are saying all those who are not mad must shave off their beards, cut short their hair and keep it tidy at all times. The must not, repeat must not, wear rags...(p133).

...This is the Voice of Truth... the police have been told not to harass white people even if they are wearing long beards and have unkempt hair or even if they are dressed in rags and dirty clothes, or are hitching lifts, or are without bus fare. The police made this announcement after the United States, and British Governments complained through their Embassies here that their citizens are being harassed on the roads in the belief that they are madmen, merely because of their beards and their long, unkempt hair. The Minister of Truth and Justice apologized and warned people against racism. The public were warned against finding fault in people because of their white colour. The Chief of police has told the police and members of the public that, in any case, white people do not go mad...(135) (My emphasis)

In a town council meeting held at the instance of the Minister of Truth and Justice, Matigari and one of his converts, Ngaruro stands to talk and berate the government's insincerity to the masses. This leads to their arrest and stage-managed confinement to an asylum as madmen. They escape from the hospital and this is what warranted the intermittent radio announcements cited above. The announcement captured from page 135 confirms the neo-colonial manipulation of the Africa's hegemony; or how do we explain the sudden withdrawal of the Government's policy statement only to the aggrandizement of the supposedly outlawed colonial authorities.

It is in reaction to these societal dysfunctions and post-Mau Mau socio-economic complications in Kenya that Ngugi recommends that "The difference between the robber and the robbed can only be settled in struggle" (p114). In a nutshell, Ngugi recommends another revolution after the epochal Mau Mau struggle failed to produce the desired post independence result. No

wonder *Matigari* dwells on the potency of violence with particular reference to the metaphor of homecoming after a long era of alienation and struggle against the colonizers. Consequently, Matigari's homecoming is deliberately designed to be greeted by the societal complications momentous enough to provoke violent disenchantment on the part of the Mau Mau returnee. Hence rather than getting home to settle down with his family and live peacefully happily thereafter, Matigari discovers the need to revisit his buried riddle because this would be necessary in his rejuvenated quest for societal form in a community bereft of any. Henceforth, Matigari sees himself as the iconoclast whom we have portrayed elsewhere as "someone who seeks to abrogate an existing order, perhaps, in a bid to replace it with what his ideological reflexes recommend." (Afolayan, 2013:26).

According to Chijioke (2006):

Liberation is attained when the people are said to be truly free, when the means of physical economic political, cultural and psychological being. Put differently when the people control the means of contact of their integrated survival and development are considered liberated (p.96).

Absolutely adhering to Uwasomba's maxim above we know that the society into which matigari is welcomed is far from being liberated. Such environment is adequately captured as follows by Uwasomba:

...First it has been the external factor of foreign Invasion, occupation and control, and second, the internal factor of collaboration with the external threat. Whether under western slavery and the slave trade, under colonialism and today under neo-colonialism, the two factors have interacted to the elements bred by the new colonial overlords, collaborated with the main external imperialist factor. The storm repeats itself, in a more painful way under neo-colonialism (p.96).

As if this is not enough, Uwasomba insists that,

[t]he interplay between the external threat and the internal collaborations is considered the greatest problems in Africa today, and the efforts towards the claws and shackles of imperialism and capitalism that provokes the revolutionary undertone in Ngugi's works as the only a radical break from the status quo demanding a less-exploited class, and a social revolution that would break dependence and thus allow for social change (p.97)

Such a dystopian state that Uwasomba has identified in Ngugi's aesthetics has also been pointed out by Ngugi himself as the literary prominence in Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not yet Born*. Ngugi portrays Armah's "sick novel" as a regurgitation of Plato's famous cave,

stating,

[t]here are very interesting parallels between the Ghana of Armah's time and the Athens of Plato's youth. Plato was disillusioned with the contemporary Athenian politics of his youth and adulthood. In particular he was alarmed at the social instability caused by the alternations of oligarchy and democracy, with neither quite able to deliver on their promises (Ngugi, 1998:74).

There is no gainsaying the fact that the so-called swap of democracy with oligarchy, is a form of government that is everything but masses friendly.

