

**THE AESTHETICS OF THE GIKUYU LANGUAGE IN
NGUGI WA THIONG'O'S *CAITAANI MUTHARABA-INI***

BY

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DECLARATION

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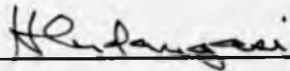


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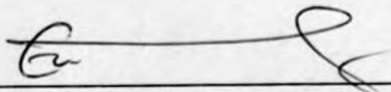
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DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**This project is dedicated to my father Mwangi wa Kibe and mother Julia Muiru
for their boundless love and sacrifice**

**and
to the fond memory of John Ndichu
whose songs stirred the heart**

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ABSTRACT

The use of the Gikuyu language as opposed to the English language has had a significant influence on Ngugi's style in his fiction. The forms of his vernacular novels have a higher affinity with the African oral literary tradition than his earlier works whose orientation is basically Eurocentric. In seeking to address himself to the masses as represented by workers and peasants in his works, he has engaged them in a discourse that heavily invests in their popular idioms and modes of literary imagination. It is with this in mind that this study investigates how he has used language to generate aesthetic pleasure in Caitani Mutharaba-ini.

The study treats literary language as a system that arises from a greater system of language in general, and which is heavily determined by the historical and socio-cultural environment in which it thrives. It therefore takes advantage of the concept of *langue* and *parole* advanced by Ferdinand de Saussure and their application in formalism and semiotics. This is supplemented by the Bahktinian 'Sociological Poetics' where we treat the work of art as an aesthetic object whose communicative function is best realized in locating its literary discourse in its social and historical purview.

The study therefore proceeds to show how specific linguistic choices in Caitani have profound aesthetic effects on an audience that is conversant with the Gikuyu idiom and how these have been watered down in the translation. Whereas the reader of the original fully grasps the way meaning arises in certain allusions in the text, the reader of the translation may have to grapple with them. This is why the author who is also the translator has altered some linguistic choices in the translation and thereby curtailed the overall aesthetic actualization of the text.

The study recommends more systematic stylistic analysis of vernacular texts as a way of increasing dialogue between the different African languages and cultures, which are by and large the embodiment of the African sensibility in African literature. A host of opinions raised on the 'language debate' in African literature have mostly been based on subjective generalization. Besides judgments have been pegged on extra-literary

yardsticks such as the pragmatics of national and international communicability of African literature for those who have vouched for the metropolitan languages, and the issues of subordination and identity construction for those who have rooted for the local languages. That we cannot wish away these pertinent issues is true. But more systematic studies on creative works in local languages would serve to beef up the arguments especially for those who desire for a pride of place for African languages in the galaxy of World languages.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Literary scholarship on Ngugi has always tended to point towards one direction concerning the decision to abandon the English language and use the Gikuyu language in his writing. Critics have argued that he did this to use the language of his people – one that the workers and peasants could understand. The move has been seen as a rebellion against the colonizing languages of the West that accorded African languages an inferior position. It was for him the proverbial return to the roots.

This position, which Ngugi himself has persistently and vehemently affirmed, is indisputable. Nevertheless, scholars seem to have remained ignorant of the fact that writing in vernacular presented him with fresh aesthetic possibilities that have significantly influenced the style in his fiction.

He has so far published three children's stories, two plays, two novels and a few poems in the mother tongue. Yet, whereas much has been written of his other works and the translations of the Gikuyu texts, there exists a dearth of the systematic analysis of the original Gikuyu works. An appreciation of the language use and style in the vernacular texts as unique aesthetic objects is desirable. It is therefore the mission of this study to investigate how Ngugi has generated aesthetic pleasure in writing in the Gikuyu language through a stylistic analysis of his first and, in our opinion, more successful Gikuyu novel: Caitaani Mutharaba-ini. Ultimately an analysis of how the Gikuyu literary language has thrived within a distinct literary tradition of the Aagikuyu community is inevitable.

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study seeks to demonstrate how Ngugi has used language to generate aesthetic pleasure in his first Gikuyu language novel Caitaani Mutharaba-ini. His shift from writing in the English language to the vernacular needs to be investigated to determine whether there is any significant change that is occasioned by this move with regard to the

language of his artistic dispensation. We need to interrogate specific linguistic choices to show how they contribute to the novel's achievement of its communicative function.

Thus a stylistic analysis that examines the author's manipulation of language, establishing in the process the extra linguistic factors that influence it, is bound to illuminate the aesthetic achievement that Ngugi makes in the Gikuyu text as compared and contrasted with his literary use of the English language. There is the need to place the Gikuyu literary language as experienced in the narrative into the broader socio-cultural context of the Aagikuyu community to determine the novel's communicative function as an aesthetic object.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

This study is a stylistic appreciation of the way Ngugi has manipulated the Gikuyu language to generate aesthetic effects in Caitani Mutharaba-ini. It specifically focuses on the lexical choices, the use of figurative language and the appropriation of the oral tradition in the novel. The analysis further entails the explanation of the social, historical and cultural contexts that influence our interpretation of specific linguistic choices. This is geared towards the attainment of a fuller appreciation of the text as an aesthetic whole.

1.3 HYPOTHESIS

This study seeks to confirm the following propositions: that Ngugi has effectively exploited the Gikuyu language to generate aesthetic pleasure in Caitani Mutharaba-ini, and that the appreciation of the Gikuyu literary language is enhanced by the understanding of its social, historical and cultural context.

1.4 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

Being one of the most prominent African writers and scholars, Ngugi has over the years attracted unceasing attention from literary critics. His decision to change from using the English language to Gikuyu as the language of his literary expression has been an issue that has attracted various responses in the ever-raging language debate in African literature as to whether it was justified. Besides, he has distinguished himself as the

foremost critic of the metropolitan languages including English, French, and Portuguese as the languages of African writers' creative expression. This makes him a most appropriate choice for this study.

The fact that Ngugi switched to the use of the Gikuyu language in order to speak to the workers and peasants in a language they could understand has been belaboured. He has been seen as the committed African writer per-excellence – the nationalist reformer moving the masses towards the revolution. Hardly has it been investigated how the use of the Gikuyu language has contributed to the construction of his Gikuyu works as aesthetic objects. A study of the aesthetic mileage that he had made in using his vernacular in his fiction will hopefully be a contribution to literary scholarship on Ngugi.

Caitani Mutharaba-ini is Ngugi's first Gikuyu novel. Its writing marked a radical departure from the Eurocentric orientation that his writing career had taken in that it stands out from his earlier novels not only in its use of vernacular, but also in its formal construction. It parodies on oral narration that is highly conscious of an audience at hand, and derives a lot of its linguistic choices from the oral literature of the Aagikuyu community. It is also more voluminous and more stylistically intriguing in its use of fantasy, caricature and narrative voices than his other Gikuyu novel Matigari ma Njiruungi. It is therefore an ideal choice for a stylistic analysis that seeks to investigate the aesthetics of the Gikuyu language in his works.

A comparative study of Caitani and its auto-translation Devil on the Cross is necessary if we are to establish the specific elements that contribute to the generation of aesthetic pleasure and subsequently find out what has been lost in translation. In addition, the fact that language operates within a socio-cultural context demands that we locate the literary language of the Gikuyu text within its literary tradition to determine its aesthetic value. An explication of how the Agikuyu history and oral tradition dictates our interpretation of certain linguistic choices such as lexical items, figures of speech and elements of oral literature in the text is therefore imperative.

Modern African literature has come to mainly be identified with the languages of the erstwhile colonial powers. Consequently creative writing in African languages has been relegated to the periphery in literary criticism especially in the area of stylistics. Even though much has been said in favour of writing in vernacular, not enough objective and systematic studies on texts written in local languages other than Kiswahili, which is fairly international, have been done. There is the dire need to establish literally dialogue between the various African languages through the intermediary of literary criticism by studying works written in vernacular. This should form a basis for comparative studies of African literature in African languages and other languages of the world. This study is a humble contribution to this end.

1.5 LITERATURE REVIEW

As one of the pioneering African creative writers, Ngugi has developed over the years to become a towering literary icon in the continent that has attracted critical attention from scholars the world over. The bulk of the studies on him have undertaken analysis of his thematic concerns. He has been seen as a literary and cultural nationalist and a Marxist who is invariably anti-colonial. A lot has also been done in the analysis of his style, and expectedly, this has largely been used to show how he has achieved his thematic mission, his social(ist) vision. An extensive bibliography of the studies on Ngugi is provided for by Carol Sicherman in her book Ngugi wa Thion'go: A Bibliography of Primary and Secondary Sources.

Given the scope and limitations of this study, this review focuses on studies on language and style especially with regard to writing in vernacular, and the impact of African oral traditions in the African novel with specific reference to Ngugi's works.

A study that deals with language in Ngugi's vernacular texts cannot avoid responding to some issues raised in the 'language debate' in African literature. Since the often-cited conference of African writers of English Expression at Makerere University College in 1962, the question on the right language to be used by African creative writers has

remained contentious to date. It will suffice to highlight just a few of these opinions raised by various scholars and writers on this subject.

Margulis and Nowekoski are among the many scholars who have addressed themselves to the language dilemma in postcolonial societies. In their article, they have echoed the observation always made about the choice of local languages vis a vis metropolitan languages and raised several questions which are quite pertinent to this study:

The issue of languages raises several polemical questions for consideration in the study of literary texts: does the author choose to work in a local language or a major European one? If the former – how does the work get translated and by whom? What might the translation have done to the work? What kind of semantic processes of abrogation/deformation and appropriation/reformation occur in the work? When a local language lends terms, in what context do they occur? Finally, what does the use of language imply about an implicit theory of resistance. (3)

Citing Ngugi as the “most radical among those writers who have chosen to turn away from English”(1), the two have gone ahead to identify other scholars and writers who have contributed to the language issue including Salman Rushdie, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffins, Hellen Tiffin, Braj B. Kachru, Raja Rao, W.H New, Edward Kaman Brathwaite and Chantal Zabus (3 of 4). This adds to our list of African writers and scholars who have aired their view on the language question in African literature including Ezekiel Mphahlele, Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Obi Wali, Alex la Guma and Cyprian Ekwensi among others.

Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffins and Hellen Tiffin, for instance, have addressed themselves extensively to language in post – colonial societies in their book The Empire Writes Back, providing theoretical paradigms of looking at textual strategies in the use of language in post-colonial writing. Just as Ngugi has vehemently argued, the three authors see the European languages as having been imposed on the colonial subject as part of the imperial project:

One of the main features of imperial oppression is control over language. Language becomes the medium through which a hierarchical structure of power is perpetrated, and the medium through which conceptions of 'truth', 'order' and 'reality' become established. Such power is rejected in the emergence of an effective post-colonial voice. (7)

They however dwell on the issues of "seizing the language of the centre and re-placing it in a discourse fully adapted to the colonized place" (38) through abrogation (deformation) and appropriation (reformation) of the metropolitan languages but do not provide models to deal with the absolute rejection of the imperial languages through writing in vernacular. Nevertheless, we are obliged to borrow their idea on the metonymic as opposed to the metaphoric functions of language. Citing Homi Bhabha's position on the importance of the metaphor/metonymy distinction to post – colonial texts they have observed that:

His point is that the perception of the figures of the text as metaphors imposes a universalist reading because metaphor makes no concessions to the cultural specificity of texts. For Bhabha it is preferable to read the tropes of the texts as metonymy, which symptomatizes the text, reading through its features the social, cultural and political forces, which traverse it. (52)

Though our study does not deal with issues of abrogation and appropriation of language, we are treating the tropes in Caitani Mutharaba-ini as metonymic insofar as they bear certain social and cultural significations in which they need to be fully appreciated.

Ngugi moves a step further than Ashcroft et al: For him, an 'effective post-colonial voice' can only be found in the total rejection of the European languages and a "return to the roots" (Writers in Politics, 53). He is dismayed by the African writers, including Achebe, Mphahlele and Gabriel Okara who believe in the Africanization of the metropolitan languages. Achebe's making the English language "carry the weight of my African experience" to Ngugi a self-defeatist position that only contributes to the

impoverishing of African languages (Decolonising, 8). He derides Okara's admission of how he strives to "capture the vivid African speech ... In order to bring the nearest meaning in English" (Quoted in Ngugi's Decolonising, 8). Commenting on Okara's position, Ngugi wonders:

Why, we may ask, should an African writer, or any writer become so obsessed by taking from his mother-tongue to enrich other tongues?...we never ask ourselves: how can we enrich our languages? How can we 'prey' on the rich humanist and democratic heritage in the struggles of other peoples in other times and other places to enrich our own? Why not have Balzac, Tolstoy, Sholokhov...Aristotle and Plato in African languages? And why not create literary monuments in our own languages? (Decolonising, 8)

Revisiting Achebe, we find in him a spirited defence of the appropriation of the European languages by African writers. Just like Ezekiel Mphahlele, he asserts that these languages have ultimately become the national, hence unifying languages in the formerly colonized nations. He strongly believes that "African writers write out of an African experience and of commitment to an African destiny" (Hopes, 50) which makes their literature truly African in spite of their use of the metropolitan languages. Indeed, for him these languages may well be for the moment considered equally African. This is what he alludes to when he says:

There has been an impassioned controversy about African literature in non-African languages. But what is a non-African language? English and French certainly. But what about Arabic? What about Swahili even? Is it then a question of how long the language has been present on African soil? If so how many years should constitute effective occupation? For me it is again a pragmatic matter. A language spoken by Africans on African soil, a language in which Africans write justifies itself. (Hopes, 63)

Wole Soyinka even gets colloquial in his rejection of the call for African writers to resort to writing in their vernaculars. In an indirect reference to Ngugi, he expresses his aversion to the “coming homeness of certain writers” (35) noting that it is not just in Africa where the phenomenon of languages dominating others has ever existed. The reality to him is that the European languages are used in all the other spheres of a people’s lives including in the judiciary, in commerce and even in road signs. Thus he concluded: “I, for one, anyway, refuse to accept the artificial ‘angst’, which either Africans themselves or outsiders attempt to impose on users of a foreign language. An element of irrationality is inherent in it, the refusal to accept the socio-political reality of which the affected users are a part, an attempt to make them stand outside their own national structures”(35).

This is an idea that is corroborated by Kohe Omotoso, a Nigerian critic who has asserted: “Some critics... support Ngugi’s advocacy of the use of indigenous languages without making the breakthrough in writing in them, perhaps unwilling to do so... whatever indigenous languages Ngugi’s Devil on the Cross might be translated to, it succeeds for me in the English rendition (58).

But this position has always had its opponents. Ngugi’s stand has its most eloquent support in the often-cited treatise of Obi Wali, a Nigerian critic who, in an article published in *Transition*, dismissed African writers writing in European languages for in doing this, he believed “they would be pursuing a dead end, which can only lead to sterility, uncreativity and frustration” (qtd in Scicherman, 30). The development of a “Truly African sensibility in African literature could only be achieved through writing in African languages”. Ngugi actually hails Wali’s allegation especially with regard to “peasant/worker audiences as the strongest source of stamina and blood for African literature” (Writers, 59), and sees the meeting of the challenges of language choice and audience as fundamental to the creation of a national literature.

Ngugi is here evidently echoing Fanon who foresaw the evolution of a writer in the formerly colonized nations from the militant writer of protest literature who addresses

oneself to the oppressor to one who "progressively takes on the habit of addressing his own people. It is from this moment that we can speak of a national literature" (193). For Ngugi, there could be no better way of speaking directly to his own people than writing in the Gikuyu language, there could be no greater way of creating a national literature than writing in a language that the workers and peasants could understand.

The above review forms a background from which our study emanates. It is evident that 'the language debate' falls in the province of literary polemics, which is of little use to an appreciation of a text as an aesthetic object. The debate is quite oblivious of the fact that literary texts are first and foremost works of art and cultural products in whose creation writers strive to exploit the aesthetic potential of the material at hand to the maximum. It is therefore desirable that we carry out systematic studies of texts in vernacular as a primary concern of criticism of African literature. The suitability of the choice of language is surely a secondary matter to the literary enterprise. Besides, it need not be over-emphasized that the availability of the medium of translation invalidates the argument of vernacular writing being seclusionist.

Nevertheless translation has got its own limitations as this study goes on to show. By virtue of its being socially and culturally determined, there are certain nuances and connotations in the linguistic elements of a language that are bound to be lost or abstracted in translation. As Sir H. Bell observes, "Every language has words, expressions, modes of thought or feeling characteristic of people who speak it, to which there are no exact equivalents in any other" (14).

The comparative analysis between the Gikuyu text and its English translation also goes out to show, as Bell's puts it, that "The translator can only convey across the gulf of language the dross in a poem but inevitably loses the gold, though he may substitute for new gold of his own smelting... the simple transference of any poem from one tongue to another, as we might carry a vase of flowers from one room to another is forever impossible" (23).

P.D. Beuchat corroborates this fact when she asserts: "A poem cannot be translated from one language to another and retain its important linguistic features. One can only write a new poem using the poetic features of the new language... in order to study the style of folkloristic material, one needs to know the language in which folklore is related" (183).

And in his essay "The Epistemology of Translation Ngugi, Matigari, and the politics of language," Simon Gikandi casts doubts on Ngugi's achievement in writing in the Gikuyu language. The gist of his argument is that once the Gikuyu text is translated, it falls into the same European tradition that Ngugi sought to discard. Thus he wonders: "What reasons could Ngugi possibly give to suggest that this novel (Matigari) has liberated him from the prison house of the colonial language and its episteme when (in its translation) it seems to affirm Europhonic generic conventions and linguistic practices found in his other texts?" (163)

In spite of his discomfort with Ngugi's apparent failure in his bid to make an "Epistemological break" (167) from the novelistic European genre, Gikandi shows substantive elements such as linguistic choices as proverbs and even extra-linguistic elements such as the title and the cover illustrations (165) that distinguish the aesthetic realization of Matigari ma Njirungi (the Gikuyu text) from that of Matigari, its English translation. The failure thus highlighted falls in Bells "Problems of translation" (9-28) or better still Gikandi's own "epistemology of translation" (166).

Bearing this in mind, it is also important to consider Ngugi's own acknowledgement that he was not re-inventing the novel to make it African. He asserts:

The social or even national basis of the origins of an important discovery or any invention is not necessarily a determinant of the use to which it can be put in its inheritors...The social history of the world before the advent of victorious socialism was the continued appropriation of the results of the labour of millions by the idle classes. Why should not the African peasantry and working class appropriate the novel? (Decolonising, 68).

