**UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**

**DEPARTMENT OF LITERATURE**

# THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY AS A POLITICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL RHETORIC: AN EVALUATION OF NGŨGĨ WA THIONG'O'S MEMOIRS

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## DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented as part of the requirements of a degree in any other university or for any other award.

Signature: Date: 3rd September 2023

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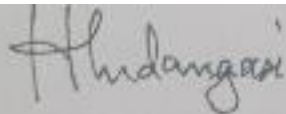
Signature:…Date: …13.09.2023………………….

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## DEDICATION

To my family from whom I have learnt the value and purpose of life.

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## ABSTRACT

This study evaluates the rhetorical strategies Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's has employed in his five memoirs: *Dreams in a Time of War*, *In the House of the Interpreter*, *Birth of a Dream Weaver*, *Detained* and *Wrestling with the Devil*. The study presupposes that, in crafting his five memoirs, Ngũgĩ artistically and rhetorically attempts to persuade his readers to assent to his political and ideological agenda. In evaluating the credibility of the narrators, the author's claims/arguments and the major rhetorical agenda in each of the texts, the study adopts a multi-theoretical approach involving the theories of autobiography and creative nonfiction, rhetoric, narratology and prison literature. The study is qualitative and descriptive in design; hence, it involved close reading and textual analysis of the collected data from the primary texts and other relevant literature. The study establishes that, in each of Ngũgĩ's memoirs, the author has employed a different rhetorical strategy in relation to the dominant exigencies and thematic focus of each text; hence, influencing the readers in different ways. It demonstrates that in *Dreams in a Time of War*, Ngũgĩ establishes his anti-colonial exigency through which he attempts to persuade the reader that colonialism had an indelible impact on his childhood memory by employing the epigraphic style, the extended metaphor of dreams, and invoking the family as a frame for anti-colonialism among others. In *In the House of the Interpreter*, Ngũgĩ adopts the rhetoric of the ambivalence of anti-colonial discourse by foregrounding education, racism and Christianity as frames for colonialism and using animal imagery and colonial iconography to interpret colonialism and the colonial Empire. The study further reveals that the rhetoric of an artist's self-definition is Ngũgĩ's rhetorical strategy in *Birth of a Dream Weaver* whereby he foregrounds his creative achievements and articulates the paradox of independence, focalizes colonialism as special topoi for his writings, and appeals to global imaginings as being among the multiple influences of his writings. It finally demonstrates that, in *Wrestling with the Devil* and *Detained*, Ngũgĩ's rhetorical strategy is contesting autocracy in postcolonial Kenya by manipulating the narrative paradigm, extolling the artist while subverting the state, foregrounding prison as a site of political oppression, and taking the not-guilty stance in defending himself against his detention. The study concludes that Ngũgĩ's style and rhetorical agenda in his memoirs draw heavily from the legacy of colonialism and are largely determined by his political and ideological agenda; hence, some of the rhetorical strategies effectively advance the author's political and ideological agenda while others work against his intention to persuade his implied audiences. This study recommends that a rhetorical criticism on different kinds of nonfiction writings, especially the memoir/autobiography in Kenya and Africa in general, to establish that the African life-writing genre could be a critical rhetorical artefact.

# CHAPTER ONE

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background to the Study

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o is a notable writer in Kenya, Africa and the world who has written extensively both fiction and nonfiction. His writings have received a lot of critical enquiry over time. His writings have outstandingly attracted heated scholarly debates on the author's sociopolitical arguments, ideological stance, thematic concerns and social vision. The question, therefore, that arises is: What exactly attracts many readers and critical scholarship to the author's works? In responding to this question, this study has established that Ngũgĩ's memoirs thrive in rhetorical representations of his political and ideological arguments. Therefore, Ngũgĩ has utilized the power of rhetoric to present his response to the colonial and postcolonial exigencies to his implied readers and society at large.