While, for instance, it is convenient to define democracy as the government of the people by the people for the people, it is almost impossible to realize it in practical terms. Every attempt by the African political *gangsters* to launch their programmes often results in oligarchist agenda which can be described as a type of agenda in which a very small group of people hold power. The sound of oligarchy triggers in our questing mind the ever-present dystopian states in the African hegemonic topography. Within the context of the Kenyan society that Ngugi wants us to see, the much-desired freedom, which informed the elongated period of Mau Mau insurrection, is typically illusory – a society in which a ‘superstate’ has simply decided to lord it over on a third world state which is still toddling towards stability and order. Hence for Keith (1995:58) postcolonial writers like Ngugi “actively engage in the construction of cultural identities for new society,... on the other hand, actual experience in the postcolonial world has been anything but utopian”. We know there is a problem when Matigari emerges and his hope of a post war utopia is dashed especially as he,

...saw a whole battalion of children running about in the middle of the road....he saw the red tractor making its way back from the market. The tractors were now heaped with more rubbish from the market....The children raced the tractors to the garbage yard....Two men stood at the only entrance of the yard, arranging the children into a queue....Each child has to pay a fee to enter. A ticket which will enable them to fight it out with dogs, vultures, rats, all sorts of scavengers and vermin for pieces of string, patches of cloth, odd bits of leather, shoe soles, rubber lambs treads, rotten tomatoes, sugarcane chaff, banana peels, bones...anything! (10)

Notwithstanding that the formalists recommended, for a critic, an unmitigated disconnect from historical antecedents in the evaluation of a literary piece, we have discovered that this is almost impossible if one is to understand the internal chemistry of the novel especially from the background that “most African novels appear to be set in recognizable nations” (Kortenaar, 2000:228). Kortenaar refers to Ngugi's type of narrative as evincing a

typologically ‘fictive’ nation which can be distinguished from the imaginary nations like Jonathan Swift's Lilliput which cannot be navigated out of any geographically realistic map.

For this research, the character Matigari becomes the typological Moses, or better still, the people's Jesus who has resurrected to bring smiles to the mouths of the oppressed of an ‘unnamed’ state, recognizably Kenya, whose socio-political profile has been variously captured by Ngugi himself. The oligarchic picture that Ngugi presents in his narrative makes his society appear bereft of form and order. Probably because this society exhibits a government of the minority, this is why the duo of ‘truth’ and ‘justice’ are missing. For instance, an oligarchist's government does not encourage equality, the very reason why the Kenya's society of Ngugi's narratological initiative suffers the specimen of imbalance identified from the incipient stage of this study. Likewise, the society into which Jesus Christ was born was bereft of form socially and politically. For instance, the Roman leaders were tenaciously in control of the then Israel and people desirously awaited the emergence of a savior – a warrior of some sort – who would rescue them from the suffocating tutelage of the Roman lords. They were very disappointed to be introduced to a preacher of peace like Christ and they refuse to accept him as the anticipated savior. George Kosmas corroborates this by alluding to the synergy between Ngugi's story and the Bible claiming

Matigari mirrors these events in that it develops a Jesus character, recreates the last Supper, and also involves a Magdalene and Judas figure. These biblical allusions mark the appropriation of a cornerstone of Christian faith. (2)

Not only has Matigari resembled Jesus in his determination to gather followers, he also exhibits the itinerant quality of Christ. His movement around town searching for truth and justice is a confirmation of this. Matigari's search for Truth and Justice takes him to the factory – the Anglo American Leather and Plastic works. John Boy Junior and Roberts Williams, the children of Matigari's greatest enemies, are both members of the board of Governors of this factory which exploits the workers to make alarming profit. The appearance of nuisance exhibited by the likes of Settler Williams in the premises of African independent polity has given birth to the problem of neo-colonialism whose presence is marked by countless multi-national companies ably supervised by black stooges and imperialist watchdogs. From American International Conglomerate Insurance (AICI), Agribusiness Coordinating International Organization, Bankers International Union, Barclays Bank to Esso Filling Station, the common objective is to molest the Kenyan socio-economic entity and leave the country's citizens as perpetual beggars. Pathetically, all the various companies seem to have been created for the exploitations of the struggling masses who like the pot,

always 'cooks but never eats the food'. Unfortunately, many working class Africans, who probably before the arrival of the white man, were inherently farmers have been brainwashed to take the factories as their economic succor and replacements for their agrarian antecedents.

This is simply the reason why Matigari considers the factory as the most suitable place where his people could be. Ngugi might therefore have used the imagery of a factory to depict the suffering of his people. He portrays the life and experiences of the factory workers as worse than the white man had met it. Ngugi shows that not only that the men are economically oppressed, their children have become despairingly miserable that they pick from the dust bin and live in the dunghill to survive. Matigari discovers to his appalling that the children, perhaps including his own children, scavenge with the vultures and dogs as they join the animal to tussle on the rubbish heap near the factory. As already stated, he also notices that the children even pay in order to gain entrance into the venue of garbage designed to showcase the gladiatorial struggle for rubbish. After exploring the pathetic condition of the children, the corrupt adults "...held their heads close together...were busy dividing among themselves the money they had taken from the children" (12).