Gikandi is of the opinion that Ngugi has just transposed the Gikuyu oral traditional into "generic conventions of the novel developed in Europe" (164). But given Ngugi's position cited above, and following our analysis in this study, we posit that Ngugi achieves considerable mileage in his endeavour to decolonise the novel. As this study shows that Caitaani Mutharaba-ini falls extensively in the conventions of African oral narration. In reacting to Gikandi's argument, we are operating on the assumption that Matigari ma Njirungi is to a great extent a similar text to Caitaani, its predecessor. This study is therefore in part a response to Gikandi's concluding question and recommendation: "If Matigari can only function as a supplement to Matigari ma Njirungi, hasn't Ngugi failed to achieve an epistemological break with his past linguistic practices? This question needs to be considered in greater detail" (167).

Ngugi has explained how he conceived and constructed the form of the narrative in Caitaani. His target audience was very clear in his mind. He says that he chose a "fairly simple structure" and "also borrowed heavily from forms of oral narrative, particularly the conversational tone, the fable, proverbs, songs and the whole tradition of poetic self-praise or praise of others." He concludes, "People would be familiar with these features and I hoped that these would help root the novel within a known tradition (Decolonizing, 78). This study interrogates how he deployed these elements in the Gikuyu text being in the language in which they originate.

Much has been written about the use of oral literature in written African literature in general and in the works of Ngugi in particular. A number of issues raised have served to precipitate this study.

Isindore Okpewho, for instance has stressed the need for oral literature to be studied in its original language to be fully appreciated. This is what he implies when he says -- about the development of the study of oral literature -- that: "A major advance in the study of African oral literature came when native scholars began to undertake research into the oral traditions of their own people.... Scholars who understood perfectly well what constitutes a beautiful expression in their own tongues took the trouble to explain the

meaning and effectiveness of various techniques in the original texts which give them their artistic qualities” (12).

Chris Wanjala has also recommended a criticism of African literature that addresses itself to the appropriation of the African tradition in the written works. He argues that, “the task of the critic today is to redefine literature and to identify the oral traditions in the written literature. African literary traditions cannot be adequately separated from the cultural traditions” (67). Disputing the romanticisation of the African oral traditions on modern African literature he goes on to show how Ngugi has made stylistic choices from oral literature to achieve concrete aesthetic effects when he observes: “When you read Devil on the Cross you find a new way of using songs to express a very new ethos which is critical of present ideology... Ngugi uses the song to shock and educate” (73).

Another scholar who has studied Ngugi’s use of oral literature is Safia Nureldin. She has looked at the cultural framework of his first four novels, all written in English where she notes that he “weaves in the fabric of his novels traditional tales; songs and legends from the Gikuyu novel” (28). On Devil on the Cross, she observes how Ngugi “captures the rhythms and nuances of the Gikuyu tongue” and indeed recommends a study of the Gikuyu version of the novel, which she could not undertake. This study does exactly that.

Gitahi Gititi is another scholar who has studied Ngugi’s use of the traditional art forms with specific reference to the use of *gicaandi* in Devil. He says that, “It is precisely the contemporary relevance of the diverse African (or Kenyan) literary forms that Ngugi is at pains to demonstrate and concretize. ‘The quest for relevance’ is not only of chapter in Decolonizing the Mind, but also Ngugi’s entire literary *modus vivendi*” (114). He further observes that “the narrative structure of Devil on the Cross is under girded by an interlacing network of genres--riddles, proverbs, songs, ‘tales’, myths and legends, and so forth” (118). However, he does not address himself to original Gikuyu text Caitani, which makes this study quite necessary.

One of the most impassioned analysis of Ngugi's use of oral literature in his works is Eileen Julien in his book. The African Novel and the Question of Orality. He explains how Ngugi uses language and orality not in the manner of "cultural framing" as can be conceived of Achebe's Things Fall Apart (144), but as a media through which his works attain stylistic/aesthetic actualization that is determined by the audience. He asserts:

In Ngugi, where orality is similarly a manifestation of a particular cultural matrix, it cannot be read as a curio, prepared for the eye of the outside viewer, for it participates in determining the actual shape of the narrative. In the first instance Igbo culture is replicated by the narrative, in the second, the narrator is elaborated in the idiom of those who are meant to be its primary listeners, in their common codes. Achebe represents a tradition of speech, Ngugi tries to conceive (write) within it. (144-45)

On Devil, he says that, "The story intimates a telling between the speaker – writer and the listener – reader" (145), and reiterates that in Decolonising and Devil, Ngugi does not just parade "a coveted set of values; it is rather a set of aesthetic conventions with which Ngugi's audience is conversant with, and from which he chooses several elements" (144). It is from this perspective that this study goes on to analyze how this has been achieved in the Gikuyu text.

This study makes the foregoing observations and arguments its point of departure. As Patrick Williams laments, "almost too much has been written on his (Ngugi's) early novel, and too little on the more recent" (xi). This is especially the case with the original Gikuyu texts including Ngaahika Ndeenda, Maitu Njugira, Caिताani Mutharaba-ini and Matigari ma Njirungi. The study is indeed recommended by Lewis Nkosi who raises a number of questions on the linguistic medium of Matigari:

Whose text is it, in fact? How faithful is the English translation to the original Gikuyu text? How much of it is Ngugi's and how much Wangui was Goro's, the translator? What words does she use for such concepts as "imperialism"? The

question is even more intriguing when one takes into account the magnificent verbal satire of the English translation. One wishes that Gikuyu speaking scholars would add to the growing Ngugi scholarship by doing comparative studies of his original Gikuyu texts and their translation. (205)

Following the above points of view on writing in African languages, the appropriation of African oral literature in modern African fiction, and on Ngugi's decision to write in the Gikuyu language, it is desirable to hearken to Nkosi's words. His concern is a true inspiration to this study.

1.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study has employed stylistics as a critical approach, which "gives us precise methodology for analyzing the linguistic peculiarities of literary works" (Indangasi, 9). It also takes advantage of some of the tenets of formalism, and semiotics as well as the ideas of Bakhtin in what he calls "Sociological Poetics".

H.G. Widdowson defines stylistics as "the study of literary discourse from a linguistic orientation" (3). For him the task of the literary critic is to "decipher a message encoded in an unfamiliar way, to express its meaning in a familiar and communal terms" (5). The critic therefore interrogates how a writer has idiosyncratically manipulated language to achieve aesthetic effects in a literary text (Leach and Short, 3), (Indangasi, 8). Katie Wales in her Dictionary of Stylistics further notes that:

The goal of most stylistic studies is not simply to describe the formal features of the text for their own sake, but in order to show their functional significance for the interpretation; or in order to relate literary effects to linguistic 'causes' where these are felt to be relevant. (438)

The study takes into account what Wellek and Warren point out, that language is "a creation of man and is thus charged with the cultural heritage of a linguistic group" (22).

We thus treat language as well as the oral tradition of a people as a system from which a writer makes choices to construct a work of art. The concept of Ferdinand de Saussure – Langue and Parole are therefore important to the study. Sunday Anozie distinguishes the two terms as follows:

Langue is an autonomous special institution, a collective contract which constitutes a system of values. Parole by contrast is essentially an act of individual selection: it prescribes a number of combinations in the use, which the individual can make of the code of langue to express his thought. (195)

In this light, we are treating the Gikuyu language and its oral literary tradition as a system from which Ngugi makes certain stylistic choices as forms of artistic articulation in Caitani Mutharaba-ini. This calls upon us to analyze certain linguistic and extra-linguistic choices in the novel in relation to the social context of the language. This is because as F.de Saussure, who established the arbitrary nature of meaning in language, says, “the social fact alone can create a linguistic system. The community is necessary if values that owe their existence solely to usage and general acceptance are to be set up” (8).

The treatment of literature as a system has developed over the years from the early Russian formalism, through structuralism, to the latter day semiotics all of which took cognizance of the Saussurean basic principle that “where there is signification and a text, there must be a knowable underlying system giving rise to meaning” (5). Jan Mukarousky, for instance, saw art as a “semiological fact’... an aesthetic object with an aesthetic function whose aesthetic potential is not inherent in itself” (Fokkema and Kunne-Ibsch, 31-2).

As for Lotman, a soviet semiotician: “The literary text is the product of, at least, two overlapping systems: the linguistic system and the literary system which is superimposed on the linguistic system”. Thus just like a receiver of a linguistic message must know the linguistic code in order to interpret the message, the reader of the literary text must know

the literary code in addition to the language in which the text is written, failure to which s/he will be unable to interpret the text.

Finally, this study incorporates Mikhail Bakhtin's 'Sociological Poetics'. Bakhtin goes beyond Saussure, who treats language as an abstract system, and sees it as a "social and a historical process" (Webster, 39). He dismisses the immanent study of a literary text by positing that: "the extra-artistic social milieu affecting art from outside, finds direct, intrinsic response within it" (596). Seeing a literary work as "an artistic verbal utterance", he contends that, "when we cut the utterance off from the real grounds that nurture it, we lose the key to its form as well as its import" (604). Bakhtin further argues that a poetic work is closely "enmeshed in the unarticulated context of life" (605) which creates a common purview between the author, the hero (subject), and the listener (reader). Texts therefore have communicative/aesthetic function and bear "assumed value judgments" (605).

The above positions help us to investigate how the Gikuyu language, its literary application and its context determine our aesthetic appreciation of Caitaani Mutharaba-ini.

1.7 SCOPE AND LIMITATION

This study limits itself to a comparative analysis of Caitaani Mutharaba-ini and the translation Devil on the Cross. Caitaani is Ngugi's debut Gikuyu novel in which he consciously sought to dispense with the European novel not only in his choice of the vernacular but also in the narrative rendition of the novel. The fact that its English version is Ngugi's auto-translation makes it quite suitable for a comparative analysis unlike the other Gikuyu language novel Matigari ma Njirungi which is translated by Wamburi wa Goro.

The study focuses on the analysis of style, specifically how language is used to generate aesthetic pleasure in the Gikuyu text as compared with its translation. Through a close reading of the two texts, our interest is to establish what Ngugi achieves stylistically in preferring the mother tongue to English as the language of his creative expression.

1.8 METHODOLOGY

This study has employed library research. A close reading and critical analysis of Caिताani Mutharaba-ini and Devil on the Cross as the primary texts of concern has been undertaken. An extensive reading of other related texts has also been done. This includes the other creative works of Ngugi, his literary essays, critical and biographical works on Ngugi and texts on literary criticism. All these have served to illuminate the study.

The Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library, Kenyatta University Library and The Kenyan National Archives, beside the personal libraries have served to provide the bulk of the research material. The Internet has also been useful in providing some information during the research.

CHAPTER TWO

NGUGI: A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

In his book Moving the Centre: The Struggle For Cultural Freedoms Ngugi wa Thiongo writes with a longing for home, thus saying: "Writing has always been my way of reconnecting myself to the landscape of my birth and upbringing" (156). Having had to flee from possible arrest and confinement by the Government of Kenya in 1982, he has spent the last two decades of his life in exile where he has continued to pursue his literary ambitions. And true to his words, events and experiences that attended his life as he grew up in Kenya heavily inform all his works of fiction.

Indeed, Ngugi's childhood and teenage must have instilled in the young mind the revolutionary instincts that came to characterize his life and animate his literary career. Born of a disinherited peasant family in Kamiriithu, Limuru in the Kiambu district of Kenya, his tender years witnessed to imperialism in its most violent manifestation in the British East Africa as the then 'British Protectorate' consisting of Kenya, Uganda and later Tanganyika was called. He was born a year before the outbreak of the Second World War. The period after the world war was a moment of heightening political agitation in Kenya especially by the African soldiers who had fought abroad on the side of Britain. Increased political consciousness culminated into the formation of The Kenya Land and Freedom Army (Mau Mau) among other anti-colonial liberation initiatives in the land. The themes of Mau Mau and imperialism have remained integral to Ngugi's literary works to date.

He started his primary education at Kamaandura mission school in 1947 before moving to Maanguu one of the Gikuyu independent and Karing'a schools. As early in his life as this, the contradictions surrounding the use of the English language by Africans crossed his path. Quoting Karega Mutahi's document on Language Policy in Kenya, Carol Sicherman in Ngugi Wa Thiong'o: The making of a Rebel notes that the English language was taught as the *lingua franca* in Kenyan schools as from 1929. However it was withheld for Africans for it was seen by the colonial administration as a "political

tool", which was for "literary rather than industrial and agricultural training" that the Africans deserved. In contrast, the Gikuyu independent (Karing'a) schools taught English at a stage earlier than that proposed by policy makers (27). The 'language question' was later to haunt Ngugi's life in a more profound way than he could have guessed in these innocent days.

It was not long before the policy of denying Africans the opportunity to learn English was revised. Now they were made to learn and speak it in place of their mother tongues. But despite the advantages that learning the English language would apparently (and actually did) avail to him, Ngugi in retrospect resents the dehumanizing manner in which this language was forced onto the pupils, essentially constructing the myth of its superiority over their mother tongue:

In Kenya, English became more than a language: It was *the* language, and all others had to bow before it in deference. Thus one of the most humiliating experiences was to be caught speaking Gikuyu in the vicinity of the school. The culprit was given corporal punishment – three to five strokes of the cane on bare buttocks – or was made to carry a metal plate around the neck with inscriptions such as I AM STUPID or I AM A DONKEY ... The attitude to English was the exact opposite: any achievement in spoken or written English was highly rewarded; prizes, prestige, applauses; the ticket to higher realms. English became the measure of intelligence and ability in the arts, the sciences, and all other branches of learning. English became *the* main determinant of a child's progress up the ladder of formal education. (Decolonising, 11)

Ironically, it was on account of having a credit in English that Ngugi secured a place at Alliance High School in 1955. It is his mastery of this language that secured him a place Makerere. It is this language that launched him into his literary career.

He was only fourteen years old when the state of Emergency was declared by the colonial administration bent on suppressing the Mau Mau uprising. The war for land and freedom,

which lasted from the early fifties to 1956, affected Ngugi in a very personal and significant way. His elder brother joined the fighters in the forest just like Boro does in Weep Not, Child. Consequently, his mother was tortured for three months at the Kamiriithu Home Guard Post. His stepbrother was shot dead in mysterious circumstances like that of Gitogo, the dumb and deaf boy in A Grain of Wheat. Besides his home in old Kamiriithu was razed down together with the other homes in the location in the villagisation process by the colonial government that sought to concentrate people together in guarded villages to cut off any ties with the “terrorists”. He captures his confusion and despair in his heart upon his return from Alliance after the first term of study:

The year before, my elder brother, Wallace Mwangi, had joined the Mau Mau guerilla army after a dramatic escape from police custody. Many home-guard loyalists would never forgive me for what some thought a miscarriage of educational justice. A brother of a Mau Mau ‘terrorist’ securing a place in one of the then top African schools in colonial Kenya? I came back after the first term and confidently walked back to my old village. My home was now only a pile of dry mudstones, bits of grass, charcoal and ashes. Nothing remained, not even crops, except for a lone pear tree that slightly swayed in the sun and wind. I stood there bewildered. Not only my home, but the old village with its culture, its memories and its warmth had been razed to the ground. (Detained, 73)

Life at Alliance was also to have a lasting impression on Ngugi’s imagination. It is the school along which Siriana in The River Between and Petals of Blood is modeled. In a somewhat ambivalent attitude towards ‘the white man’s’ (formal) education, the author portrays Siriana as both liberating and subjugating. For Waiyaki in The River, joining Siriana would empower him with knowledge that his people needed to liberate them. But the Siriana of Munira, Chui, Karega and the eccentric, condescending, English principal – Cambridge Fraudsham – in Petals is seen in a different light. It was an institution that actively developed the colonial hegemony, where the myth of the superiority of the European literature and culture, and the white race in general was systematically constructed.

Ngugi writes about how he was treated to a variety of European classics including the Biggles series, Stevenson's Treasure Island and Dicken's Oliver Twist. Besides, the school headmaster would lead the school in the recitation of Kipling's poem "If". (Moving, 136). Writing about the school years later, Ngugi's mistrust for the white world and its 'civilizing mission' in Africa is evident:

It was a colonial school in a colonial world. The school, founded by an Alliance of Protestant Missions way back in the thirties, was the leading elitist school for African children. Its motto, 'Strong to Serve', expressed the ideas of the school: to produce leaders who of course had the necessary character and knowledge to faithfully but intelligently serve king and Empire. It was a boarding school run on military lines ... where Kiplings poem 'If' was so very important. And of course Shakespeare. But Biggles? Oh yes, Biggles. (Moving, 137).

Ngugi's effort in writing started at Alliance where his first story *I Try Witchcraft* was published in the school magazine. Although he rose to become a dormitory prefect he was branded an agitator and warned by the principal against getting involved in politics. And, inspite of himself, Ngugi became a devout member of the school's Christian Union. This explains the preponderance of the Judeo-Christian motifs in his fiction.

In 1959, Ngugi joined Makerere University College in Kampala, Uganda. He undertook a two-year preliminary course before proceeding to a three-year Bachelor of Arts degree course studying Economics and English. He specialized in English with Joseph Conrad for his Special Paper and graduated with an Honours Degree in 1964. His literary career started to blossom during his undergraduate days. His first creative work was the short story *A Fig Tree* that was published in *Penpoint*, the Makerere University literary journal that he later came to be a member of the editorial board. He wrote the short plays *The Rebel* and *The Wound in the Heart* for the inter-halls drama competition at the university and the longer play *The Black Hermit*, which was performed in 1962 as part of Uganda's independence celebrations.

But it is in prose writing that Ngugi distinguished himself as a talented upcoming African writer while still at Makerere. He wrote The Black Messiah, which won the first prize of a novel writing competition organized by The East African Literature Bureau in 1961, and which was published, with revisions, in 1965 as The River Between. He wrote his second novel Weep Not, Child in 1962 with which he again won a first prize this time in the UNESCO prize for literature for upcoming African writers. This was his first published novel (1964). Makerere was therefore launching pad for Ngugi's writing career.

But as he has noted, the Eurocentric bias in the study of literature and the English language was not abated at Makerere: It was indeed more profound. It entailed the study of "English writing of the British Isles from the times of Chaucer, Spenser, and Shakespeare up to the twentieth century of T.S.Eliot, James Joyce and Wilfred Owen" (*Moving*, 6). This was in addition to the study of the history of the English language. There was nothing taught about African literature. Yet Ngugi celebrates his having first encountered African and Caribbean literature here and credits Chinua Achebe, Peter Abrahams and George Lamming as black writers who fired his imagination in those formative years. He particularly cites Peter Abrahams' Tell Freedom and Lamming's In the Castle of My Skin with a fondness as he recollects:

It was actually at Makerere University College, but outside the formal structure, that I first encountered the new literatures from Africa and the Caribbean. I can still recall the excitement of reading the world from a centre other than Europe. The great tradition of European literature had invented and even defined the worldview of the Calibans, the Fridays and the reclaimed Africans of their imaginations. Now the Calibans and the Fridays of the new literature were telling their story which was also my story. (*Moving*, 4)

When Makerere was the cradle whence Ngugi's literary birth took place, it was his three years sojourn at Leeds University in England that shaped his ideological thinking. Having graduated from Makerere with a B.A honours degree in 1964, and after a stint in journalism as a weekly reporter and columnist for Kenyan newspapers *Daily Nation* and

Sunday Nation, he got a British Council scholarship for postgraduate studies at Leeds where he entered in September, the same year. Here, he undertook to write a thesis on the themes of exile and identity in Caribbean literature with particular reference to the works of George Lamming. He talks glowingly of his enthusiasm at joining Leeds where reputed African scholars including Soyinka, Peter Nazareth, Grant Kamenju and Pio Zirimu had preceded him, and attests to the way it contributed in moulding his revolutionary personality:

At Leeds University there was at this time a radical intellectual tradition which had grown side by side with a conservative formal tradition. And as was the case at Makerere, I once again identified with the unofficial radical tradition. Leeds exposed me to a wider literary world; it made me aware of the radical literature that embraced the Third World as well as the socialist world. (qtd in Sichernman 22).