This study takes cognizance of the fact that a successful writer does not take their readers for granted, but will strive to convince them to assent to their ideological and sociopolitical inclinations by employing a combination of different artistic and rhetorical strategies. Jonathan Charteris-Black points out that "rhetoric is the range of methods for persuading others" (Charteris-Black 12). Thus, by exploring Ngũgĩ's distinct style of presenting his claims and arguments, this study discloses the source of attraction of many critical scholarships on the author's works, particularly in his life writing.

Taking Ngũgĩ's five memoirs which are *Dreams in a Time of War*, *In the House of the Interpreter*, *Birth of a Dream Weaver*, *Detained* and *Wrestling with the Devil* as a representation of the author's nonfiction writings, this study evaluates the rhetorical strategies in each text vis-à-vis the author's responses to the predominant exigencies and thematic concerns in each of the texts. In the memoirs, Ngũgĩ has not only narrated his personal experiences of the colonial and postcolonial realities in Kenya, but also has used the texts as a platform through which he presents the key sociopolitical arguments and the ideological agenda he has passionately addressed in most of his essays including *Homecoming (1972), Writers in Politics (1981), Barrel of a Pen (1983)*, *Moving the Centre (1993), and Decolonising the Mind (1996)* among others.

These include the problems of colonialism such as land alienation, colonial education, language and literature, racism and post-independence disillusionment among others.

Studies on Ngũgĩ's nonfiction, however, are not only few but have focused mainly on thematic and ideological issues that the author has passionately written on. For example, some scholars have pointed out that Ngũgĩ has been critical to discourses that undermine African cultural heritage and promote that of the colonial and imperial powers; thus, there is need to psychologically decolonize the Africans and promote their true identity (Farabi "Decolonizing the Mind of the Oppressed", Fashina "Alienation and Revolutionary Vision" and Kaur "Ngũgĩ's Politics of Language"). However, how Ngũgĩ has manipulated rhetorical strategies to persuade his readers to assent to his ideas on the colonial structures and postcolonial realities in Africa still remains unexplored. Furthermore, none of the studies conducted have linked Ngũgĩ's political and ideological trajectories to his personal transformation and development from childhood to his current status as distinguished professor of literature.

By employing a rhetorical criticism on Ngũgĩ's life-writings, we have been able to evaluate how Ngũgĩ writes in order to persuade his readers. Of particular importance is to recognize that, to achieve his intentions in crafting his memoirs and appeal to his readers, the author has artistically manipulated language in certain ways in order to attain greater aesthetic effects and what Mikhail Bakhtin terms 'dialogic overtones' (Bakhtin 1986) in his memoirs. Ngũgĩ's works, therefore, can be taken as rhetorical modes through which the author has engaged his ideas on various aspects of the social, political and economic realities in Kenya, and Africa in general.

The analysis of rhetorical strategies in Ngũgĩ's memoirs calls our attention generally to the area of rhetoric on which all rhetorical studies are based. In his *Rhetoric,* Aristotle conceptualizes a rhetorical text as the art of discerning the different ways as well as the devices (linguistic or non-linguistic) that speakers/writers employ in persuading a target audience within a given context. These means and devices are meant to make the audience to lean towards the speaker's intended worldview (Abrams 269). Similarly, Jonathan Culler recognizes that rhetoric involves adoption of language that makes abundant use of figures of speech and aims to be powerfully persuasive (*Literary Theory*). In Book 1 Part 1 of Aristotle's *The Art of Rhetoric*, Aristotle argues that

people "attempt to discuss statements and to maintain them, to defend themselves and to attack others" (Aristotle 4). This means that speakers or writers will normally defend their claims or sometimes attack their opponents. As such, Ngũgĩ's life-writings can be read as the author's defence of his claims or provide him a ground on which he attacks those he ideologically and politically differs with.

In Ngũgĩ's life writings, we presume that the author has various intentions or goals which presuppose the creation of the texts. However, when we think about his readers, we begin to imagine how the author's intentions will affect them. It is at this point that we should reflect on the possible artistic and rhetorical choices that the author makes and employs in order to convey his intentions to his readers in the most persuasive manner. Charteris-Black argues that the purpose of rhetoric is "to change the audience's mind about something" (Charteris-Black 13). This demonstrates that, unless the audience are influenced intellectually and emotionally, then a writer would not have persuaded the audience, hence, shall not achieve his/her rhetorical agenda in their speech/writings.