For the first time after living the forest, our hero sees the reason to broaden his search from the mere simplistic looking for the cure for his immediate family to the search for a more monolithic answer which can provide a panacea for the generality of the society. It is consequently not ordinary that Matigari meets Ngaruro Wa Kiri the union leader. Their brief meeting and discussion shows the people's resolute desires to upturn the egregious capitalist manipulations which has led to the oppression of the masses in a quasi-imperialist regime. Matigari's message of courage to other workers raises the hope and provides stimulation for the people's insurrection against the capitalist oppressors – the Williamses and John Boys of the world.

Like as been noted from the incipient stage of the study, Ngugi has orchestrated a fictive world that is replete with believable tropes that are universally African. Ngugi's aesthetics in *Matigari* is not, however, peculiar to him alone especially given the circumstance that there is nothing outstandingly different from the parlance of sarcasm amplified in the novel. The historical paraphernalia which was available to Ngugi is a *given* phenomena because "...the reality of the material world of Africa, and which its writers essentially confront in their works, is the neo-colonial state of the continent" (Ushie, 33). Ushie further cites the example of another African country to buttress that neo-colonialism has eaten deep into the African political hegemony in the excerpt that follows:

Indeed, the mental make-up of most Africans is generally

neo-colonial. Nigerians, for example, make good shoes, bags, belts and wear at Aba [a city in Eastern Nigeria], but if the indigenous craftsman in Aba is to earn the wages for his labour, he must put the label of a foreign country on his product. In the spheres of politics and economy, Nigerian newspapers still burst forth with screaming headlines such as "US Endorses Obasanjo's/Jonathan's etc Reforms". Thus, like a pupil brandishing his freshly marked and returned exercise book before his parents, Africa's political leaders do return periodically from Washington DC radiating smiles before press men because of a US President or any of the predatory arms of the Breton Woods institutions has given the African government a 'pass mark' in its economic and political reforms. And similarly, the endorsement of a presidential candidate in any election in the country by the US President is a weighty campaign weapon for the 'endorsed' candidate.

From this it is obvious that Ngugi is out to recommend a forceful correction of this abysmal extent to which neo-colonialism has eaten the African polity. Ngugi seems to suggest that those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable. Here, Ngugi's position is clear on the option of violence as a worthy tool of resistance. This is clearly echoed when Matigari states:

The enemy can never be driven out by word alone, no matter how sound the argument. Nor can the enemy be driven out by force alone. But words of truth and justice, fully backed by armed power, will certainly drive the enemy out. When right and on right are on the same side, what enemy can hold out?
(my emphasis) (Pp.138-139)

Conclusion

Matigari from all indications revolves around thesis of revolution. It expresses the concept of violence as a tool for resistance. Ngugi's option of revolution as the enduring answer to the domineering case of neo-colonialism stems from the equation of imbalance, determined from the author's presumed *mathe-logic* of his revolutionary ideology, created in the beginning of this essay. This equation has presented the African society as typically bastardized from the binoculars of inequality with which first, the European has looked at the African indigene and second, with which the African leaders have been brainwashed to look at their people. It is therefore indubitable that writing *Matigari*, Ngugi intended to spread his topical message that "... Black people must realize themselves on the level of class and take anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist positions" (Killiam, 1980, 6). In this paper therefore, we have created a paradigm of equation

which we refer to as *mathe-logic* which by extension can be equated to Foucault's idea of revolution which he calls "courage of truth" (1993:17).

Reading other scholarly materials on Ngugi in the formative process of this study, we discovered that Ngugi's *mathe-logic* of revolution is inspired from the macrocosm of literary belief of the African literature.

Fashina (2008:4) sheds more lights on this when he states

... African literature caught the fire of revolution in East Africa in the novels, plays, critical essays, and speeches of Ngugi wa Thiong'o, a Mau Mau activist against colonialism and believer in both Marxism and Fanonism who vociferously castigated the oppressive neocolonial regime of Jomo Kenyatta, even at the risk of exile. The place of Ngugi's revolutionary art in radical African social philosophy is pivotal.

Fashina continues that there is also the need to mention the author's commitment to the critique of capitalism and its manifestations in economic deprivation and political domination, which he describes as "the rule of consolidated finance capital" (Ngugi 1986, 83). Here he addresses the economic alienation of the majority (the masses) from the means of production by the capitalists and aristocrats (2008:4).

Fashina's information, no doubt, has provided a soft landing for the thesis of this scholarship dedicated to the study of *Marigari* because it has in no little capacity corroborated the contextual details supplied as the bedrock of our earlier statements on the novel, its author and its background.

Conflict of Interests

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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