It is here that he read Fanon's The Wretched of the Earth and the political literature of Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels and Lenin, which came to greatly influence his ideological thinking. During this period he wrote A Grain of Wheat, which was published in 1967.

Upon his return to Kenya he was appointed in the University of Nairobi where he taught from 1967 to 1969. It is here that his bid to decolonize the study and practice of African literature started to toll. Teaming up with his colleagues Henry Owuor-Anyumba and Taban Lo Liyong, he, in 1968, wrote a letter to the then Acting Head of the English Department calling for the abolition of this department and the setting up of the Department of African Literature and languages. They envisaged the study of Swahili, English and French alongside other African languages. The study of the oral tradition was also to be integrated into the syllabus. Theirs was a conviction that, "With Africa at the centre of things, not existing as an appendix or a satellite of other countries and literatures, things must be seen from the African perspective (Homecoming, 150).

In 1969 Ngugi resigned from the university in protest against the violation of academic freedom. He then joined Makerere where he stayed up to 1970. In the same year he joined North Western University as a Visiting Associate Professor where he stayed up to 1971. It is here that he started writing Petals of Blood which he was to finish five years later. He rejoined the University of Nairobi in 1971 where he was appointed the first African Head of the Department of Literature with effect from 1973. Consequently, he supervised final renovations on the literature syllabus. His first collection of essays Homecoming was published in 1972 while Secret Lives and Other Stories came forth the in 1976. So did his play co-authored with Micere Mugo: The Trial of Dedan Kimathi.

1977 is perhaps the most momentous, if not the ultimate turning point, in Ngugi's literary career. It was year of the controversial performance of *Ngaahika Ndeenda*, written together with Ngugi wa Mirii by the Kamiriithu Community Education and Culture Centre. Petals, which just like the play is overtly political was published. These two might have led to his arrest and eventual detention without trial at Kamiti Maximum Security Prison.

It is here, at cell 16, that the novel of our study was conceived. Interestingly, it was a police warder who prompted Ngugi into thinking critically about writing in vernacular. The friendly warder challenged Ngugi that he and his educated lot did not like interacting with the ordinary people or speak their mother tongue. "What have Europeans done to you people that you follow them like dogs their master? What have they done to you that you despise your own tongues and your own country?" (Detained, 130). Ngugi explains that these questions from the warder intensely provoked his thoughts. And with the events of the "Kamiriithu experiment" then, fresh in his mind, he further explains how he started writing Caitani Mutharaba-ini:

...his talk has stung me in ways that he will never know. That night I sit at the desk and start the story of Wariinga in the Gikuyu language. It flows just like that, and for the first time since my incarceration, I feel transports of joy. That which I have always toyed with but feared writing a novel in Gikuyu – is happening

before my own eyes, and I have government toilet-paper for writing material, and a government paid warder as a consultant. (Detained, 130)

Since Caitani, which was published in 1980, Ngugi has written his fiction in the Gikuyu language. His later works include Maitu Njugira written for performance in 1982, Matigari ma Njiruungi, the second Gikuyu novel published in 1986 and the *Njamba Neene* series of children's stories written between 1986 and 1990. He has also edited a Gikuyu language journal *Mutiiri* (1994). In his ever-expanding canon is also a host of critical/literary essays published in Writers in Politics (1981), Barrel of a Pen (1983), Decolonising the Mind (1986), Moving the Centre (1993), and Pen-points, Gun-points, and Dreams (1997).

In his authoritative book Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Simon Gikandi has interrogated the inherent contradictions/paradoxes that have come to define Ngugi's literary career. He traces Ngugi's development artistically and ideologically in what can be seen as a life-long search for an elusive 'writing freedom'.

At Alliance, Gikandi notes that Ngugi was "the model student of colonial culture" (25), something that had its fruition when he got to Makerere University College "eager to master English and Englishness" (251). It is here that he fully imbibed "the grammar of liberal culture" and its claim to liberal/ universal humanism. At Leeds, after experiencing Fanon, Marx and Engels, Ngugi's ideological leaning as a Marxist and an anti-colonial critic was initiated. Literature, then, ceased having aesthetic autonomy: it came to be ever determined by political economy. Yet, as Gikandi further observes, "even as he increasingly espoused materialist theories of art and strove to privilege the base structure over the superstructure, Ngugi could simply not let go the central liberal notion that art was about the human spirit, individual and collective values, and social relationships" (249).

Whereas Ngugi saw his writing in the Gikuyu language as providing for him the solution to his anxiety about the best way to communicate to the masses, Gikandi sees it as having had the capacity to foster the ethnic--Pan African dichotomy. Besides, his materialist theory of language was hardly a panacea in the "discourse of national identity". Gikandi

therefore wonders: "But if language was a product of different generations and social classes, how could it transcend historically engendered social divisions to become the signifier of a unified nation and its many voices?" (265)

Even after his 1986 'farewell to English' the pragmatics of life in exile gravitated him back to the language he had renounced. His experiment with *Mutiiri*, a Gikuyu journal published in the US, was hardly successful. Being as physically alienated from Africa as its editor and contributors, it could hardly strike a resounding note of success as one that Ngugi must have enjoyed with Ngaahika Ndeenda, once upon a time at Kamiriithu. Nevertheless, Ngugi has remained a luminary in African literature whose lofty literary pursuits since his formative years at Makerere have remained steadfast. As we anticipate his forthcoming third novel in the Gikuyu language, Murogi wa Kagogo, which like Matigari ma Njiruungi was written in exile, we hope to find out how much he has sustained the communion between himself and the landscape of his birth and upbringing.

CHAPTER THREE

LEXIS

Dwilight Bolinger has stated that the organic function of language is to carry meaning, which must have something to do with the workings of the linguistic cell (86). This linguistic cell is the morpheme, which is the smallest meaningful element of language, and "the semi-finished material from which words are made" (88). As such words are central in the construction of meaning and therefore determine our perception of reality. This makes it important for a stylistic analysis of a literary text to start with the examination of the writer's choice of words. It is in this light that we investigate Ngugi's lexical choices and their aesthetic effects in Caitani Mutharaba-ini in this chapter.

We are interested in the specific aspects of the Gikuyu language lexis and its contribution in the generation of aesthetic pleasure in the text as compared to its English language equivalent in the translation. In so doing, we are contending, as Sir H.I.Bell has argued, that "a combination of words which in one language very happily suits the impression desired is not likely to do so when the words are taken from a different language." The study focuses at the use of the Gikuyu language nouns and noun phrases, aspects of word-formation, the use of foreign words, describing words and phrases (intensifiers), taboo words and euphemisms. To draw our conclusions we have made a hand in hand comparative analysis of the original text and the translation.

Our analysis commences with the examination of **nouns** and **noun phrases**. In his book A Short History of Kikuyu Grammar B. M. Gecaga has indicated that the Gikuyu language has got eleven classes of nouns. These classes are marked by a distinctive singular and plural prefix, which goes in front of the noun stem of each class (6). According to L.S.B. Leakey, the first three classes of nouns in the Gikuyu language represent things, which are considered to have a spirit, with the first class having the first class spirit and the third class having the least spirit (2).

The first class of nouns constitutes names of human beings and is denoted by the prefix *mu-* in the singular and *a-* in the plural. We have such names as *mundu* (human)--*andu* (humans), *muiritu* (girl)--*airitu* (girls), as examples. The second class has the names of most large trees and plants, certain epidemic diseases considered spirit borne, and a number of animals that are promoted, for one reason or another, to go into class II. They are denoted by the singular prefix *mu-* and the plural prefix *mi-*. Examples of this include: *mugumo* (fig tree)--*migumo* (fig trees) and *murimu* (disease)--*mirimu* (diseases). The third class has the names of birds, reptiles, insects, mammals, lesser plants, weeds and grasses. This is denoted by the prefix *n-* both in the singular and the plural and includes such nouns as *nyoka* (snake), *nyoni* (bird), and *nyeki* (grass)

Class IV has the names of inanimate objects denoted by the prefix *ki-* or *gi-* in the singular and *i-* in the plural. Examples are *gikombe* (cup)--*ikombe* (cups), *kihato* (broom)--*ihato* (brooms). The fifth class, on the other hand, constitutes names of objects of ceremonial, religious and magical significance and is denoted by prefix *i-* in the singular and *ma-* in the plural. This includes such nouns as *ihiga* (stone)--*mahiga* (stones), *itimu* (spear)--*matimu* (spears) among others. Class six takes the prefix *ru-* in the singular and prefix *n-* in the plural while class VII consists of abstract nouns which take the prefix *u-* in the singular and *ma-* in the plural. Class VIII has prefix *ku-* or *gu* in the singular and *ma-* in the plural, these being names of certain parts of the body. There is only one noun in the ninth class, the noun *handu* (place), in the singular and *kundu* (places) in the plural. Class X is the group of nouns, which are expressed in the diminutive denoted by prefix *ka-* in the singular and *tu-* in the plural. Thus we can have *kabuku* (booklet)--*tubuku* (booklets) in the singular and the plural respectively.

Leakey further observes that it is common for certain nouns to be either promoted or demoted from their normal class to another. This is especially common with names of people or animals. Certain human beings have their names demoted from the first class to any of the lower classes for certain reasons. They could be for instance demoted to class III, the class of lesser living things, to indicate that they are objects of pity. This includes such nouns as *ngombo* (slave) and *ngia* (pauper). There are others, which are

placed in class V because they have a special connection with religion or are ceremonial. A good example is *ithe* (father). When people or animals deserve to be scorned or hated, they are demoted to class IV, the class of inanimate objects. Examples include *kiguta* (lazy person), *kimaramari* (naughty person) and *kiura* (frog).

Ngugi has taken full advantage of the above-mentioned grammatical aspects of the Gikuyu nouns to achieve stylistic effects in *Caitani Mutharaba-ini*. Naturally, all the noun classes of the language abound in the novel, but there are certain nominal choices that draw attention to themselves, hence catch our attention as we appreciate the text.

One of the most striking uses of nouns and noun phrases is the way names and other noun phrases referring to people are used to delineate the host of characters that populate the story. This is not only seen in his choice of proper nouns but also in that of the common nouns that refer to certain characters and the words and phrases that modify them. In so doing, Ngugi has managed to develop his thematic concerns and to effectively satirize the characters in question. A sample analysis of some of these nouns and noun phrases illustrates this.

One of the ways in which the author has manipulated language in *Caitani Mutharaba-ini* is through the modification of nouns and noun phrases in describing some characters in the story. This can be seen in a number of examples.

Whereas in *Devil on the Cross* we are told of Boss Kihara as the *employer* of Jacinta Waringa and the *landlord* who evicts her from her rented house, in the Gikuyu version, they are referred to as *ndoonga ndongoria* and *ndoonga* respectively. The noun *ndoonga* is a derivative of the class IV noun *gitonga* that ordinary means a rich person, but has a nuance that this person is awful. It falls in the class four nouns, the class of inanimate objects. In addition, the narrator has augmented it from *gitonga* to *ndoonga*. The dull enunciation of the prefix *nd-* suggests further the wickedness of the amorous employer and the dehumanized landlord.

The ruthlessness with which Wariinga is evicted is captured in the name used to describe the thugs who threw out Wariinga's things. In the English version the thug who threw the keys to Wariinga is referred to as a henchman. But in the Gikuyu version this man is *kimuitu*. It would suffice to simply call this man *mitu*, which loosely translated means a criminal. To begin with, this belongs to the second class (*mu—mi*), the category of trees and animals. In addition, the narrator uses the augmentative form *ki-*, which puts the noun in the class of inanimate objects, to emphasize the abhorrence of the thug.

We have another example cave where the robbers are gathered., Gatuiria is shocked to learn that there still exists, as translated into the English version, “professional murderers and eaters of human flesh.” In the Gikuyu version, these are said to be *mang'eani* and *mang'auru* which when literally translated mean cutthroats and shirks respectively. The use of the prefix *ma-* instead of *a-* (*ang'eani*) and *i-* (*ngi'auru*) captures the viciousness of the men as perceived by Gatwiiria. Similarly, the Devil's Voice that comes to tempt Wariinga refers to itself as “*Hihinyi. Hahami. Henania. Haati*” (194). This is translated into English as “Oppressor. Exploiter. Liar. Grabber” (DOC 192). The modification of these nouns, which ordinarily would be *muhihinyi, muhahani, muhenania* and *muhaati*, by using the prefix *h-* emphasizes the inhumanity of the devil.

The white man is portrayed as repugnant through the nouns that describe him in the text. A case in point is the name attributed to the white man who allegedly left behind Ford T that Mwaura inherited. In the English version, this man is referred to as a European, which is simply denotative. However in the Gikuyu version the noun *thuungu* is a truncation of *muthuungu*, which removes it from the class one nouns, hence dehumanizes it. This again seen in the instance where we are told of Wariinga's nightmares when she was a student in Nakuru. She would see the devil that, in the English version, had “a skin white as that of a very fat European.” (139). Though the adjective “fat” serves to portray the European as undesirable, the Gikuyu version “*kimuthungu kimwe kinoru*” (138) which should translate into “one gigantic fat European” is more intense. The prefix *ki-* is the augmentative indicator of inanimate objects. Coupled with this is its alliteration

in the phrase. It puts emphasis that the European seen in Wariinga's dream was frightening and quite repulsive.

There are other objects whose nominal description deviate from the grammatical norm. This again is mainly achieved through the use of augmentative and diminutive prefixes of the nouns in question, which the Gikuyu language, unlike the English language, provides for. A good example is how the dressing of the men who removed the devil from the cross in Wariinga's nightmare at the beginning of the story is described. Whereas in the English version they were merely dressed in suits and ties, these in the Gikuyu version are referred to as *mathuti* and *matai* (8). The prefix *ma-* reveals the feelings of the narrator who is disgusted with these men whose suits and ties could otherwise be simply referred to as *thuti* and *tai*.

Similarly, Kareendi's relationship with the loafer as told in Wariinga's anecdote is referred to as love. This is not just *wendo* (love) but *kiwendo* (very big love). The prefix *ki-* implies the artificiality of this love, which at the best can only be described as an infatuation, fueled by cheap romance. It implies that this love is destructive and ill fated. This indeed turns out to be the case in the story.

Another example can be seen when, at the cave, Wangari is disgusted with the braggadocio of the thieves and robbers. In the English version this is described as "the self-congratulation and mutual admiration of the thieves and robbers" (98). In the Gikuyu version this is described as "*minua ya aici na atunyani*" (94) which in translation would be "the big mouths of the thieves and robbers." Instead of the conventional *tunua* we have *minua*, which indicates how irritating the men's talk was to Wangari.

The use of Gikuyu language has also helped Ngugi to appropriate and formulate personal nouns which have contextual symbolic significance and which have thus contributed to the overall aesthetic achievement of the text. This includes the names and nicknames of most characters in the story that are derived from common Gikuyu words.

Wariinga's boyfriend at the university, for instance, is called Njooi Kimwana. Kimwana is a common noun meaning a young man, which ordinarily would hardly be used as proper noun. But Ngugi uses it here as a proper noun to underpin the youthfulness of Wariinga's boyfriend as contrasted to the sugar daddies like Boss Kihara. Indeed, running through the novel is the conflict between the young men and the old men as they compete for young girls. This conflict is aptly captured by the name given to the young (kamoongonye) and the name given to the old (waigoko). Ngugi has appropriated these two names from a Gikuyu ballad in which a girl laments that her father wants her to marry a waigoko--an old man with a hairy chest, and refuses her to get herself a kamoongonye -- a poor young man.

This conflict is best captured in Wariinga's anecdote about Kareendi's predicament with the above two antagonists whose motive is to sexually exploit her. Wariinga's herself has had her misadventures with a kamoongonye and a waigoko-- Njooi kimwana and the Old Man of Ngorika respectively. At happier times, Wariinga fondly appreciates her thriving relationship with Gaturia and wonders:

Iingiahikiire Waigoko uri nderu githuri ri, iingiacookire kuruuta kamoongonye ka mwanake ku?Tiga ati nderirwo ni ungi ati Waigoko a riu nimeanjirwo nderu githuri ni mbeeca (CM 240)

This is the English version is translated as:

If I'd married my hairy-chested waigoko, where would I ever have found a young man like you? But I was told by someone that modern waigoko's have their chests shaved smooth by money (DC 235)

The two names, therefore, have got significant connotations that contribute to thematic and character development in the story and whose aesthetic actualization is dependent on the reader's knowledge of the oral sources alluded to.

Virtually all the proper nouns have an intrinsic literary value, an aspect that we are going to deal with at length under figures of speech in the following chapter. But we can also for now examine some of these nouns and noun phrases at the lexical level. These are in particular the phrases, which consider compound nouns. Compound nouns are nouns made of two or more words like the noun 'Editor in Chief'. The compound nouns in *Caitani* have greater stylistic effects than it turns out to be in the translation. We can illustrate this by citing a few phrases referring to certain people, places or a group of people in the story.

It is interesting to observe how Wangari addresses Mwaura when she informs him about her inability to pay for the fare. She says, "*Ithe wa andu, reke ngukaire tutanathii muno*" (CM 31). This would be literally translated as, "Father of the people, let me plead with you before we have gone far." But it is translated as, "Friend, let me pour out my problem to you before we have gone far." (DC 36). Again when Mwaura gets keen hear what she has to say Wangari says, "*One ugwo baaba witu*" (CM 31) which would be literally translated as "Oh that is it our father" but is translated as "That is the spirit, friend." (DC 36). The phrases "*ithe wa andu*" and "*baaba witu*" are commonly used in dialogue to appeal to human emotions through flattery which at times borders on sarcasm. This is common with women while pleading with an adamant person to do them a favour. Wangari, being the experienced woman that she later turns out to be, has mastered the art of flattery, which she tactfully employs on Mwaura. The beauty of this is lost in the English version as the words chosen do not correspond to the original. There is also the loss of the tonal movement suggested by the words in their original which captures the speaking mannerism of ordinary people and goes a long way into characterizing Wangari.