Since Ngũgĩ's memoirs can be seen as avenues through which the author expresses his factual experiences and sociopolitical agenda, we presume that they equally afford the reader a considerable knowledge of the author's personality. Thus, in the analysis of the rhetorical strategies in the texts, I have examined their aesthetic value and the purpose they serve in relation to the author's rhetorical intentions in trying to persuade the intended reader to assent to his political and ideological agenda. For instance, it is interesting to evaluate the adequacy or ineffectiveness of the rhetorical strategies in expressing the author's honesty, truth and consistency in explaining the problems that have affected Africans and the oppressed during the colonial and postcolonial milieu in the texts under study.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

This study is an evaluation of the rhetorical strategies Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o has employed in his five memoirs to advance his sociopolitical and ideological agenda. The study is premised on the fact that the autobiography can be read as a writer's political and ideological rhetoric, hence,

some of the rhetorical strategies Ngũgĩ has used in his memoirs are effective while others are not. Furthermore, some of the strategies employed may have been used to reveal or conceal certain truths/facts about the historicity of specific events or persons narrativised in these writings. Therefore, since the memoir is a form of nonfiction writing which is based on what the narrators saw, heard or experienced, it is imperative that the rhetorical strategies employed in crafting the texts are evaluated against the narrators' commitment to telling the truth about the different events, persons and claims narrativised in the texts within specific spaces. This is because this kind of writings can be seen as avenues through which the author articulates his arguments or claims that are meant to influence or persuade his intended readers to identify with his political and ideological leanings.

Taking Ngũgĩ's memoirs as avenues through which the author has strived to establish some degree of intimacy with his readers, I also presume that the author has upheld a high degree of honesty and truth as he strives to persuade his intended readers to ascribe to the ideas expressed in the texts. Further, is the fact that in writing the memoirs, Ngũgĩ is speaking directly to his intended readers, confiding and sharing his thoughts, memories, wishes and emotions. Therefore, for Ngũgĩ to have a greater impact on the readers, he must employ effectively various rhetorical strategies which will enable him to establish a relationship, either of concordance or even revulsion, with the reader. There is need to evaluate, for example, how Ngũgĩ has used both subjective and objective points of view through his adoption of the monologic and narrative strategies that include testimonies, personal experiences, citing historical facts, refuting/contradicting his opponents and appealing to authority in his memoirs. Additionally, Ngũgĩ's extensive use of figurative language, especially the iconographies of colonialism, symbolism and extended metaphors in his memoirs have been examined to ascertain how the author has convinced them in his criticism of racism, colonialism and postcolonial issues like neocolonialism, dictatorship and imperialism in the texts.

As indicated in the literature review section, most of the studies done on his memoirs and nonfiction works have mainly focused on the thematic concerns and ignored the author's rhetorical strategies and the stylistic component in the texts. Therefore, the findings in this study will contribute significantly to the large corpus of critical works on Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o creative oeuvre.

## 1.3 Research Objectives

The specific objectives of this study were to:

a) Identify the rhetorical strategies in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's memoirs;
b) Evaluate the effectiveness of the rhetorical strategies in expressing Ngũgĩ's anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism and anti-dictatorship ideas;
c) Explore the different types of Ngũgĩ's implied readers that the rhetorical strategies signal in his memoirs.

## 1.4 Justification of the Study

A close reading of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's memoirs reveals that the author has deliberately employed specific rhetorical strategies in order to criticize oppressive practices in both the colonial and postcolonial milieu, express his advocacy for mental decolonization and appeal to his intended readers in a variety of ways.