The compound nouns *Mbari ya Karianime*, *Mbari ya Karimi* and *Mbari ya Iregi* are yet some other lexical choices whose semantic and stylistic significance is greater in the original than in the translation. They should be literally translated as "The Clan of the Eaters of What Others Have Tilled", "The Clan of the Tillers", and "The Clan of Those Who Rebelled", respectively. But they are translated in the English version as "those

who live on the products of others," "the producers" and "the iregi rebels". *Karianime* is a pejorative term customarily used against lazy people and those who take advantage of their positions to exploit others. The idea of these people being a *mbari* (clan) in the story implies that this is cohort of well-organised exploiters, which the 'thieves and robbers' in the story prove to be. Similarly the idea of the peasants being a clan suggests their collective victimhood, while 'the clan of those who rebelled' is suggestive of the growth of socio-political consciousness among the oppressed peasants and workers. The term *iregi* has its origin in the Gikuyu's *Iregi* generation, which is the generation of those people who rebelled against dictatorship. These are therefore stylistic choices whose aesthetic effect is greater when we appreciate them within their socio-historical context.

It is also interesting to see how the fat men and the thin ones are contrasted as the competitors at the cave are introduced. The thin ones are referred to as *Mbari ya Waceke*, which means 'The Clan of the Thin One', while the fat ones are referred to as *Mbari ya Mucuuha*, which means 'The Clan of the Loose Stomach'. The fact that these phrases begin with capital letters implies that they are treated as proper nouns whereby *Waceke* and *Mucuuha* stand for the names of the patriarchs/matriarchs of the supposed clans. This contrasts with the English version where we have, for the equivalents, the descriptive phrases "the clan of skinies" and the "clan of fatties". This becomes more evident when the narrator says:

Ni hangiatuthukire haaro riria Wamucuuha umwe aaniriire akiuga ati mundu ucio ukwaragia ari muceke ota Ndaaya wa Kahuria. Naake muuru wa Waceke akiruuga na iguru riingi mikiha yoothe ya ngiingo na uthiu yuumiriite. (CM 92).

A fight almost broke out when one fatty said loudly that the man who had just spoken was as lanky as Ndaaya wa Kahuria. The man who had been insulted stood up and demanded bitterly (DC 96).

Whereas *Wamucuuha* is a proper noun, 'one fatty' is a descriptive phrase. *Muuru wa Waceke*, which again acts as a proper noun phrase, means 'the son of Waceke (The Thin

One). Waceke is a common Gikuyu name given to women. The two nominal choices are used to contrast the men and ridicule them by creating humour out of their disproportionate physique. This is more profound in the original than in the translation.

Another interesting stylistic aspect in *Caitani Mutharaba-ini* is the way the author has introduced words that are not indigenous to the lexicon of the Gikuyu language. We therefore now turn to **word-formation** as an exercise that serves aesthetic ends in a literary text. The writer may engage in different word-formation processes such as coinage, borrowing, blending, clipping, compounding, conversion, formation of acronyms and derivation through the use of affixes.

Borrowing as George Yule observes entails taking over words from other languages and directly translating the elements of the words into the borrowing language (52). We have a host of borrowed words in *Caitani*. These include such words as *ngoobu* (golf), *ceekeretari* (secretary), *aandirithi* (address), *injinia* (engineer), *kapito* (capital), *yunibaciti* (university), *baanica* (furniture), *ndiramu* (drum), *borithi* (police), *maraitenithi* (licences), *kaandarathi* (contract), and *Aabirika* (Africa) just to mention a few. Words such as *kaburaita* (typewriter), *thenema* (cinema), *muthubari* (municipality) and *kanju* (council) are words that are commonly used by the speakers of the Gikuyu language. In the novel most of the borrowed words are from the English language.

However, we observe that there are instances where the author comes up with totally new words, which he has borrowed from English or opts to use the borrowed version of a word whereas there is a local equivalent. He, for instance uses *handimbagi* (handbag) instead of *kamuhuko*, *thibiiti* (speed) instead of *iHENYA*, *ngiree* (grey) instead of *kibuu*, *gategethimo* (catechism) instead of *kirira* and others of this kind. Some new words that he forms are words such as *Aamerikanici* (Americans), *nacing'i* (nursing), *phiciteecita* (phase tester), and *baagiranti* (bankrupt).

It is questionable as to why Ngugi extensively borrows words from English, a language he has accused as having led to the suppression of African languages. This could be an

admission on his part that the Gikuyu language has been greatly influenced by English in its lexical development. Being the official language in the country, English is a major language in the media, and the language of instruction in schools. As such, many words borrowed from the language, with slight modifications like the ones cited above, have come to form a substantial part of the lexicon of most local Kenyan languages. Thus such words as *matooyota* (toyotas), *maciindici* (mercedes), *koonicati* (concert), and *kaambuni* (company) have naturally come to be part of the lexicon of the Gikuyu language.

As a stylistic strategy, the use of some borrowed words captures the speech behaviour of the ordinary people while others have humorous effects in the story. This is especially in dialogue where the expected enunciation of the words is amusing, it being an imitation of their English pronunciation. Words such as *inicibegita* (inspector), *baagariniti* (bankrupt), and *gategethimo* (catechism) are bound to sound amusing when uttered. Another good example is when Wangari reports how the white owner of the shop in Nairobi told one of his workers when he had Wangari arrested: "*Nguundi waka mithita mugwate, nguundi waka*" (CM 37) which is translated as "Good work Mr. Mugwate, good work." (DC 43) Though these words are just a direct imitation of the English speaker, the writer uses them here to ridicule the African. Humour is especially achieved through the punning effect of the title *mithita*, which though intended to mean Mr. immediately strikes the reader as being the Gikuyu word for 'many penises'.

There is another intriguing process of word-formation in the text where Ngugi has converted already existing words to form new ones. Yule defines conversion as an aspect of word-formation where there is a change in the function of a word, as, for example, when a noun comes to be used as a verb (54). Thus from the word bottle we get the verb bottled. When contributing to the debate in his *matatu*, Mwaura at one point says:

Nii gutiri itainaga. O na umuuthi gutiri nii itainaga. Njugaga atiri: thi ino ni githiururu. Yeera mwena uyu, ngerania nayo. Yaatiruka mwena ungi, ngatirukania nayo. Yaaruruma, ngarurumania nayo. Yaakira, ngakirania nayo

ndaakora akurinu ngukurinuhithania nao; ahonoki ngahonokania nao; aithiramu ngathirimithania nao; piigani, ngapiigithania nao (CM 42)

This is translated in the English version as follows:

As for me, there was no song I wouldn't have sung then. Even today there's no song that I wouldn't sing. I say this world is round. If it leans that way, I lean that way with it. If it stumbles, I stumble with it. If it bends, I bend with it. If it stays upright, I stay upright with it, if it growls I growl with it, if it is silent, I am silent too.... If I find myself among members of the Akurinu sect, I become one of them; when I am with those who have been saved, I too am saved; when I'm with Muslims, I embrace Islam, when I'm among pagans, I too become pagan. (DC 47)

In the Gikuyu text, the writer stretches his imagination to come up with new lexical items that appeal to our sense of aesthetics. A translation of the last statement of the above quotation, which is a closer approximation of the original than the one in *Devil on the Cross*, serves to illustrate our argument:

If I find Akirinos, I'm akuritized like them; when I find the Muslims, I'm Muslimized like them; when I find pagans, I'm paganized like them.

The use of the suffix – *nia* (-ed) converts the nouns Akirinos, Muslims and pagans into adverbs, which are quite uncommon, which makes them call attention to themselves.

The writer has also used acronyms to achieve satiric effects in the text. When the master of ceremonies calls upon the leader of the foreign delegation to address the people present, for example, he refers to their organization as *Ngwataniro ya Aici na Atunyani a Thi Ng'ima (NAATI)* which is translated as the International Organization of Thieves and Robbers (IOTR). Another example is BMW, which in the Gikuyu text, as Nditika wa Nguunji puts it, stands for *Bata Bata Mathagu Mutumia wi Wakwa* (177). This when literally translated becomes, 'Flap Flap Your Wings Woman You Are Mine', but is said to

stand for 'Be My Wife' (176) in the English version. Much as the acronym helps to characterize Nguunji as an amorous male chauvinist in both the texts, the difference in their intrinsic meaning and phonetic articulation has aesthetic aspects that are unique. *Bata Bata Mathagu* (Flap Flap Your Wings), for instance, has got both onomatopoeic and metaphoric qualities that have sexual innuendos, which is lost in translation

The borrowing of words discussed above is closely related to the use of **foreign words** in the Gikuyu text. Ngugi has severally used words, phrases and sentences in Caitani mostly in the English language, though we have a few instances of Swahili, Latin, French, and Lingala words.

The use of foreign words has helped achieve realism in the largely story. This is achieved, for instance, in way these words are used in dialogue. It is a common habit among literate Gikuyu language speakers to talk in a mixture of languages. We find this in quite a number of conversations held in the story. The dialogues are laced with Swahili, English, and French words. This contributes in the delineation of characters.

In the dialogue between Gatwiria and Mukiraii, the two easily resort to the English language. This is, for example seen in the following exchange:

"Yes, yes, Research Staff," Gatuiria agicookia."

"I see, I see," Muundu wa Macicio riu akiuga. (CM 56)

"Yes, I'm on the research staff," Gatuiria replied in English.... "I see, I see," the man in dark glasses said "(DC 61)

Their use of English is an indication that the two are a class apart from the rest of the passengers in the *matatu* who are not as educated as they are. Wariinga who is typical of an average Kenyan also sprinkles her speech with English words like, for instance, where she says:

"Sorry, ni thiurura yanyita O rimwe," Wariinga akimeera.

"Ni tuthii riu.... Please rekei twehere haaha." (CM64)

“Sorry, but I suddenly felt very dizzy,” Wariinga told them. “Let’s now go, please. Let’s get out of this place.” (DC 69)

The use of foreign words has also achieved humourous and satiric effects in the story. Unfolding drama. The narrator, for instance ridicules those people who cannot speak their mother tongue but are eloquent in foreign languages. Such people are a big embarrassment. This is what the narrator implies when he says:

Gatuiria aaragia ruthiomi ta andu aingi athoomu thiini wa Kenya: andu matoondsoiraga ta ngeenge makiaria thiomi cia ururi wao, no magatwarithia maundu nywee makiogotha thiomi cia ageni! (CM 50)

Gatuiria spoke Gikuyu like many educated people in Kenya-- people who stutter like babies when speaking their national languages but conduct fluent conversation in foreign languages (DC 56)

This is in reference to how Gatuiria speaks when he seeks to join the debate in the matatu. He is at a loss in telling whether what they are having is *ngarari* (an argument) or *ndereti* (a talk). When he starts to talk he stammers as he grapples with the Gikuyu language words and keeps falling back to English. This is what happens in the following excerpt.

“Ndiraamenya wega biiu the difference... Sorry I mean... Utiganu uria uri ho gatagatiini ka mawitikio maanyu inyueeri.... Let me ask.... Sorry.... I mean...ta rekei ndimuurie kiuria giiki.”(CM 51)

“I can’ quite see *the difference...sorry, I mean* the difference between your two positions.... *Let me ask...sorry, I mean* let me ask you this question.”(DC 56)

To drive his point home, the narrator redeems Gatuiria by explaining that "The difference was that Gatuiria was at least aware that the slavery of language is the slavery of the mind and nothing to be proud of" (DC 56)

More satire is achieved in the use of foreign words by the 'thieves and robbers' at the cave. They seek to use foreign words at the slightest opportunity available. This is so because they have an image to create for their audience especially the foreign investors whom they are striving to impress. The competitors are determined to win the title of the cleverest modern thief and robber. The more alienated from one's roots one proves, the greater, it appears, the glory one is going get; the more westernized, the closer one gets to the crown!

Generally the use of the foreign languages by the competitors is part of their braggadocio. One of the most interesting of this is Mwireri wa Mukiraii, BSC. (Econ.) (Mak), B Com (NBI); (M.A. Bus Admin) (Harvard, U.S.A.); (M.R. Soc I.B.M). Though his ideas are found unpalatable and inimical to the foreign guests, he shows of his wealth of knowledge by dropping such terms as 'Capitalistic Business know-how', 'Creative investment', 'Native Capitalism' and 'Maintenance Technology'. His melodrama reaches its peak at the end of his speech when he concludes: "*Ni gutwike guo... per Omnia secular soeculorum! Amen.*" CM 171.

The use of foreign words provides for variation in lexical choices. There is also variation in the graphological presentation of the text, which is necessitated by the use of different languages. This has created a diversity of patterns as experienced in our visual appreciation of the text. The words have also contributed to rhythm in the sentences and paragraphs where they are used. The humour and satire generated makes the story enjoyable to read. All these effects are to a great extent lost in the translation.

Another striking aspect in the choice of words in the novel is the use of **intensifiers**. The Gikuyu language like most other languages has a stock of words and expressions that are used to reinforce meaning in sentences. This usually takes the form of repetition of the

same word with or without a conjunction in between. It may also be a figurative description or the use onomatopoeic words in adverbial phrases. Good examples can be seen in the Swahili language phrases like *alilala fofofu* (he slept heavily), *haoni hasikii* (he is blind with love), and *kwa hali na mali* (by all means). The English language has similar phrases such as 'forever and ever' and 'there and then'. But we are interested in their use in *Caitani* because it is not possible to translate them without losing the essence of their linguistic application both in speech and writing: the beauty of their sound pattern, their imagery, and their rhythmic and emphatic quality.

We have innumerable examples of these expressions in the text. A comparative analysis of a few of them in the original and in the translation would serve to illustrate our point. Giving a literal translation of the phrases (in brackets) will serve to suggest what could be lost in the translation.

To begin with, when Kareendi in Wariinga's story gets himself a boyfriend she vows: "*Nii Kareendi kuna ndigagakararia undu uriku kana uriku*" (CM 14) (I, Kareendi, for sure, will never disagree with him on anything, either which one or which one). This is translated as, "I, Kareendi, will never anger him or argue with him over any issue" (DC 20). Secondly, when referring to Mwaura's vehicle, the narrator says. "*Yari nguru o uu wega*" (CM 24) (It was old quite this well) which is translated, as "Certainly it was old" (DC 30). Thirdly when Nguunji produced his gun threatening to shoot at his rivals, we are told that the people, "*makirite ki*" (CM 121) (were so very quiet).

Another example is when Mwaura says of Muturi that he would bring them "*Giconoko gitari ithabu kana kagera*" (CM 153) (A shame without number or measure) which is translated as "Untold trouble" (DC 154). When Mwaura himself is embarrassed as he tries to report Muturi's plan to the people at the cave we are told that, "*Githithi giake giathitiite o guthiita na ngoro yake irituhiite o kurituha*". (CM 164) (His face was dull so dull and his heart heavy so heavy) which is translated as "His face was dark, his heart heavy" (DC 164). Finally, when talking of Wariinga's bravery when she eventually confronts The Old Man from Ngorika, the narrator says that she did not have, "*Guoya wa*

u kana u wa kii kana kii" CM 256 (the fear of who or who of what or what). This is translated as, "Her fearless eyes" (DC 249). The aesthetic effect of the original phrases is quite different from their translation.

Finally, we look at the use of **taboo words and euphemism** in the novel. Writers often deliberately use taboo words and euphemism in their works to achieve certain stylistic effects. Indangasi explains that taboo words are words that refer to subject or experiences or parts of the human body, which are not supposed to be talked about in public or in polite society. This may also entail the use of cursing or swear words. Euphemism on the other hand is the use of polite language used to soften the effect of taboo words (79).

The use of taboo words and euphemism is of relevance to a study of the stylistic effects of the Gikuyu language in a literary text. This is because they are aspects of language use that are pertinent to certain socio-cultural aspects of the community. Traditionally, Gikuyu culture set high moral standards especially in matters of sexuality. Decorum and use of polite language is required of every member of the society. This to some extent explains why there is a scant use of taboo words. It is a social anathema. Euphemism thus tends to be more prevalent than taboo words.

This is for instance captured in the proverb *kanua ni koinagirwo ithigi* (close your mouth with a branch), which means that you should be careful about how you talk. It reprimands one for being liberal with indecent language. Indeed the use of taboo words is traditionally the preserve of the elderly people, especially men. Interestingly, in the traditional circumcision rites, young boys and girls who were preparing for initiation were customarily given the licence to liberally indulge in vulgarity--to use as many taboo words as they could--in a ceremony called *marara nja*, which was usually held on the eve of the actual physical initiation. This explains why the Gikuyu circumcision songs are full of taboo words.

It is in the light of the above observations that we analyse the use of taboo words and euphemism in *Caitani Mutharaba-ini*. There are a few instances of the use of polite and impolite language in the novel, which, incidentally, seems to take place together. This is

specifically found in the speeches of Mwaura and some of the competitors at the feast in the cave.

Mwaura's speech when we first meet him has the blending of both taboo words and euphemism. This is particularly seen in the two songs that he sings as he touts for customers:

Kwa Ngai kuungiri gakuhi
Maraaya twathii ciira nainywi
Kindu mwaheirwo ni mwathani
Mbaga ici, muukwendia kibaau!

(CM 25)

If God's kingdom were near
I would take you whores to court
Something given to you free by the Lord
You now sell for twenty shillings.

(DC 31)

The song talks about prostitution. This is a practice that is alien to the traditional Gikuyu culture. The word *maaraya* (prostitute), for instance, is not originally a Gikuyu language word. It is from Swahili and has no local equivalent. Calling somebody a *maaraya* is a great insult and those who practise prostitution are accorded a pariah status. Prostitution itself is a taboo subject.

But Mwaura here subjects his listeners to the dirty song, which ironically becomes a source of entertainment and the listeners ask for more. The song is in bad taste because, for one, an admission in public that one would want to have an affair with a prostitute is something to be frowned at. Secondly, the allusion to the female sex organ and the fact that it can be offered for sale is repulsive. This explains why Mwaura uses euphemism in the nevertheless vulgar song. He uses the word *kindu* (something) instead of the real word.

The second song is even dirtier. It is an open request for sexual favours from a girl:

Kairitu ndaakuhoya uuhe

Na ndukae kuuga ni uukugia ihu

Njui kuhinga bikibiki

Mbaga ino, no we itaangihinga. (CM27)

Young maiden, if I should beg,

Don't say you'll get pregnant,

For as I know how to break a motorcycle

Do you imagine that I could not apply the brakes to you? (DC 36)

This is in bad taste. Here is Mwaura bluntly extorting sexual favours from a girl, chiding her to oblige, and bragging how he could 'apply brakes' so as not to impregnate her. Though it is just a song, it is obscene and more the worse because it is directed towards Wariinga who, for lack of an alternative, has resolved to board Mwaura's matatu.