In this study, I have focused on Ngũgĩ's five memoirs since we presuppose that these texts represent Ngũgĩ's experiences and thinking in different periods, and as such, have captured his shift in the use of rhetorical strategies that correspond with his changing sociopolitical and ideological perspectives. As such, it is anticipated that the author's choice and impact of rhetorical strategies should have been manipulated accordingly to correspond with the equally changing readership of his writings.

The study of Ngũgĩ's rhetorical strategies is important since it enables us to appreciate the suitability and effectiveness of the author's artistry, arguments and persuasive appeals in articulating his sociopolitical and ideological agenda in his life-writings. For instance, there is a need to examine how the author has employed a combination of rhetorical strategies that appeal to the logos (the author's rational arguments), ethos (the author's trustworthiness) and pathos (the audience's affective needs) in his memoirs.

The centrality of the reader in our study has been taken seriously since the rhetorical strategies the author has employed in the texts signal what kind of readers they are meant for. That is why, for instance, Ngũgĩ has intimated this in his advocacy for a change in the current readers' reading strategies in his book *Globalects*: *Theory and the Politics of Knowing* in which the author anticipates a different kind of reader appropriate for his writings (51).

The author's persistence and commitment to his anti-oppression and anti-imperialism worldviews throughout his writings has inspired me to study the art of his craft, specifically his style of writing that is meant to persuade his intended readers of his memoirs. Furthermore, some of his life writings have not yet received the critical attention that they deserve. These texts include *Birth of a Dream Weaver* and *Wrestling with the Devil.* Thus, it is important to study these texts and see whether there has been any remarkable shift in terms of Ngũgĩ's stylistic strategies and their rhetorical implications vis-à-vis the author's political and ideological inclinations.

This study, therefore, has made an important contribution to literary scholarship since it has demonstrated that Ngũgĩ has not merely communicated his anti-oppression and anti-imperialism worldviews in his memoirs, but also that he has crafted his messages by deliberately employing rhetorical strategies that are in concordance with his commitment to project his political and ideological standpoints and appeal to his intended readers in a variety of ways. Significantly, this study shows that rhetorical strategies employed by a writer may be used not only to persuade the readers, but also to conceal or reveal the truth or facts about historical issues, key figures or the writer's life.

## 1.5 Scope of the Study

This study is an evaluation of the rhetorical strategies in Ngũgĩ' wa Thiong'o's five memoirs namely *Detained*: *A Writer's Prison Diary (1981)*, *Dreams in a Time of War: A Childhood Memoir (2010)*, *In the House of the Interpreter (2013)*, *Birth of a Dream Weaver: A Writer's Awakening* (2016) and *Wrestling with the Devil* (2018). Though the memoirs form the primary focus of this study, I have made necessary references to his drama, fiction and critical essays in

order to have a wider and comprehensive understanding of Ngũgĩ's political and ideological agenda vis-à-vis his style and rhetorical intention in the memoirs. Relevant critical studies on the author have also been referred to so as to clarify some critical issues or ideas in the evaluation of the rhetorical strategies in the texts under study.

## 1.6 Operational Definition of Key Terms

**Memoir:** According to Meghan P. Tubbs, "memoirs are self-narratives" in which the reality becomes what the writer recalls (Shands 4). Similarly, Kerstin W. Shands informs us that a memoir treats aspects of a life worth reminiscing and therefore, does not encompass a whole lifetime perspective. In this study, we take Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's memoirs as narratives about himself and his true experiences of the historical events and persons narrativised in the texts within specific times and places. For instance, *Dreams in a Time of War* focuses on his childhood and primary school life, *In the House of the Interpreter* (his youth and secondary school life), *Birth of a Dream Weaver* (as a young adult and his university life), and *Detained* and *Wrestling with the Devil* (as an adult and his prison experience) can be read as different stages of the author's intellectual, political and ideological trajectories at specific moments in his life.

**Rhetorical strategies:** In this study, the expression "rhetorical strategy" is used to refer to a deliberate style employed by Ngũgĩ to advance his arguments, enhance the persuasive appeal of his ideologies/arguments and influence/persuade his intended readers in a number of ways; that is emotionally, intellectually and politically. In evaluating the rhetorical strategies in Ngũgĩ's memoirs, I have employed the theories of rhetoric to examine the rhetorical agenda of the author's style in the texts.

**Discourse:** In this study, I have adopted Vivien Burr's conception of discourse as "a set of meanings" that can be deduced from different linguistic and non-linguistic aspects that can be employed to create a given account of events (Burr 48). In this case, therefore, this study

assumes that there are a variety of different discourses in Ngũgĩ's writings whose rhetorical impact on the author's audience varies from one text to another.

**Nonfiction:** According to Root, this term refers to the type of writing about facts or real events, not imagined ones and includes essays, autobiographies, biographies, creative journalism among others 2003). Tilar J. Mazzeo, emphasizes that the author of nonfiction must have facts about the setting, events and characters/people involved (Mazzeo 4) and that it is "true to facts and history" (7). For Chris Anderson, this kind of writing is thoughtful and individual expression. Its purpose is to convey both information as well as tell the story of the author's thinking and experience (*Literary Nonfiction*). In this study, the term nonfiction shall be limited to Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's five memoirs.

**Intended reader:** Robert H. Stein argues that our knowledge about a writer's readers enhances our understanding of the meaning that the author intends to convey in one's text (Stein 63). In this study, we take Ngũgĩ's intended readers as the different categories of readership that are appropriate to the sociopolitical and ideological issues that the author has presented in his memoirs. For instance, the reader of *Dreams in a Time of War* is likely to be one who shares with Ngũgĩ the sociopolitical ideas related to colonialism, the struggle for independence and postcolonial realities.

**Ideology:** According to Charteris-Black, an ideology consists of "a set of ideas and beliefs" (2011) that represents the world about which people can agree. In this case, therefore, it serves a sociopolitical function since it contributes to the creation of collective identity and provides the basis for revealing a given worldview. In this study, the term ideology has been employed to refer to the worldviews which Ngũgĩ has strived to project and invite his readers to assent to in his life-writings. I have discussed this in relation to Ngũgĩ's major thematic concerns in the texts which include colonialism, racism, neocolonialism, postcolonial dictatorship and African traditional and cultural issues among others. This study, therefore, presumes that Ngũgĩ is an ideologue whose ideas are intended to influence or persuade his implied to act, believe or behave in certain ways vis-à-vis the existing sociopolitical order around them.

## 1.7 Literature Review

Since the main focus of this study is on Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's employment of rhetorical strategies in his life-writings, a review of the studies on his style and craftsmanship forms the main basis of this section. The rationale for this selection is based on the fact that a large volume of critical scholarly works on Ngũgĩ has dwelt extensively on his fiction and thematic concerns while ignoring the stylistic and rhetorical components in his nonfictional writings. Florence Chinyelu Ojukwu's declaration that Ngũgĩ's nonfiction writings are mere extensions of the author's ideas in his fiction () underscores the need to accord the large corpus of his life-writings the attention they deserve.

According to Ojukwu, Ngũgĩ writes to regenerate his society, uncover the various challenges and atrocities in his Kenyan society with the aim of purging it of its "inequalities through changing the status quo" (Ojukwu 3). Therefore, the author strives to summon his implied audience to take action against what he perceives to be disagreeable to societies that are under different forms of oppression and exploitation. Additionally, Ojukwu argues that the language that Ngũgĩ has employed in most of his works is militant and inciting, which is characteristic of his radical stance on some socio-political ills in the society represented in his texts (124). She points out that Ngũgĩ's standpoint to change is "Marxist and materialist" (7) since he believes that change should be achieved by any radical means by calling his audience to "struggle" and "fight" (156) in order to about an urgent change. However, Ojukwu's study has not examined the stylistic and rhetorical components which Ngũgĩ employs to persuade his implied readers to act, believe or behave in certain ways. Additionally, her study also focuses on Ngũgĩ's fiction, hence, ignoring the author's memoirs which this study takes as an important genre through which Ngũgĩ's implied reader can access his political and ideological leanings.