The fact that these two songs pull an enthusiastic crowd around Mwaura mainly because of their taboo status. The public is attracted to their vulgarity. This coupled with the idiomatic and metaphorical allusions such as *kuhinga bikibiki* (braking a motorcycle), generate aesthetic effects in the text. We appreciate the songs as stylistic choices that create comic effects in the story and help us to understand and evaluate Mwaura's character.

Generally speaking Mwaura strikes us as interesting if abominable in his use of language. He has an incurable inclination towards vulgarity. During his quarrel with Wangari over her inability to raise the fare, he indignantly tells her: "*Ngari ino ndinyuaga mathugumo*" (CM 31) which literally means that the vehicle does not *drink urine*, which it is translated as, "This car does not run on urine". (DC 37) He repeats this as the quarrel heats up when he tells her "*Ndakwira o ringi at ino ngari ndihururagia kimira.*" (CM 32) which means that the vehicle does not *suck mucous* but is translated in the English version as "I repeat, this car does not run on urine" (DC 37). The idea of the vehicle partaking of

urine or mucous is both amusing and nauseating. It makes us dislike Mwaura especially because this vitriol is directed to Wangari who we sympathize with.

We are treated to more obscenity when we encounter the 'thieves and robbers' at the cave. They are arrogant and obscene. They delight in and act true to the saying: "*Uthuri wa ndoonga ndunungaga*" (the fart of the rich man does not smell foul). It is on the lips of each one of them. It legitimizes their base tendencies and their exploitation of the less privileged. For them, the poor people are inconsequential. Women are objects of sexual gratification. Thus they brag-about their riches, sugar girls and sugar mummies. The men brag about their sexual exploits. It is in reference to their amorous conquests that we are again subjected to a host of taboo words and euphemisms.

Kihaahu wa Gatheeca's confession is a case in point:

Nii nyeendaga atumia eene. Muundu aaguaga wega atuunyanite? Nduui o na guo no uici ungi? Makiria nii hoteete atumia a maandaraka. Matiri hinya. Na matiri maundu maingi. Bata wao ukoragwo ari uri o ucio umwe. Amwe matihuunaga rimwe kana meeri... riu matiindaga makiina -garurira mbeu ti ya kinya kimwe. Ti cuumbi ati ni uukurika, kana thabuni at ni uugithira. Ndamabatithirie Mahuthu Karekia (CM 106)

This is thus translated:

I like other people's wives. One gets such a glorious feeling of victory. You know, don't you, that that's another kind of stealing? I am particularly good at bourgeois women. They never resist. And they have no pretensions. They want only one thing. Some are not satisfied with one or two shots....today, they sing only one song-- change for good seeds are not all contained in one gourd. A cunt is not salt or soap that will dissolve or disappear after use. I have baptized them Ready-to-Yield. (DC 110)

Directed to supposedly distinguished guests, Gatheeca's tale of his perversion indulgences shows the depth of immorality that he, his audience and the society at large has fallen into. There is a considerable difference between the original text and the translation. Whereas in the Gikuyu excerpt there is the use of periphrases and euphemism, the English version does not mince the taboo words.

In the Gikuyu text, for example, Gatheeca says that the women do not get satisfied by one or two times. But the English text bluntly talks of the woman not getting satisfied with one or two shots. The height of obscenity in Gatheeca's speech is when he says that he female genitals are neither salt nor soap that will dissolve or disappear after use. The Gikuyu text politely refers to this as 'it' while the English one uses the actual word.

Equally scandalizing is Nditika wa Nguunji's idea of producing spare parts for the human body so that the rich men may have, among others, 'two cocks'. This is referred to as *minyamu iiri* (two male things) while the women's genitals are referred to as *indo igiri* (two female things) in the Gikuyu text.

As observed in the cases cited above there is less use of taboo words and more of euphemism in the original than in the translation. It is in the nature of the Aagikuyu people like many other African communities to shun the subject of sex and to avoid mentioning the private parts of the human anatomy. Ironically, this taboo subject is a source of amusement as we have seen in Caitaani. We have also seen that the use of taboo words and euphemism has contributed in the delineation of characters. We can therefore conclude that they deliberate stylistic choices by the author to enhance the satire in the novel

In summary, in this chapter we have looked at the various lexical items as stylistic choices that have contributed to the construction of Caitaani Mutharaba-ini as an aesthetic object. We have identified different nouns and noun phrases and shown how the author has manipulated them to create specific effects. Similarly we have seen how new words--borrowed or freshly coined--have enriched the Gikuyu language vocabulary. We

have further seen that descriptive words and phrases are used to intensify meaning and enhance rhythm in the text. Finally we have shown how foreign words, taboo words and euphemism have had humorous and satiric effects in the novel.

In drawing our conclusions we have demonstrated how language in the original has been used to generate aesthetic pleasure and compared this with the translation. It is evident that there is something that we lose in the translation. In the vernacular the author brings out feelings and nuances forcefully by taking advantage of some grammatical aspects of the language and by capturing the speech behaviour of specific groups of people. There are words that cannot be translated and concepts that are culturally bound. The reader of the original is therefore in a position to enjoy the story more fully than the one who only reads the translation.

CHAPTER FOUR

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

In the previous chapter we have paid a close attention to the word as a crucial unit of meaning in language. We have looked at words as used to designate meaning and their contribution to the literariness of the text, focusing more specifically on the difference in the aesthetic effects of the Gikuyu language lexis as compared with the one of the English language. It is from this point that this chapter departs and proceeds to look at language at the level of figurative representation.

Figurative language constitutes the use of the figures of speech including metaphors, similes, personification, metonymy and synecdoche. These entail an imaginative comparison between two things. According to Henry Indangasi, they are “a semantic category involving as they do transference of meaning”(102). He further observes that:

Figures of speech, which operate on the principle of comparability, can be said to enhance the semiological character of language. By comparing phenomena in nature it becomes easier for us to cognize reality: reality is cognized in its fullness. (103)

Figurative language therefore makes the objects described in the text more vivid to our minds and senses. Commenting on the use of figures of speech as an aspect of imagery, H. Coombes has asserted that:

In a good writer's hands, the image, fresh and vivid, is at its fullest used to intensify, to clarify, to enrich; a successful image helps to make us feel the writer's grasp of the object or situation he is dealing with, gives his grasp of it with precision, vividness, force, economy; and to make such an impact on us, its content, the stuff of which it is made, can't be unduly fantastic and remote from our experience, but must be such that it can be immediately felt by us as belonging in one way or another to the fabric of our own lives.(45)

In this chapter we focus on the use of figurative language in Caitani Mutharaba-ini, mainly as manifest in the use of metaphors, similes and personification. Our principal interest is to investigate how the author has explored the resources of the Gikuyu language to come up with distinct figures of speech. We seek to advance the argument that every language has a distinct way of rendering reality, which determines the way we appreciate a literary text in a given language. This as we seek to illustrate, is our experience when we go through Caitani vis a vis Devil on the cross.

When describing Wariinga's house at Ofafa Jericho, the narrator says:

No ni nyumba kana ni gitara kia nyoni? Thi yeenjekete marima, thiingo ciamethukangite igathamia tunua, na ciiring'i ni yoiraga (CM4)

(A house or a bird's nest? The floor was pitted with holes, the walls gaped with cracks, the ceiling leaked) (DC10)

To begin with, the first statement in the above quotation is phrased differently. Being a rhetoric question, the Gikuyu version captures the tone of the narrator more aptly than the translation especially due to the fact that its more precise translation would be. "But is it a house or a bird's nests?" In addition, the picture of the dilapidated status of the walls is drawn slightly differently in the two versions. The walls in the original are said to have cracks 'with mouths wide open' unlike in the English version where they are said to be 'gaping'. Although the description captures the same idea, the 'wide-opened mouths' of the Gikuyu version are more stylistically intriguing than the English equivalent: 'gaping'.

Wariinga's troubles are portrayed as a great vexation to her heart. When she is preparing to leave Nairobi for Ilmorog, we are told that she does it, "*ngoro yake ikurugaga maundu nyungu ng'ima*" (CM5), which we can translate as, "her heart cooking a potful of things". This is translated as "a cauldron of worries seething in her mind." (DC 11) It suffices to say that the image of a cooking pot is more authentic in the African context than a cauldron. Besides, the heart unlike the mind is the centre of being and its being said to be

cooking Wariinga's troubles is a more captivating metaphor than the cauldron, which is said to be seething in her mind in the translation.

In another instance, Ngugi uses a language of extreme beauty in describing Wariinga as follows:

No riria Wariinga aakeneete akariganirwo ni uthitu wa magego kana uiru wa gikonde, agatheka na ngoro yake yoothe, mitheko iyo yahehenjaga andu kuhehenja. Ari mugaambo wa maguta. Maitho mahenagia ta njata utuku. Kiuga giake kiari gia kwirorerwo. Kaingi na kaingi agikinyukia njiraini eeriganiirwo, nyoondo ciake ikiinainaga githuri-ini ta matunda meeri makiinainio ni karuhuhu, Wariinga ni atumaga aanake moinike ngiingo (CM5)

This is translated as:

But when Wariinga was happy and forgot to worry about the fading whiteness of her teeth and about the blackness of her skin and laughed with all her heart, her laughter completely disarmed people, her voice was as smooth as perfume oil. Her eyes shone like stars in the night. Her body was feast for the eyes. Often, when she walked along the road without self-consciousness, her breasts swaying jauntily like two ripe fruits in a breeze, Wariinga stopped men in their tracks (DC 11)

We cannot dispute that the above two passages equally express the splendour of Wariinga's beauty. A close scrutiny of the two reveals that there are certain elements that are lost in the translation. In describing Wariinga's laughter, for instance, the narrator says, "*mitheko iyo yahehenjaga andu kuhehenja*", which we can translate as "that laughter used to crush and vanquish people". This is a more figurative way of showing how Wariinga's beauty used to weaken men than the word 'disarming', which is used in the translation. In another example, the narrator in the English version says; "Her voice was as smooth as perfume oil". This is a simile that differs with the more poetic metaphor in the Gikuyu version describing the same "*Aari mugambo wa maguta*" (She had a voice of oil). And as far for the young men who were dazed by Wariinga's beauty,

we are told of how she would make them stop in their tracks. This is captured more humorously in the Gikuyu language where we are told: "*Atumaga aanake moinike ngingo*", (She would make young men break their necks). This in allusion to how the men would sharply turn their necks, mesmerized, to behold Wariinga.

In the allegory that Wariinga recounts to the young man from the university, she uses a combination of similes, metaphors and aphorisms to depict the trouble that Kareendi experiences with Boss Kihaara and her frustrations when she loses her job and has no one to turn to. A few of these stylistic choices can only be fully appreciated in the Gikuyu language.

One of this is the analogy '*mbathi' ya mihang'o ya tumoongonye*' (the bus of a myriad of petty pre-occupations of young men). Boss Kihara uses this as he reprimands Kareendi for being late for work and giving the reason that the bus delayed. He exclaims: "*kai utangiuga ni mbaathi ya mihang'o ya tumoongonye!*" (CM 19) (Why can't you say it is the bus of a myriad of petty pre-occupations of young men). But this is translated as: "why can't you admit that the trouble is the rides you are offered by young men" (DC 24). The meaning of this statement is altered, partly because the original is figurative whereas the English version is a plain statement. Besides the analogy '*mbaathi ya mihango*' is a popular saying derived from a popular Christian song. It implies the habit of indulging in petty pre-occupations at the expense of the more serious things in life. Similarly, the word *tumoongonye* as explained in the previous chapter alludes to a popular Gikuyu ballad. The statement, therefore, has connotations that are only realized in the context of the Gikuyu language.

Another example is the statement the narrator uses when Kareendi is sacked: "*Kareendi wakwa aacooka o bara-ini cia ategi*" (CM19). A literal translation of this should be "Kareendi of mine goes back into the roads of hunters," but it is translated as, "once again, she roams the streets in search of work" (DC 24). Just like in the example above, the imagery is lost in the translation. Similarly, the allusion made in the original can only be understood in the context of the Gikuyu language and oral literature. The metaphor

'roads of hunters' is an appropriation of the Gikuyu riddle, "*Ndathii uu ndathii uu – njira cia ategi*" (I go this way, I go that way – the hunters paths), which here describes Kareendi's difficult task of hunting for another job. Without the knowledge of this riddle, one can only grapple with the meaning of the statement if it were literally translated.

This is no less true of the way Kareendi's experience with her boyfriend, Kamoongonye, is described. When she meets him, we are told in the translation, "Kareendi pours out the whole story of Waigoko, whose bearded chest has been shaved by money"(DC 24). Instead of the equivalent of the metaphor 'pours out the whole story' in translation, the original says "*agagigakundia rugano ruothe*" (made him drink the whole story). This is a metaphor derived from the Gikuyu language idiom '*gukundia ndeto*' (to make one drink information). We thus relish it in the original. Still in the same statement, the metaphorical allusion to Waigoko whose chest has been shaved by money (in reference to Boss Kihara who is old but continues to behave as a young man since he is rich) cannot be fully appreciated without the knowledge of the Gikuyu ballad alluded to.

Indeed this ballad, which we explained in Chapter Two, has been a source of a lot of imagery in the story. Another instance is in the same scene as above when Kareendi breaks the news of her misadventures with boss Kihara. The narrator shows how the young man registers his disdain for her thus saying, "*Kamongonye niiko riu kainamitie maitho ta ngari kana ta ng'ondu ikiria nyeki*" (CM 19). This is aptly translated as "Kamoongonye is the one who lowers his eyes like the shy leopard or like a leopard or like a lamb cropping grass" (DC 25). This is derived from the ballad where the girl persona says:

My father can't let me get myself a Kamoongonye
A Kamoongonye who will beat me up
Making me silent
Making me to lower my eyes like a leopard
Like a leopard or a lamb cropping grass.

But unlike the persona in the song, whose display of shyness is out of hypocrisy, the Kamoongonye in our story is seething with rage for he feels betrayed by Kareendi. Kareendi's trouble indeed escalates--a situation captured in the use of more metaphoric popular sayings. The narrator says:

Kareendi akeeyuria ciuria itaangicokeka. Tuuge Ngo'ombe ya ngirindi ni yaahiukia iria. Tuuge riu no itwarirwo king'e-ero? Giciinga ni kihiriire Kareendi ngatiro. Riu aacooka o haria oimiriire. (CM 20)

Kareendi asks herself many questions without answers. The grade cow stopped yielding milk. So is it now fit for slaughter? For Kareendi, the sword is burned at both ends. She is back where she started. (DC 25)

The grade cow here refers to Kareendi who, now proving to be of no use to the self-seeking Kihaara and the infuriated Kamoongonye, has come to be disinherited and forsaken. The cow can no longer yield milk so it has to be slaughtered. This is a popular saying to the Gikuyu language speakers who are therefore in a position to appreciate the metaphor. The same case applies to the imagery of the sword being burned on both ends ('the firebrand is burned in the handle' would be a more precise translation). This is an idiomatic expression that means that things have turned sour.

In a nutshell, the tribulations of Kareendi in Wariinga's story are recounted in a language that uses a lot of imagery from the Gikuyu popular culture.

Mwaura's Matatu Matata Matamu model T Ford registration number MMM 333 is portrayed as such an interesting phenomenon by the narrator who describes it as follows:

Ni ta yo yari ngaari ya mbere thiini wa thi ng'ima guturwo. Cuuma cia thiini ciakayaga na ikoiga mbu ta mathanwa magana karundo magituubwo mageca hiindi imwe. Maabati ma nja maainanaga ta thaara hindi ya ruhuho. Ngaari yo yeene yeengenyaga bara-ini ta mbatakiengei kirima-ini. Igikagwata mwaki

ruciini, iyo yoonagia eeroreri ndeto na uriru. Injini yaathamaraga, igacooka igakorora maita maingi ta kuundu gikorogoca gia cuuma kiahatiite mumero-ini, ikariikiriria na kuhanya ta ino yari ndwaru mahuri. Hindi iyo Mwaura agakunurania gikuniko kia haha mbere, agathoombootha haaha na haaria, akahuutaangia waya ino na iiria, agakunikania gikuniko, agacooka kibara-ini. Riu Mwaura agathaita kiracii na kuguru kwa urio, nayo iinjiini icaayacaayage ta ino iraamooywo nda na maguta ma mbariki. (CM 26)

This is translated as follows: -

It looked as if Mwaura's... was the very first motor vehicle to have been made on earth. The engine moaned and screamed like several hundred dented axes being ground simultaneously. The car's body shook like a reed in the wind. The whole vehicle waddled along the road like a duck up a mountain. In the morning, before starting, the *matatu* gave spectators a wonderful treat. The engine would growl, then cough as if a piece of metal were stuck in its throat, then it rasped as if it had asthma. At such times Maura would open the bonnet dramatically, poke here and there, touch this wire and that one, then shut the bonnet equally dramatically before returning to the steering wheel. He would gently press the accelerator with his right foot and the engine would start groaning as if its belly were being massaged. (DC 32)

The description of the vehicle is beautifully woven in a figurative discourse. And the translation is quite commendable. But there is some elegance, which, though the writer strives to cultivate in the translation, is much more delicious to the reader in the original. This is realized both at the level of diction and comparison, in which case, the narrator in the Gikuyu text creates the register of a story being told in a casual gathering. Indeed the figurative language in this excerpt borders on colloquialism.

In the personification of the metal parts of Mwaura's vehicle the narrator says: "*ciakayaga na ikoiga mbu ta mathanwa magana karuundo.*" Firstly the axes alluded to here are said to be a 'pile of hundreds' in the original. This is a colloquial exaggeration. Secondly, there is the use of onomatopoeic words such as *ciakayaga* (they screamed) and *okoiga mbu* (they made the cry of distress, 'mbu'). Though their equivalent in the translations 'moan' and 'scream' are also onomatopoeic, it is nevertheless true that onomatopoeia is best appreciated in its original language.

There are a host of other onomatopoeic words in this passage. These include words such as *yeengayaga* (waddled), *igakorora* (coughed), *agathoombatha* (poked) and *icaayacaayage* (as it groaned). The simile of the vehicle 'waddling along the road like a duck up a mountain' as indicated in the translation has quite an interesting equivalent in the original: "*Yeengeyaga b ara-ini t a m batakiengei k irima-ini.*" This phrase takes the form of tongue twister achieved through the assonance of the vowels a, e, i and the repetition of the consonants y, t, n and ng. Sounding more like a joke than a serious observation, the repetitive and somewhat onomatopoeic nature of this statement enhances the ludicrousness of the image of the vehicle behaving like a waddling duck.