Michela Wrong has argued that in *Dreams in a Time of War* Ngũgĩ recollects his boyhood experience during the 1940s and early 1950s when the Mau Mau fought against the British rule in Kenya. Wrong observes that, through the memoir, Ngũgĩ has successfully uncovered the imperialist's inherent racism and its impact on colonized subjects ("Starting Out as a Writer"). Nonetheless, what problematizes Wrong's arguments is the fact that he inaccurately describes

the tone in the memoir as being "calm and nuanced" despite the narrator's revelations of his terrifying experience of colonialism as a child. Margaret Busby's analysis of the memoir resonates with Wrong's arguments and claims on the painful repercussions of colonialism on the colonized and, more specifically on Ngũgĩ-the-child and his immediate family (2012). However, both Busby's and Wrong's evaluation of the memoir ignores the credibility of the child narrator's criticism of the various colonial structures that the text has explored through the author's adoption of the adult voice.

Bernard Nyantino studied Ngũgĩ and Soyinka's childhood memoirs by focusing on the role of memory in influencing the authors' construction of their memoirs ("Representation of Memory"). However, Nyantino has not interrogated other aspects of the autobiographical truth and how effective the author has employed them. For instance, it would be interesting for one to evaluate the shifting narrator's tone which the author adopts to influence the intended reader's perception of colonialism, its structures and the author's sociopolitical worldviews in *Dreams in a Time of War*.

According to Jenipher Achieng Otieno, Ngũgĩ has effectively developed the plot, narrative points of view and different characters in the memoirs (Otieno 6, 36, 61). However, though Otieno describes the narrative point of view as a crucial aspect of narrative unity in the memoirs, there is still a need to evaluate the author's adoption of the adult voice in his two memoirs (*Dreams* and *In the House*) vis-à-vis his political and ideological agenda. Furthermore, Otieno's analysis has ignored the author's employment of extended metaphors and symbolism to characterize colonialism and interpret the Empire in the texts. Just like Nyantino, Otieno does not interrogate the credibility of certain voices, such as that of Ngandi, in articulating and interpreting the historical realities in Kenya during colonialism.

Ngũgĩ's tendency to indict colonialism even in the post-independence socioeconoic problems in Africa resonates across his fiction, essays and memoirs. This observation is underscored by Evan Maina Mwangi in his review of Ngũgĩ's *Secure the Base*. He faults Ngũgĩ by pointing out that the author has not advanced his ideological stance in this text. Instead, Ngũgĩ has just pointed out

African problems and linked them to their colonial origins. To justify his critical observations, Mwangi poses a question which is intended to challenge the reader on the tendency of the writer's habit of perpetually blaming colonialists for problems and mistakes Africans have created for themselves (Mwangi 2016). Vivere Nandiemo concurs with Mwangi but adds that Ngũgĩ has continued to flounder in didactic and overused ideological outbursts even in his latest writings ("Kenyan Readers"). Therefore, there is need to evaluate the author's rhetorical intentions in his employment of colonialism as special topoi in not only his fiction but also his nonfiction writings that include his memoirs. Furthermore, it would be interesting to critique Ngũgĩ's Marxist clichés in his nonfiction writings in relation to a writer's autobiographical pact with his readers which requires that the narrator upholds high levels of honesty and truth in one's narrative discourse. By doing so, this study shall have addressed Mwangi's concerns.

Mwangi also contends that there are restricted choices that reveal gender differences in Ngũgĩ's choice of themes, narrative perspectives and intertextual relations in his writings. His study further establishes that Ngũgĩ deploys the mythology of the Agĩkũyũ community to discuss themes that trace the history of the Kenyan nation ("Artistic Choices"). Mwangi's observations take cognizance of Ngũgĩ's deliberate stylistic choices whose main intention is to project a specific worldview to his intended readers. Similarly, he points out that Ngũgĩ has extended some of his stylistic elements in his fictional works to his nonfiction writings in order to attain his political, ideological or artistic intentions. However, Mwangi has not tackled the author's rhetorical agenda in Ngũgĩ's extensive employment of the Agĩkũyũ myth in most of his writings. Therefore, it is paramount to interrogate the author's intention of using the mythology to represent the Kenyan nation and critically evaluate the suitability of its employment in his memoirs.

In echoing similar observations as Mwangi's above, albeit in Ngũgĩ's *Weep Not, Child*, Henry Indangasi, in *Rethinking Literature*, also insinuates to the act of Ngũgĩ being stuck with the past. Indangasi has, for example, questioned the purpose of the Gĩkũyũ mythology in Ngũgĩ's fiction and its symbolic ramifications to the political realities in the contemporary Kenyan society (*Rethinking Literature*). Indangasi's concerns are privy to his awareness of the possible rhetorical significance of the writer's act of foregrounding certain stylistic elements in one's writings. In this thesis, for example, it is interesting to evaluate Ngũgĩ's foregrounding of the

Gĩkũyũ nationalism through the employment of myths, songs as well as the Mau Mau legacy in his memoirs. Equally significant, is the examination of the (in)effectiveness of Ngũgĩ's symbolic employment of Marxist bandwagon appeals to his readers in his effort to persuade them to assent to his political and ideological arguments in *Detained* and *Wrestling with the Devil*.

Underscoring Ngũgĩ's extensive use of the Agĩkũyũ mythology and other related aspects of style, Muchugu Kiiru ("Oral Features"), argues that features that are usually found in oral discourse are dominant in Ngũgĩ's novel *Devil on the Cross* and other writings. He points out that the I-narrator, biblical allusions, oral literary features and confessions are predominantly employed in this novel. He argues that the I-narrator in the novel adopts aspects of style in his narration that are associated with oral discourse such as repetitions, direct address and involvement of his audience in the story he narrates. Kiiru also argues that the biblical allusions used are in the form of sermons and parables that Jesus delivered to his aural audiences. The scholar further identifies genres of folklore such as proverbs, songs and oral narratives that are predominant in the text and argues that the songs used in the novel comment on the events narrated in the text and provides some relief to the audience. Nevertheless, it would be interesting to critique Ngũgĩ's employment of these aspects of style in his nonfiction writings. For instance, Ngũgĩ's negative portrayal of Christianity while elevating the Agĩkũyũ mythology in his memoirs to advance his ideological and political agenda need to be explored further to establish their rhetorical agenda.

In his book *The Postcolonial Animal*, Evan Mwangi has discussed extensively the employment of animals and oral literary forms in African postcolonial literature. In reference to Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Penpoints* and *Decolonising the Mind*, Mwangi argues that the author links between animals and human beings with the wider world portrayed in folkloristic art and underscores the co-dependence of humans and nature in oral literature (Mwangi 57). However, there is need to explore the rhetorical agenda in Ngũgĩ's employment of the animal imagery in his autobiographical narratives rather than relying on his association of them with oral literature of African communities. Furthermore, although Mwangi has underscored Ngũgĩ's emphasis on the use of oral forms of representation in African literature, none of the studies done on Ngũgĩ's

nonfiction writings have examined the rhetorical intentions of the author's use of animal imagery and the Agĩkũyũ mythology in his writings.

Additionally, in reference to Jomo Kenyatta's *Facing Mount Kenya*, Mwangi asserts that the writer has allegorically used animals to articulate the anticolonial setting of his narrative so that readers can easily discern the symbolic implications of the animals vis-à-vis colonialism and its inherent structures. For instance, Mwangi points out that the elephant's displacement of man from his house after the latter welcomes it can be compared with the colonialists who forcibly took the Africans productive land and interfered with the lifestyles of the Agĩkũyũ community and Kenyans at large. However, Mwangi's argument that the story about the elephant-man conflict merely illustrates the folly of ingratitude acted out against extended hospitality (*The Postcolonial Animal* 62) undermines the seriousness of colonialism and its impact of the dispossession of Africans' land from their rightful owners. In Ngũgĩ's memoirs, the problem of land dispossession has been used to amplify the colonial impoverishment of the local African communities and as a justification for the Mau Mau uprising in 1952 through 1956.