It is in this humorous mood that the narrator goes on to say of the vehicle. "*Igikaagwata mwaki ruciini, matatu iyo yoonagia eeroreri ndeto na uriru.*" We can translate as, "Before it caught fire in the morning, that matatu used to show the spectators news and wonders" The phrases *kugwata mwaki* (to get fire), which means 'start', and *kuonia uriru* (to show wonders), which means 'to amuse', are common expressions in the Gikuyu language which, therefore, adds to the local flavour in the Gikuyu text than its translation in the English version: "In the mornings, before starting, the matatu gave spectators a wonderful treat."

The personification of Mwaura's matatu assumes farcical dimensions as the narrator builds up the description to the climax with the vehicle finally getting started. The narrator thus says; "*Riu Mwaura agathaitha kiracii na kuguru kwa urio, nayo iinjini icaayacaayage ta ino iramoonywo nda na maguta ma mbariki.*" The translation of this

concluding statement does not quite match the original.” He would gently press the accelerator with his right foot, and the engine would start groaning as if its belly were being massaged.” Suffice it to give a more literal translation as follows: “Now Mwaura coaxes the accelerator with his right foot, and the engine moans softly as if being massaged with castor oil.” The image of vehicle being cajoled, the image of the vehicle moaning as if in pain is grotesque and humorous. And so is the idea of matatu matamu model T Ford being massaged with castor oil – a traditional Gikuyu ointment.

In the conversation in the matatu we also get a treat of figurative language in the dialogue among the travellers. A good example is when Muturi breaks the spell of the silence that looms after Wangari’s account about her tribulations in the city. In his speech, Muturi highlights the frustration and despair that pervades the society of the workers and their progeny to whom the fruits of independence that dangle above them have only served to tantalize and disillusion them. Thus he says that the country is pregnant. In going ahead to expound this, he employs a heavily metaphoric language, which we enjoy when we locate it in its cultural context.

To begin with Muturi wonders: “Ati ciana ciitu aruti-a-wira iriikaraga riu-a-ini inyootie, ihuutii, na iri njaga, ciitoreire matunda meeruiire miti iguru na itingitua ona rimwe ciiringire njoka iria yeerirwo?” (CM 40). This is translated as: “The children of us workers are fated to stay out in the sun, thirsty, hungry, naked, gazing at fruit ripening on trees which they can’t pick even to quieten a demanding belly!” (DC 46). Much as the translation strives to be faithful to the original, the concluding analogy in the above statement is different. The phrase ‘ciiringire njoka’ is translated as “to quieten a demanding belly”. Though the two give the same meaning, the original refers to the act of feeding to satiate one’s hunger as the ‘hitting of the worms’ in the stomach. Incidentally, among the Agikuyu, the feeling of hunger is usually attributed to the complaints of worms, believed to dwell in the belly, after they have run short of food, hence the common expression ‘to quiten the worms’ to mean ‘feeding’. The original metaphor in Muturi’s statement above therefore borrows from the idiom of the Gikuyu language, which the translation negates.

Another example in the series of rhetorical question that Muturi employs on the above issue is when he again wonders: "Cionage irio igitooga thegi na itiingiikia koiga nyungu iyo itahe itaaha rimwe naari?" (CM 40), which is translated as: "Fated to see food steaming in the pantry, but unable to dip a calabash into the pot to scoop out even a tiny portion!" (DC 46). A pantry (a small room with shelves in a house, where food is kept) implies a modern house while thegi is the room in the traditional Gikuyu house where food was kept. Besides, the application of a calabash to scoop food stored in a pot in thegi evokes in the reader an atmosphere that intimates the Gikuyu people's cultural past. It is this cultural configuration, which we deduce more easily in the original than the translation that appeals to our sense of literary beauty in this story.

This is again the case with the concluding statement in Muturi's speech. He uses the imagery of riddles to artistically capture the despondency of the children of workers:

"Ciana ciitu ikonorage maitho ikigwatanagia ndai cia kieha na maithori o muthenya ciuranagie kiuria o kimwe tu: wui tuuria i?" "turigu twiru!" Wangari akiamukiria o ta ari ndai ya biu aagwatagio ni Muturi.

"Wui tuungi-i!" Muturi akiuga

"Tui twi ngurunga yeene," Wangari akiamukiria o riingi. (CM 40)

This is translated thus:

Fated to lie awake all night telling each other stories about tears and sorrow, asking one another to guess the same riddle day after day: "Oh, for a piece of one of those!"

"Ripe bananas!" Wangari replied, as if Muturi had asked her a real riddle

"Oh for some of that!" Muturi said

"Fresh, cool water in a cave that belongs to another; Wangari replied again. (DC 46)

In the first place the idea of the children lying awake is captured more figuratively in the original for we are told, 'ikonorage maitho' (pulling out their eyes). In the second place, instead of the tears and sorrow', Muturi, in the original, uses the metaphor of the riddling formular in the Gikuyu oral literature: 'throwing each other riddles of sorrow and tears'. To conclude, Muturi completes the analogy by using a popular Gikuyu riddle, 'wuui tuuriai'. This is a riddle that is used in a situation whereby something that is much desired--such as a ripe banana or water in a cave--is hard to get. The riddle therefore enhances what the entire statement seeks to underscore: the desperate yearning of the poor who have been fated to merely nurse the tantalizing yet elusive dream of socio-economic fulfillment.

Muturi's speech as a whole reveals his perceptive and eloquent nature. His language use is evidence of this being wise. And in our appreciation of the beauty of this language, we get to grips with the conflicts in the story. This is the same case with other similar moments where figurative language is used in the rest of the text.

Gatuiria effectively uses language to embellish the story of Ndinguri, which he tells to other passengers in Mwaura's vehicle. At one point in the story, he quotes Ndinguri as having said:

*Indo igaruraga mbogoro igatuika ikere cia gutharanagwo ni nyarari cia bururi.
Indo inuunguraga unuungu, ikabuthuria ubuthu. Kiroonda kia ndoonga gitiri
mahira. Uthuri wa ndoonga ndunuungaga. (CM 61)*

Property changes bow legs into legs that are fought over by the beauties of the land. Property sweetens evil smells, banishes rot. The wound of a rich man never produces pus. The fart of a rich man never smells. (DC 65)

The first statement draws a dichotomy between beauty and ugliness as represented by *mbogoro* (bow legs) and *ikere* (calves). These refer to the shape of legs, which traditionally are hallmarks of ugliness and beauty respectively. Yet the translation

downplays the significance of *fikere* (calves). It does not refer to them. In the broader sense the two features as used in the text symbolise the good (the calves) and the evil (the bowlegs).

The second statement in the quotation of the original above has an element of word play in the phrases *inuunguraga unuungu* (it unsmells smell) and *ikabuthuria ubuthu* (it unrots rotting). The contrast and sound repetition in these phrases have a rhythmic effect in this statement. This is unlike their equivalent in the translation: 'sweetens evil smells' and 'banishes rot' respectively.

We observe another interesting use of figurative language in Gitutu wa Gatanguru's confession as he brags about his grand appetite. He boasts, saying:

Ruuciini ndokira nguthaga matuumbi na mugate wa thiagi, ngacooka ngaciikurukia na ngiraathi ya iria. Thaa inya uguo, ngakirumura kiro ya mburi icamukiitio. Thaathita, ngagutha kiro igiri cia nyama ...na cio icio ngaikurukia na gacuuba ka bia karia kahehu muno. Thinaacara huutagia kaguku o gakuriinga njoka nginyua whithiki, maira ndie supper proper hwai-ini. (CM 96/7)

When I wake up in the morning I swallow a few eggs on top of pieces of bread and butter and a glass of milk to chase them down. At ten o'clock or thereabouts I manage to put away a couple of pounds of cooked mutton. At twelve I attack four pounds of beef ... I wash the beef down with a cool beer, one bottle. At six, I nibble at a piece of chicken, just to have something in the belly as a base for whisky, pending supper proper in the evening. (DC 100)

It is true that the two passages are figuratively descriptive. But there is a distinct variation in the lexical choices used to construct the imagery in the two texts when we compare them. Firstly, the word in the original *nguthaga* (I hit) is translated as 'I swallow'. Secondly, *ngaciikurukia* (I take them down) is slightly modified as 'I chase them down'. Thirdly *ngakirumura* (I bite munch) is rendered as 'I take away' while *nguthaga* (I hit), which is used, again is now translated as 'I attack'. *Huutagia kaguku o gakuriinga njoka*

(I touch a chicken just to knock the worms in the stomach) is given as 'I nibble at a piece of chicken just to have something in the belly'. In both cases, the imagery serves well to satirize Gitutu's greed. But the metaphors in the English version seem unnatural and contrived. In the Gikuyu version, the lexical choices used are common albeit colloquial ways of describing varied eating habits by the Gikuyu language speakers. Their use therefore enhances the register in the text at this particular moment as the audience is presumably familiar with this manner of speaking. To the reader of the original, the metaphors are natural, and do form an ingenious combination that effectively draws the caricatured portrait of Gitutu, which the writer has set out to do.

Later in the story we encounter a heated debate as reported by Mwaura, between himself and Muturi. In it, Mwaura tries to discourage Muturi from supporting Wangari's bid to have the thieves and robbers arrested, saying: "*Wimanyerere kugurukio na iguru ni ngoma cia aka a matuku aya*" (CM 157). This statement, which is translated as "beware of being swept off your feet by the whims of modern women," (DC 157) is derived from the Gikuyu language phrase referring to a whirlwind: the 'demons of women'. Its more faithful translation would have been, "Beware of being swept off your feet by the demons of the women of today." But the allusion would make little sense to a non-Gikuyu language speaker. In this context, it refers to Wangari's zealous intention to have the thieves and robbers arrested which Muturi is enthusiastic about, but which Mwaura believes is crazy. The translation not only loses the figurative element but it also departs from the original analogy.

Muturi, on his part, is unequivocal about his position. He lambasts the thieves and robbers observing thus:

Muici uri huunyu arindagirira uria uri maguta ...ithui kaingi twonaga o muici uria uri na huunyu....no aya aakugetha kuria matahaandire ri, nginya makarekereria aici a murimo na o matubire o kuo ri, kuna makagetha kwene magathii kuiga makuumbiini mao ri...matiakimia na matororokia ...makaruruungana kimaamo-ini gutuonia nda hamwe na matanuko. (CM 155)

A thief in rags often becomes a sacrifice for the thief in finery ... in many cases we point at a thief in rags... but these modern thieves who reap where they have never sown, to an extent of even inviting foreigners to join in the harvest, and who store all the grain in foreign granaries...have they not shat and farted beyond the limits of tolerance...congregates in one den to parade their full scorn on us.
(DC 158)

This speech has, first and foremost, metaphoric and symbolic allusions derived from the Gikuyu proverb that Muturi uses, "*Muici uri huunyu ariindagira uri maguta*" (a thief whose skin is scarred helps to make unnoticeable the one who has oiled his skin). By this, Muturi underscores the fact that it is the petty (inconsequential) thief who is mostly punished while the well placed, greater, and more dangerous thief goes unpunished. It is such thieves as the ones gathered in the cave at Ilmorog whom Muturi feels need to be punished. It is this that makes him determined to join hands with Wangari to administer justice to the people. The proverb therefore enriches the text for its contribution to the use of figurative language in the story. In addition, Muturi's speech has allusions derived from the economic life of the peasant farmers. The imagery of harvesting and storing grains in foreign granaries goes well with the traditional farming activities of the Aagikuyu whereby, after the grains are harvested, they are stored in granaries. Muturi uses the symbolism of harvesting and the granary to refer to exploitation of the masses by foreign capitalists and their local puppets.

Allusion to the Gikuyu oral literature in the novel's figurative language is again seen when the narrator describes Nditika wa Nguunji's tummy: "*Nda yaake yacomokeete na mbere ikang'athiria andu ta ino yari gwa thiaka*" (CM 176). This is translated as, "His tummy hung over his belt, big and arrogant" (DC 176). A literal translation on the other hand would be, "He had a protuberant tummy that looked as arrogant as the hyena that was at Thiaka's place." This alludes to the Gikuyu popular story of a hyena that went to the home of a man called Thiaka to eat bones for he had slaughtered some goats. The hyena greedily gobbled down the bones it came across. Unfortunately, a piece of bone got stuck in its gullet making it collapse onto the ground, panting and writhing in pain.

The people who came across it tried to scare it away but it would not move. They thought that it was an arrogant hyena, that it was refusing to budge. It is only when someone took a chunk of wood and threw it to the hyena that the bone darted out. The hyena, now relieved, fled from the scene. It is then that the people learnt the truth: the hyena had not been arrogant after all.

It is from this story that comes the popular saying: *kung'athia ta iria yaari gwa thiaka* (to be as arrogant as the hyena that was at Thiaka's). The thought of Nditika's tummy facing the people arrogantly like the hyena's at Thiaka's place, with the implications of its big size, the greed that has built it up, and its worthlessness akin to the vain fear of those who had imagined the hyena was arrogant in the story, is an amusing personification, the humour of which we are deprived in the translation.

One of the most striking aspects in Caitani Mutharaba-ini is the motif of search, which runs throughout the story. On the one hand we have the 'thieves and robbers' bragging about the myriad of the unscrupulous methods they have employed to get rich, and their yet more determined quest for more wealth. On the other hand we have the workers and the peasants who are exploited and oppressed. Theirs is a quest for justice as seen in the story in Muturi, Wangari, and the student leader and in Wariinga's at the end of the story. Then there is our narrator, the Gichandi Player, who has set out to tell Wariinga's story as it happened so that the entire world may know the unadulterated truth. But perhaps it is in Gatuiria--whose name literally means 'the small researcher'--that the theme of search is best developed. He has spent two years researching and striving to compose and compile music that would tell the story of his country. Towards the end of the novel, Gatuiria has a good reason to celebrate. He has not just been able to compose the music, but to crown it, he has won Wariinga's heart and intends to give the score of this music as the engagement ring to her. This, in the story, is described as follows:

Gatuiria ni araitiriire rwimbo thi. Araacooka araitirira ngoro ya Wariinga thi ... riu niarenda kuinuka mucii, akiinukagia maciaro ma utwiiria wake miyuciki-ini, agikionagia aciari aake mutirima wa ngoro yake. (CM 229)

Gatuiria has now accomplished the musical feat. And he has also won Wariinga's heart ... would now like to return, bringing home the darling of his heart and the fruits of his research in music.(DC 225)

The translation is devoid of any poetic bent in the choice of language. Firstly in the original, Gatuiria does not just 'accomplish the musical feat' or 'win Wariinga's heart:' he 'poured down the music', and then 'poured down Wariinga's heart'. We relish the metaphor 'pour down' for it configures in our mind a sense a thorough, irreversible accomplishment. Besides, it echoes the Gikuyu proverb, "*Mai maitika matioyagwo*" (when water pours down it cannot be collected). The proverb, though, is applied in situations of misfortunes, but the metaphor in our text is used positively. It highlights Gatuiria's heroic achievement. Secondly, Wariinga is not just Gatuiria's 'darling': she is 'the walking stick of his heart', to literally translate the Gikuyu text. Such distinct manipulation of language is what makes the original a greater delight to read than the translation.

It would be grand that Gatuiria, whose splendid vision is to immortalize the history and culture of his people, should win, for a bride, Wariinga whose ravishing beauty that made many a man covet her, has been sung about by the narrator. But the Wariinga that we encounter as the story advances to its ultimate climax at the end is a different Wariinga: a Wariinga who is now a hardened fighter for justice, of whom Gatuiria is perhaps after all not deserving for he – his noble ideals notwithstanding- has remained a lukewarm, armchair scholar whose passive intellectual solidarity with the oppressed and exploited masses can, for the moment, at best be described as sterile. We need people like Wangari, Muturi; the university student leader and the new Wariinga. We need a revolutionary!

It is in this spirit that the 'Prophet of Justice' gets lyrical if fanatical about "Wariinga, heroine of toil... Wariinga our engineering hero!" (DC 217), as her character dramatically changes from a reticent victim of injustice to an industrious and fiery woman. "*Wariinga mbari ya Iregi!*" (CM 226) (Wariinga of the clan of Iregi!"), the

Gicaandi Player exclaims in this phrase that echoes in the story like a refrain in a song. The translation of this is "Wariinga, daughter of the Iregi rebels!" (DC 222). Again, as she suffers from the pain of oppression when the plot for the garage where she has been working is grabbed, the narrator adds: "No *ngoro yake iraatheruka urume wa iregi*" (CM 227) (But in her heart boils the courage of the Iregis), which we have for the translation as, "But her heart rages with the courage of a rebel" (DC 223). As argued in the previous chapter, this metaphorical allusion needs to be appreciated in the context of the history of the Aagikuyu as pertains the famous Iregi generation -- the generation of those people who rebelled against dictatorship.

True to these heroic attributes, Wariinga brings our story to a dramatic end. In a fit of formidable courage, she fells the Rich Old Man from Ngorika in a symbolic execution, where the past, the present and hopefully the future injustices against her, and the oppressed and exploited people, is avenged in the summary elimination of the villains who are here embodied in Gitahi. What Wariinga thinks of Gaturia's father is of interest to us. As he grovels for her love, Wariinga sternly dismisses him and calls him, "*Gitahi kia mioyo yeene*" (CM 261). This is aptly translated as, "You snatcher of other people's lives!" (DC 253). But the Gikuyu text entails much more than the figurative description. There is the deliberate punning of the word Gitahi which here acts as the proper name of Gaturia's father, and as a pejorative reference to him as the oppressor --the snatcher of other peoples' lives. This is a conviction that drives Wariinga to shoot Gitahi dead, a fact that she reiterates over his dead body saying:

Ino ni ndutu, ndaa, mbuca, thuuya, ngunguni... uyu ni kieha na thiina uria utuuragio ni gutaambiria miti ya mioyo ya andu aria andi! (CM 261)

There kneels a jigger, a louse, a weevil, a bed bug! He is mistletoe, a parasite that lives on the trees of other people's lives! (DC 254)

Of particular interest to us is the use of the mistletoe to describe Gitahi. Its Gikuyu name *thiina* also, indeed originally, means problem/poverty, and features in the Gikuyu proverb

"*Thiina nduri miiri*" (Mistletoe [read, poverty/problem] has no roots). The plant is believed to be parasitic and can easily be got rid of as it grows on other trees, having no roots of its own. As such, when Wariinga refers to Gaturia's father as *thiina*, our attention is drawn to the word play involved. The word implies 'the mistletoe' and 'a problem' both at once. These effectively describe Gitahi because on one hand he is a problem—an epitome of evil. On the other hand his life has come to an end just like a mistletoe that does not last forever. In her use of language Wariinga persuades us to justify the Rich Old Man from Ngorika's riddance. Her momentary victory is the victory of the oppressed and exploited masses. It heralds the demise of the greedy and insensitive bourgeoisie class.

From the foregoing comparative analysis of *Caitani* and its translation, we re-affirm the fact that Ngugi has taken advantage of the Gikuyu language to make the story captivating. Keeping in the tradition of story telling, he has employed metaphors, similes, personification and symbolic allusions to embellish his story. These are stylistic choices whose aesthetic effect is more profound in the original text than its English version.

We have established that the imagery in the novel appropriates a lot from oral literary genres including riddles, narratives, songs and proverbs. Their language and content are here used in a fresh figurative sense that necessitates that the reader has knowledge of their contextual application in the oral tradition. We have also identified one of the most outstanding effects of these linguistic choices as the way they have helped the author to create a distinct register in the text by capturing the speech behaviour of typical Gikuyu language speakers in ordinary conversations and story telling sessions. Humour and satire have been generated by the use of the idiom of the Gikuyu language. Moreover, we have shown how the figurative language in the text is deeply steeped in the popular culture/oral literature of the Aagikuyu, an aspect that we proceed to analyze in greater depth in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

ELEMENTS OF ORAL LITERATURE

In explaining the contextual nature of proverbs, Kabira and Mutahi have recounted a well-known Gikuyu anecdote:

Muhoro was a very mean person. One time there were people who planned to go and steal his cattle, goats and sheep. Somebody was sent to go and warn him about the plan. When this old man came to Muhoro's house, he sat down as was expected of him and waited for a while before giving the message; Muhoro asked the wives half-heartedly to give the old man something to eat. The women realizing that their husband was not serious did not give the man food. The man never gave Muhoro the message because he was disappointed. Muhoro was therefore caught unawares and his property was taken away – hence the proverb, *Kwa Muhoro gwakwire ngaguro* (Muhoro's home and wealth was destroyed because he and his wives could not give his messenger a welcoming token meal. (37)

The two have argued that proverbs emerge from specific settings within a given community; that once these proverbs are in use in the society, they are used to refer to similar kinds of situations. Thus they have concluded: "Proverbs are very culturally bound and therefore one has to understand the cultural contexts in order to fully appreciate their meaning and function." (38)

This observation reinforces our argument in this study that there are certain aspects of the use of a language that are best appreciated by the reader/listener who is well versed with socio-cultural milieu of that language. This is particularly so in the literary use of language, particularly so where the application in question is that of oral literature.

This is what we are going to address ourselves to in this chapter. In the previous chapters we have cited illustrations that fall within the sphere of oral literature especially in terms

of their figurative quality. In this chapter, we focus more decidedly on the genres of oral literature including proverbs, oral poetry, riddles, epigrams, names and nicknames, and also some elements of oral performance as they emerge in the novel. We seek to establish their aesthetic contribution to the story by virtue of their attribution to the idiom and the culture of the Gikuyu language speakers.

The central premise in this chapter is the fact that Caitaani is a novel that is conceived and rendered in the framework of an oral narrative. This is a fact that Ngugi acknowledges when he says that he borrowed a lot from the oral tradition (Decolonizing, 78). It is therefore expedient for us to look at narration in the context of this tradition. Basically, narration refers to the way a story is developed through the manipulation of linguistic and extra-linguistic elements from the beginning to a meaningful end. In addition, given the centrality of performance in oral literature, it is fascinating to contemplate the novel as a performance by virtue of firstly, its being in part a quintessential parody of an actual rendition of an oral narrative and secondly, its being replete with elements of a Gicaandi performance.

In Caitaani, there are implicit and explicit features of oral narration as a multi-generic creative process where the artists parade their wealth of knowledge on the idiom and the lore of their people. Besides the mastery of the plot, the artist embellishes the story through such stylistic choices as the proverbs, popular sayings, epigrams, songs and jokes. These are elements that abound in our text. Besides, oral narration is performed art. In the novel we have elements of oral performance including implied dramatization, particularly the use of implied gestures. Moreover, it is evident that the "I" narrator in the story addresses himself directly to an imaginary audience with which he strives to strike rapport and make an active participant in the delivery of the story. In fact the title *Muini wa Gicaandi* (The Gicaandi Player) is Ngugi's pet name for the story teller in this novel. We can take a closer look at some of the above elements.

Right from the beginning of the story, we get the impression that this is indeed an oral narrative. Like the normal Gikuyu oral fictional narratives, the narrator starts the novel with the opening formula, "*Uga itha*" (say *itha*). This is a statement that usually comes at

the beginning of a Gikuyu oral narrative to alert the audience and as Kabira and Mutahi have shown, "is a clear indicator that the artist is taking you into a fictional world" (6). This formula and introductory remarks are left out in the translation.

Still in the introductory part, the narrator animatedly invokes the presence of a listener to whom he beckons in the words "*uka muraata/uka twaranirie!/ uka twaranirie riu!/uka twaranitire cie Jacinta Wariinga u taanatua ciira wa ciana ciitu..*" (CM 3) (come, my friend/come and let us reason together now/come and let us reason together about Jacinta Wariinga before you pass judgement on our children...) (DC 9). The whole narrative is thus presented as an attempt to put the facts about Wariinga in the right so that the friend (audience) may make a fair judgment of her. This is made more concrete by the use of the collective "we" narrative voice implying the audience/reader is indeed actively present in the narration. A perfect example is at the introduction of the main story, the second part where the narrator requests to start the story a fresh: "*Hi! Anga ni ndaarugirira rugano. Mathiina ma Wariinga matiambiriiriea Ilmorog. Reke turutie uhoru mbara Nginyo...*" (CM 4) ("Wait!") I am leaping ahead of the story. Wariinga's troubles did not begin at Ilmorog. Let us retrace our steps...") (DC 10). The exclamation "Hi!" ("Wait!") presumes an addressee who is physically present at the site of the utterance. And the statement "Let us retrace our steps..." is quite revealing of what we need not overemphasize here: the narrator and the narratee are both actively involved in the process of the narration of the story of Wariinga.

Performance means dramatization. Besides, hardly can any form of enactment be devoid of gestures. And as we delve deep into Caitaani, we occasionally discern certain linguistic choices that suggest drama, that conjure in our minds gestures used by the narrator. We can cite a few of these.

The first example is in Wariinga's anecdote where Kareendi is made to wait for her boss after normal working hours. As she waits anxiously the narrator marks the passage of time as follows:

Thaa ikumi na imwe ni ici. Boss Kihara hihi ari gwake wabici agicora marua. Thinaacara ino. (CM 15)

Five o'clock. Boss Kihara is in his office drafting the letters, perhaps. Six o'clock. (DC 21).

The expression of time in the vernacular text is done with implied gestures suggesting the arrival of time. The more literal translation of the phrases of time used in the original would be "Five o'clock is this" and "Here is six o'clock. The use of the demonstrative pronoun 'this' and the adverb 'here' suggests action. These are done away with in the translation. A similar example is where Mukiraai says about his moving from the University of Nairobi to America: He puts it as "*Nii nii ucio. O America...*" (CM 72). Translated as "Then, forward march. In America...." (DC 77). The Gikuyu statement, which we could also translate as "Then there I go. To America..." not only suggest a variation in the tone of the speaker but also a probable accompanying gesture or facial expression that would demonstrate the concept of the great leap in space by the speaker, moving from Kenya to America.

That the narrative persona is actively conscious of his "audience" close at hand is again demonstrated as the story gathers speed towards its momentous climactic end. This is at the beginning of Part Ten where the story teller agonizes aloud, sharing his doubts and anxieties with his 'friend' whose opinion he seeks and whom he urges to keep on giving him company:

Ngwambiriria ha? Kana hihi ndige kuhithuria hitho ciene? No ningi ri, ndaari Kuu Naikuru iyo iganagwo. Ni ndeeyooneire na maya, ngigwira na maya.... Giuke muraata... Uka o riu.... Uka tuthii naawe ngugererie tucira turia Wariinga aagereire, uka tumuume makinya thuutha tukionaga na maitho maitu ma ngoro kiria oonaga, tukiiguaga na matu maitu ma ngoro kiria Wariinga aiguuaga, geetha tutikaahiuhe kumutaira ciira na uira wa njuuku.

(CM 218)

Where shall I begin? Or should I stop involving myself in other people's lives? But I too was present in Nakuru. I saw with my own eyes and heard with my ears.... So, come, my friend, come with me so I can take you along the paths that

Wariinga walked. Come let us retrace her footsteps, seeing with the eyes of our hearts what she saw, and hearing with the ears of our hearts what she heard, so that we shall not be hasty in passing judgment on the basis of rumour and malice.
(DC 215)

To begin with, the rhetorical questions that are ideally directed towards the friend/audience (reader) have been used to achieve both rhythm and suspense. Rhythm is especially reinforced by the fact that the passage cited constitutes very short sentences partly patterned in verse form. Secondly, dramatization is again experienced in the vernacular text like where the narrator says, "*ndeeyooneire na maya na ngiigwira na maya*" (I saw for myself with these ones and heard for myself with these ones). The demonstrative pronoun 'these' is an implied gesture used to point at the narrator's eye and ears respectively (which explains why the two pairs of organs are not mentioned in the Gikuyu text). The translation, which leaves out the nuances of oral performance we experience in the original, has had to mention them: "I saw with my own eyes and heard with my ears". Moreover, the narrator solicits the company of the listener(s) explaining that they have to continue the story together for it is the quest through which they will arrive at a sound judgment of Wariinga. These strategies cultivate a strong rapport between the narrator and the audience/reader.

The other feature of oral literature that is extensively used as a narrative strategy in the novel is oral poetry. The use of songs and other forms of oral poetry is a practice that traditionally accompanied most cultural events in African societies. Consequently, African oral poetry was for many years deemed to be merely a functional, ritualistic enactment during specific ceremonies. It was hardly appreciated as an art form. But later scholars--notably Ruth Finnegan, Okpewho Dathorne, and Wanjiku Kabira, among others--have put up a strong case for the artistic input of individual performers in terms of creativity at the moment of delivery of the oral item.

It is certainly not for their ritualistic value that Ngugi appropriates oral poetry forms, including songs and recitations in Caitani Mutharaba-ini and his other works. It is for their potential as literary forms of imaginative expression. It is for their contribution in

terms of rhythm, the tempo of the story, in terms of creation of a suitable atmosphere, the right mood, in building up or relieving of suspense. Indeed, the use of songs and poems in the narrative situates it in the tradition of story telling under the full moon where the narrator would occasionally break into a song, acquiring a firmer grip on the story line and the audience in the process. It is these aesthetic qualities that Ngugi adeptly exploits to embellish the story of Wariinga. This is particularly effective in the vernacular text.

There are numerous other instances of the use of oral poetry in the novel. There is a panorama of the sub-genres of songs including traditional types such as *irua*, *mwomboko* and *muthunguci*, religious songs, prayers and chants, patriotic and mobilization songs and even contemporary music such as the lingala songs spewed forth by the *Hells Angels* band at the cave in Ilmorog. Such a conglomeration of voices is what Gatuiria has been striving to assemble in his two years research into the history of Kenyan music and culture. The song motif, therefore, runs throughout the narrative. And it is not surprising that the braggadocio of thieves and robbers is idiomatically referred to as *kuina kaari* (to sing and dance *kaari*, that is, to sing and dance to one's self-praise). Indeed, the whole story is also conceived in the paradigm of an expansive song; soloed, as it were, by the Gicaandi player who nevertheless keeps on taking to the backstage to leave individual performers (characters) in the story to sing their set parts.

We start our analysis of oral poetry by looking at Gicaandi as a quaint art form that Ngugi has adapted, cannibalising and recasting it in this postmodern story where the ancient and the contemporary merge to compliment each other, innovatively constructing this solid work that he would happily call 'the African novel'.

Gitahi Gititi has done an informative exegesis of Gicaandi highlighting its dialectical and multi-generic essence, and explaining how it is appropriated by the author in Devil on the Cross. He has documented that virtually all the genres of oral literature coalesce in a Gicaandi text. "Even a cursory reading of a Gicaandi text reveals the complex interplay of genres- riddles, proverbs, biographical "information", history, commentary and a performative dramatic quality, which invest in voices, gesture and attention to the

audience”(109). Yet in spite of Ngugi invoking Gicaandi in the person of the autobiographical narrator in the story, the novel may not really be considered akin to the Gicaandi performance per excellence. In explaining the nature of Gicaandi Fr. Cagnolo has written thus:

The singer of the Geshande... goes round the country... and stops on the markets and squares to sing his song to the accompaniment of bottle-gourd which he waves to and fro...He challenges any other singer to know as many verses as he does. In case he is defeated, he loses his instrument. The song may go on for a whole day. (166)

The performance is a kind of a game of wits which involves coding and decoding of messages that require quick thinking, vast knowledge of the life and experience of the Aagikuyu, and a sense of fair play. (Kabira and Mutahi, 33). In *Caitani* we can only identify features that are appropriated from *Gicaandi* both in form and content but we can neither consider Ngugi's "I" narrator as an exact copy of *Muini wa Gichandi* (singer of Gicandi) nor the story a perfect parody of a Gicaandi performance. The use of this art form should therefore be appreciated within the broader perspective of oral narration.

The other aspect that falls under the poetic forms in the novel is the use of verse. The novel is essentially written in prose. Incidents of verse in the traditional novel are few and are usually in form of actual or implied quotations. However, in *Caitani Mutharabaini*, there are instances where prose melts into verse especially in some dramatic moments in the story. This is especially in the earlier parts of the story and towards the end where the Gicaandi Player gets lyrical, evidently strives to captivate the audience (reader).

In the introduction (Part one), for instance, where after seven days of fasting he is commandeered by the spirits to deliver the prophesy to the people, the Prophet of Justice submits, crying out:

Nii ndeetikira

I accept

Ni ndeetikira

I accept

Ngiria kiriro ngoro-ini

Silence the cries of the heart

Ngiria maithori ngoro-ini (CM2) Wipe away the tears of the heart... (DC 8)

The last (third) section is a blending of poetry and prose where the three single sentence paragraphs are punctuated with the lines announcing the narrator's acceptance, which creates a regular rhythm in a sort of an artistic tango (between verse and prose) culminating in the concluding dramatic recital:

Gwithaamba ni kuruta nguo

Guthambira ni gutoboka rui

Ni wega uguo...

Uka

Uka murata

Uka twaranirie!

Uka twaranirie riu!

Uka twaranirie cia Jacinta Wariinga utaanatha cira wa ciana ciitu...
(CM3).

To bathe is to strip off all clothes

To swim is to plunge into the river

Come

Come my friend

Come let us reason together now

Come and let us reason together about

Jacinta Wariinga before you pass judgment on our children...(DC9)

The basic difference between the original and the translation is that the words in the Gikuyu text are more compact and more charged with emotion than in the English one. The sound patterns are more elaborate in *Caitaani* than in *Devil* like, for example, in the first illustration where *ngiria* means both 'silence' and 'wipe away' and alliterates with *ngoro-ini*, which is not the same for 'silence' and wipe away-- they can never alliterate with 'of the heart'.

Similarly, in the case of the second illustration, it starts with a pair of proverbs whose wording enhances the musicality of the verse. The near semblance, for instance, of the orthographic/enunciatory nature of their first words *gwithuamba* (to bathe) and *guthambira* (to swim) is a good case in point. Moreover, the flow of verse is something a kin to a chain song. Therefore the Gikuyu versions are inevitably much more sonorous than their translations.

Another classic example is the *marebeta* (poems) that are used by the university student as he cautions Wariinga about life in Nairobi:

<i>Nairobi ino riu,</i>	Today Nairobi teaches
<i>Ithiinguraga muthingu</i>	Crookedness to the kind,
<i>Igatugura mutugi</i>	Meanness to the kind,
<i>Ikeendithukia mwendani</i>	Hatred to the loving,
<i>Ikeegu kia mwega</i>	Evil to the good,
(CM 10)	(DC 16)

This poem is an enactment of the struggle between good and evil. The author uses poetic license to coin fresh verbs, which helps him to achieve profound poetic effects in terms of sound, rhythm and cryptic juxtaposition of theses and antitheses. Perhaps an unconventional translation of the above would shed more light on this:

This Nairobi today,

Unholies the holy

Unkindens the kind

Unlovens the loving

Ungoodens the good

My translation may strike us as crude. But in the original text it is nothing but novel. In either case the message is clear: Nairobi is a dehumanizing city.

As we mentioned at the beginning of this chapter proverbs are the other genre of oral literature whose meaning and aesthetic function is to some extent socially and culturally determined. The place and significant of proverbs in African oral tradition is perhaps best articulated by Chinua Achebe in Things Fall Apart where the narrator says:

Having spoken *plainly* so far, Okoye said the next half a dozen sentences in proverbs. Among the Ibo the *art of conversation* is regarded very highly, and proverbs are the *palm oil with which words are eaten*. Okoye was a great talker and he spoke for a long time, skirting round the subject and then hitting it finally. (5, emphasis mine)

In the first place, this observation seems to discredit *plain* language (like the one Okoye had used) and goes on to attribute the aesthetic quality in the *art of conversation* to the use of proverbs. The image the palm oil underpins the centrality of proverbial language to the enjoyment of speeches among the Ibos. Ruth Finnegan corroborates this fact in her observation about public speaking in Africa: "...aesthetic considerations are also involved, if only to add to the persuasiveness of the speech... we often hear of the use of proverbs on such occasions to appeal to the audience or make a point with extra forcefulness" (445). Not only are proverbs used to introduce an idea; they are also used to develop an argument (to *skirt round the subject* in Achebe's idiom). Besides, they often act as potent clinchers to an argument.

Ngugi has extensively appropriated the proverbial language of the speech of the Aagikuyu community as a narrative technique. We are here using the term 'proverbial' in the broader sense of the word, which according to Collins Concise Dictionary means, "of, embodied in or resembling a proverb". We are as such going to address ourselves to popular idiomatic expressions, sayings and epigrams, and the proverbs themselves. The basic distinction that we give between 'popular discourse' and the 'proverbs' is that the popular is that which is commonly used among the general public and which is easily comprehensible as contrasted with the proverb which is usually more dense in terms of language use and content, and therefore tends to be a preserve of the experienced communicators, mostly the elders. This is what Finnegan alludes when she asserts:

It will emerge that, in addition to terseness and relative fixity, most sayings classed as proverbs are also marked by some kind of poetic quality in style or sense, and are in this way set apart in form from more straightforward maxims. (393)

Caitani Mutharaba-ini is full of popular idiomatic expressions and sayings. For the sake of our analysis we are going to sample some of these.

Adhering to the principle of self-preservation, there are times in the Gikuyu traditional value system when it is deemed prudent that you keep quiet about a truth that you know, lest you get yourself destroyed. This is what the Gicaandi Player invokes when he wonders: "*Nii ni nii u, kanua weriire?*" (CM 1) ("Who am I-the mouth that ate itself?") (DC 7). The statement expresses the narrator's dilemma on whether to tell the story of Wariinga or not, bearing in mind the drastic repercussion it might bring him for provoking the wrath of the people in power. This same phrase is used by Mwaura who describes himself and other matatu taxi drivers as *kanua weriire* (42) for their being reckless word-mongers. This expression serves the same function as the proverbs: "*Kari guoya kainukiire nyina*" (The cowardly warrior went back safely to his mother) and "*Kwigita ti guoya*" (Shielding oneself is not cowardice). They all warn the individual against irresponsible bravado.

Another interesting reference to the mouth and its speech habits is the expression *kanua moonjore*. The first word means 'the mouth' but the second one is hardly translatable. The phrase refers to a mouth that spews forth a lot of words, which may not be believed or trusted. In the novel, Wariinga quotes Kareendi in her anecdote as saying, "*O nanii ni ndaritukwo ndari icio cia kanua monjoore*" (CM 12) which is translated as "I have lost faith in silk tongued gigolos" (DC 18). Mwaura who hopes to win himself more passengers uses this again. He says: "*Ngigaakinya Rimuru ndahoota kuona akuo aingi... ndimatahe na kanua moonjore*" (CM 28), translated as, "Before I get to Limuru, I may find more passengers... and I can win them over with sweet words" (DC 34). The expression is epithetic and it underlines the community's high regard for honesty and sincerity.

There are a host of other popular expressions of the Gikuyu language in the novel. For now it will suffice to look at one more example of the popular idiom in the text. This is phrase "*andu matoi i kana e*" (CM 108) (people who do not know *i* or *e*). This is used by Kihaahu wa Gatheeca when he says how he decided to start his own school after observing that even illiterate people were starting schools and making a lot of money. The origin of this expression could be traced in the fact that when children go to school the first thing they do in the study of language are the vowels. The lower primary classrooms usually resonate with the chant of the vowels, *a e i o u*. Coming, as it were, as a song, it has so appealed to the imagination of the casual listener as to come up with the idiom *kumenya i kana e* (to know *i* or *e*) to refer to literacy. The translation in the English novel is "people who could hardly read or write A or B" (DC 111). Though it makes sense, especially when accompanied by the words 'read or write', and in spite of its being altered to consist of A and B, the idiom remains foreign to the English language to be as fully appreciated as the vernacular one.

Aphorisms and epigrams are the other aspects of proverbial language that we encounter in the popular culture of a people. Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English gives the meaning of an aphorism as a concise pithy saying that expresses a fact; an adage, and an epigram as a pointed witty statement often with a paradoxical twist. Janheinz Jahn on

the other hand has quoted Doke as having observed the following about aphorism and by extension African oral literature: "A glance at the literary form of aphorism in any (Bantu) language makes it abundantly clear that they are different from ordinary prose utterances. The difference is not entirely due to the pithiness of the sayings, but also to a tendency towards the rhymic, a tendency which at times borders on the poetic" (Jahn 58). He goes on to point out some of these poetic qualities as the parallelism in syntax, doubling of words, alliteration and rhymes. It need not be overemphasized that it is practically impossible to directly translate the rhythmic/poetic qualities of these statements from the original language to another. An analysis of a few of these in Caitaani will serve to illustrate this.

A good example is when Wariinga says as she narrates the story of Kareendi. "*No bata ndubatabataga*" (CM 13). The translation of this only retains the content but is devoid of the poetic elements of the original: "But problems don't have wings to bear them away" (DC 18). The original is concise and expressive. It invests in onomatopoeia--the word *batabata* is the imitation of the sound made by the wings of a bird as it flies off. The statement means that you have to make an effort to solve a problem afflicting you for the problem cannot solve itself. But whereas the meaning of this aphorism is central to the development of the story, it is its rhythmic, its poetic nature that we relish as readers.

There is a series of similar popular sayings in the text whose literariness is experienced in its profundity, not in the message, but in the poetic quality that we experience in the Gikuyu version. One of these is the statement directed to Kareendi by her reneging boyfriend, Kamoongonye when he reprimands her, saying; "*Uracama ari njeme*" (CM 19), which is translated as "He who tastes develops a penchant for tasting" (DC 25). The other one is what Wangari says upon her decision not to say much in the matatu: "*Metumi Magunirwo ni gwituma*" (CM33), translated as "The people from the land of silence were once saved by silence" (DC 39). Thirdly there is the saying "*Rugendo in kugeenda*" (CM 39) translated as "Traveling is what makes a journey" (DC 36). Finally we have the epigram used by Mwaura as he touts for passengers: "*Munyaka niunyakukagwo*" (CM 29) which is translated as "Good fortune can change to ill fortune" (DC 34).

The above examples have one thing in common: in them thrives the interplay of sound and meaning, and the repetition of a word or part of the word, which contributes immensely to their rhythm. This is lost in the translations, which are in form of explanation, which has undone the terseness of the original and hence reduced their aesthetic potential.

The situation is not any different when we look at the more dense proverbs. Nevertheless, proverbs may not so much invest in the sound and rhythmic pattern as aphorisms and epigrams: the strength of proverbs lies in the metaphoric and symbolic language in which they are couched. This is what Finnegan notes when she says: "In many African cultures a feeling for language, for imagery and for the expression of abstract ideas through compressed and allusive phraseology comes particularly in proverbs" (390). And she quite aptly asserts that they are not isolated sayings on their own but "just one aspect of artistic expression within a whole social and literary context" (393). In the strength of these observations, we proceed to analyze a few proverbs in Caitaani within the context of the Aagikuyu language and culture.

In the lore of the Aagikuyu community the heart is usually taken to be analogous to a forest. Living in a region characteristic of the tropical forests of Africa, the community traditionally considered the forest as pivotal to the well being of its members: it is the life giving, life sustaining reservoir from which the springs and the rivers flow, providing water for life. Its flora and fauna fed the people by providing fruit and firewood for the former and meat for the latter. In times of adversity, it served as a haven of retreat for safety. Is it then not quite congruous that the heart (which to the Aagikuyu is the essence of being,-- quite indistinguishable from the soul) is deemed akin to the forest insofar as in it resides the deepest secrets, fears, despairs, most cherished dreams, et cetera, that the individual may leash or unleash to secure his happiness, his survival or at his own peril? It is this contextual social matrix that the proverb, "*Mutitu uri n goro n duunagwo ngu igathira* (CM 1) (the forest in the heart is not cleared of all its firewood), should be appreciated. The proverb is used by, the Prophet of Justice, as he agonizes over whether or not in telling Wariinga's story he is not going to jeopardize his life.

This proverb is accompanied by another one before the narrator issues a concluding statement. This tendency to use a series of proverbs in a row is quite frequent in the story. This has contributed greatly to the tempo and the rhythm of the narrative. A look at the paragraph in which the above proverb falls illustrates this.

Nii o naanii murathi wa kihooto ni ndaambite kurituhirwo ni murigo uyu, njugage atiri: mutitu uri ngoro nduunagwo ngu igathira. Cia mucii ti como. Ilmorog ni gwitu. (CM 11)

I, even I, Prophet of Justice, felt this burden weigh heavily upon me at first, and I said: *the forest of the heart is never cleared of all its trees. The secrets of the homestead are not for the ears of strangers.* Ilmorog is our homestead. (DC7)

The proverbs in the original come as short terse statements which when arranged in a row and given their poetic diction form a rhythmic pattern that is captivating to the reader. This is considerably lost in translation where the equivalent in English often appears to be more like an explanation than a match for the original. The second proverb in the above paragraph, '*cia mucii ti como*' for example, is short alliterative and quite novel in its use of the word 'como' (which is a corruption of the verb comora [pull out]). Its translation says the same but in a loose, uninteresting and mundane manner. The tempo in the paragraph is slowed down. This dulls the aesthetic sensation that is quite pointed in the original.

An outstanding example of the extensive use of proverbs in the story is where Gaturia recounts how the old man from Bahati who narrated to him the story of Ndiguri started the story:

Aambiriirie na thimo gakuundi.... Akiuga: na toonde kwerirwo ati uthuri wa ndoonga ndunuungaga, na ati ndoonga igiragio igaanjo na ikarima, muundu o wothe eekwendo amenyage ati wainaga in eeroragira, na waringaga ni atobokaaga. Woni we njaci, wagi gitaranio. Kwenda muno ni kwiyeendia.

Mwananke uyu caria indo. No ndukaanonie Ngai nda, na ndukaanoonie Kiriindi matanuko. Mugaambo wa kirindi niguo mugaambo wa Ngai. (CM 58)

He started off with several proverbs...He told me that though it is said that the fart of a rich man has no smell, and that a rich man will cultivate even a forbidden, sacred shrine, still every man ought to know that he who used to dance can now only watch while others do it, and he who used to jump over the stream can now only walk through it. To possess much encourages conceit; to possess little, thought. Too much greed may well prompt one to sell oneself cheaply. "Young man," he said, "go after property. But never show God your nakedness and never despise the people. The voice of the people is the voice of God. (DC 63)

This is a typical Gikuyu old man speaking, "skirting around the subject", giving the young listener some food for thought, and not without creating a great deal of suspense. In this particular incident, the knack of story telling in the oral tradition is demonstrated where the storyteller introduces a story with a proverb, proverbs or the riddles to whet the enthusiasm of the audience.

Turning to riddling as a popular practice, which has been appropriated into our narrative avails us exciting insights as to how oral literature could further flavour the form of the novel. Granted, we have already referred to some riddles in the previous chapter in the light of figurative presentation. But this should not deprive us of the opportunity now to contemplate the riddle in the broader sense as a quaint art form among the Aagikuyu.

Having carried out a study on the general and linguistic structure of riddles in Bantu, P.D Beuchat has the following to say: "Most of the features of the linguistic structure of Bantu riddles to a great extent, cannot be translated into English. Symmetry of syllable patterns and onomatopoeic idiophones are culture-bound-or rather language-bound" (182).

This is true of the few riddles that are used in Caitaani. One of the riddles that has been elaborately appropriated is a popular riddle “*Ndathii uu, ndathii uu – njira cia ategi*. (I go this way I go that way – the hunters’ path). The riddle is provoked by Wariinga’s question to Muturi whether he would attend a devil’s feast. Muturi says:

Gwata ndai ngugwati cia kiiriu “Ndaathii uu ndathii uu!” Muturi akiuga.

“Njira cia ategi,” Wangari akiugira Wariinga.

“Aaca!”

“Oya kigacwa.”

“Njira cia aturi! Gwata riingi!”

“Ndaagwata.”

“Ndathii uu, ndathii uu!!”

“Njira cia aruti wira. Gwata o riingi.”

Ndagwata

Ndathii uu ndoreete gwa ituika

Njira cia aruti a-wira

“ii, na aaca. Rehe kigacwa na ndigukugaca muno ni wamenyamenya.”

“Oya!”

“Njira cia aregi..... na no cio cia aruti-a-wira....

(CM/66/67)

“Let me ask you a modern riddle....

“I walk this way and that way!” Muturi said

“The ways of hunters.” Wangari answered for Wariinga

“No!”

“Take a forfeit!”

“The paths of builders! Answer another riddle”

“I will!”

“I walk this way and that way!”

“The paths of builders.”

“No give me a forfeit.”

"It's yours."

"The paths of workers. Answer another."

"I will!"

"I walk this way and that way towards a revolution."

"The paths of workers."

"Yes and no. You owe me a forfeit, but I won't take everything for you got half the answer."

"I accept that."

"The answer is the paths of resistance.... And those are the paths made by workers." (DC 71)

The riddle form contributes to the thematic development of the novel in an interesting way. Muturi who acts as the author's mouthpiece seizes the movement upon Waringa's question to manipulate the lore of the people to underscore the role of workers in bringing about a revolution. Taking the nature of a question and answer dialogue between the poser (Muturi) and the respondent (Wangari), this exchange in the now innovated and extended riddle occasions a light moment in the text. It is done playfully as we can, for instance, perceive in the asking for and giving of a forfeit between Muturi and Wangari. Significantly, this is yet another stylistic choice in the story where form in oral literature enhances the aesthetic function of the text.

Another genre of oral literature that abounds in Caitani is that of names and nicknames. "Names can be used as a succinct and oblique ways of commenting on their owners or on others," says Finnegan (470). She contends--as a host of other scholars of African Oral Literature have done--that names form an important part of oral literature in Africa. Several critics have talked about the literary significance of names in the works of Ngugi. They have established that names of characters especially in his later novels are deeply symbolic. In Caitani, for instance, most of the names are emblematic of the character and worldview of the respective individuals given. The most striking of these are the names of 'the thieves and robbers', all of which serve to show their heinous nature. They designate different versions of exploitation such as Kahuria (snatcher), Gataanguru

(tapeworm), Gatheeca (sucker) and Nguunji (squeezer). It is interesting to observe that the writer has used the augmentative and diminutive forms for the first and last names of Kahuria, Gatheeca and Gataanguru. This intensifies their bestiality. Besides they are humorous and grotesque. Their English names such as *Rotten Borough Ground Fresh Shitland Narrow Isthmus Joint Stock Brown (Gitutu wa Gataanguru)* complete the caricature in the melodramatic moment in the narrative as the crooks horn their fame to the audience in the cave. The use of these names as satirical devices ridicules the men's greed for wealth and their vanity. That the Gikuyu names are not translated is an obvious loss for the reader of the English version.

An equally interesting aspect is the use of nicknames and epithets for some characters in the story. We have *Wariinga Marakara* (Wariinga the Angry One), *Mahua Kareendi* (Kareendi the flowers) *Kareendi ciero* (Kareendi of thighs) *Mahuthu Karekia* (The Easy to yield) and *Thaara wa Wainaina* (Napier-grass Son of Trembling) to mention a few. They intrigue us for their idiomatic presentation, which is not without a tinge of humour. There is more of playfulness than abhorrence in their use in spite of their being epithets of apparent condemnation. Just like the names above, the nicknames and epithets echo the Gikuyu popular folklore and are a great source of comic effect and satire. Whereas they appear as real (proper) names in their Gikuyu version, they seem to be mere descriptive phrases in translation.

This takes us back to where we started. The one thing that has propelled our investigation along in this chapter, as much as in the previous ones is the question: how does a writer of a literary text communicate for maximum aesthetic effect? We have throughout the chapter contended that aesthetics are more often than inherent to an individual language and the lore of a people. Besides, oral literature has proved to be the very embodiment of what Dathorne calls the experience of a people "stored in the memory of a tribe", whereby, in his words again, the artist acts as "the link that bound art to the life of a people.... The continuous expression of living art"(7).

We have looked at the use of popular discourse as it is the case with popular idiomatic expressions, popular sayings, epigrams, aphorisms and proverbs, of which we have established that their aesthetic realization is not just in their witty or cryptic sense, but more so in their compactness, their diction, and the subsequent rhythmicity. We have looked at other short forms including the riddles, names and nicknames. We have also looked at the versified forms as derived from oral poetry. And we have sought to locate all the above in the tradition of oral narration. Thus we have concluded that Caitani Mutharaba-ini could be conceived as an oral narration in which the narrator employs multi-generic narrative strategies to achieve a carnival of aesthetic effects in the text.

CONCLUSION

This study has been a stylistic analysis on how Ngugi has exploited the Gikuyu language to generate aesthetic pleasure in Caitani Mutharaba-ini. It has been guided by the principle that however much a literary text may serve as a moral treatise, however much it may be geared towards social ends, it is first and foremost a work of art. Language on the other hand is the raw material with which literature is made. It is the clay in which works of art are moulded. A creative writer generates aesthetic effect on the reader through manipulation of language. Taking advantage of the ideas of Ferdinand de Saussure, we have looked at language as a system from which we pick specific choices to articulate our ideas. By extension we have treated literary language as another system that is superimposed on the linguistic system. We have taken cognizance of the fact that any literary system is heavily determined by the social, historical and cultural circumstances in which it thrives.

We have therefore further employed Bakhtin's idea that the extra-artistic social milieu determines how meaning as well as aesthetic pleasure is generated in a work of art. Specifically, we have looked at how the Gikuyu language in its literary use is determined by the culture of the Aagikuyu people especially their oral tradition. Thus we have shown that to fully appreciate some linguistic choices in Caitaani and its translation, one needs to be well versed in the lore of the Aagikkuyu.

We started this study by analyzing words as the basic units of meaning in language. We have been able to establish that the grammar of the Gikuyu language has some properties different from the English language especially with regard to nouns and noun phrases. Ngugi has, for instance, taken full advantage of the fact that names in the Gikuyu language can be demoted or promoted from one noun class to another for aesthetic effect. Similarly, the use of the diminutive and augmentative forms, the coining new words, the borrowing of others and use of the foreign words in the Gikuyu text have contributed to the generation of aesthetic pleasure in the text. It has been interesting also to establish that taboo words and subjects are a source of humour, which the writer uses for satiric effects.

We have also looked at language as a literary expression at the level of imaginative comparison--the use of figurative language. Owing to the fact that figurative language usually derives its objects for comparison from a people's immediate environment, we have gone a head to show how there are a host of similes, metaphors and instances of personification that demand that the reader be well versed with the language and the folklore of the Aagikuyu to fully comprehend certain allusions in the text.

This is especially the case with the use of oral literature in the novel. Going through a cross-section of the genres of oral literature, from the short fixed forms to poetry and oral narration, we have seen how Ngugi has incorporated traditional art forms into the narrative structure of Caitani, making the novel form to have a greater affinity with African oral literature than his earlier works. This is particularly in the way he has invigorated the narrative process of the novel with the dynamics of oral narration.

We have done a comparative analysis of Caaitani and Devil showing in each case the difference in terms of the aesthetic realization of the individual text. What has emerged from our investigation is not the superior language vis a vis the inferior language dichotomy. Rather, we have demonstrated that the two are, to some extent, different texts whereby by virtue of its being the original, Caaitani has intrinsic aesthetic merits that have been lost in the translation. We have shown a justifiable cause why Ngugi would love to write in Gikuyu: The polemics of what constitutes a national/African literature aside, Gikuyu is a rich language, which a good artist can use to achieve profound aesthetic effect.

The study is a contribution to literary criticism on vernacular literature. There is need to encourage more creative writers to write in their mother tongues by doing objective and systematic analysis of existing vernacular literature. Besides, criticism must continue to play its role of mediating between the reader and the writer by helping readers appreciate vernacular texts. We therefore recommend more studies on literature in African languages. Comparative studies between texts in different languages is also desirable as a way of increasing dialogue between the different languages and cultures of Africa. Moreover, if

we are to continue advancing the cause for African writers to write in local languages, we must give vernacular literature the attention that it deserves. We must make its presence felt in the community of world literatures. Only then shall we be seen to be sincere.

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