In her examination of Ngũgĩ's memoir, Jennifer Muchiri has symbolically compared the narrator's family's experiences to what was happening in most African families in the colonial Kenya who were equally faced by the problem of landlessness, abject poverty, the anti-colonial struggle as well as the infamous World War II in the rest of the world (2014). Muchiri's findings are crucial to our study as they provide the author's perceived audience with the main themes of the memoir. However, Muchiri's ideas on the family have not been connected with Ngũgĩ's covert persuasive agenda in relation to the different aspects of the African family within the colonial context. Therefore, our study becomes handy in examining Ngũgĩ's employment of the family as a rhetorical tool that can be used to condemn colonialism and its oppressive structures. For instance, it is interesting to examine the diminishing father figure in the African family and its rhetorical impact on the readers.

In recognizing that Ngũgĩ has intertwined the story of his life as a high school student with the story of colonial Kenya in his memoir, *In the House of the Interpreter*, Muchiri intimates that Ngũgĩ has done so with a rhetorical mind to advance his anti-colonial ideas to his intended

reader. Nevertheless, Muchiri's study focuses mainly on Ngũgĩ's thematic concerns and sparsely touches on Ngũgĩ's style and craft in the memoir. For instance, whereas she discusses the themes of colonialism, Christianity and education in the memoir, her study does not say anything about the author's political, ideological or rhetorical agenda in his criticism of the colonial structures in the text. This study, therefore, examines the ambivalences inherent in Ngũgĩ's negative portrayal of the colonial structures as he strives to influence and persuade his implied readers to assent to his political, ideological and rhetorical agenda in the memoir.

In her examination of Ngũgĩ's *Detained* and Wanyiri Kihoro's *Never Say Die*, Muchiri has argued that the prison memoir vividly describes the horrendous reality of the imprisonment of members of the academia and accurately compares the experiences at Kamiti prison to president Moi's autocratic regime which subjected many dissenting voices to arbitrary detentions. However, Muchiri's study is delimited to the thematic concerns in the memoirs. It would, therefore, be significant to explore Ngũgĩ's artistry in *Detained* while focusing more on the author's utilization of the rhetorical situation in the memoir and its apparent exigencies to advance his political agenda and influence his readers in different ways. For instance, there is need to interrogate Ngũgĩ's arguments on the question of language vis-à-vis the historical evidence on language policies in the colonial and postcolonial periods. It would also be interesting to examine his self-defense strategy by positioning himself among the common peasants in society and the impact of invoking colonialism as special topoi in the memoir.

Simon Gikandi, in his examination of Ngũgĩ's *Detained,* demonstrates that the memoir clearly brings out the contest between an autocratic state and artists as well as exposes what prison literature entails (*Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o*: *Cambridge Studies*). However, though Gikandi successfully foregrounds the conflict between the artists and an autocratic state in the *Detained*, it should be underscored that, by the time Gikandi studied *Detained*, Ngũgĩ had not revised his prison narrative to come up with *Wrestling with the Devil* in which he has altered some of his earlier claims and omitted key sections and pertinent details on his imprisonment.

Nelson Fashina and Isaiah Ilo have concurred that Ngũgĩ's *Decolonising the Mind* is a critique of cultural and linguistic imperialism as well as neocolonialism in Africa. Fashina argues that there are two ideological arguments that resonate in the text: Ngũgĩ's opposition to the linguistic and cultural absurdity of writing African literature in European languages and his critique of capitalism and its manifestations in economic and political domination (Fashina 9). On his part, Ilo argues that African literature in foreign languages demonstrates the dominance of the colonial languages over those of the Africans and emphasizes that the question of cultural imperialism and linguistic hegemony are issues Ngũgĩ has consistently talked about across his writings ("Language in Modern African Drama"). Though, Fashina and Ilo have succinctly acknowledged Ngũgĩ's discursive discourse on the politics of linguistic hegemony of English over the local African languages, there is need to further re-examine the author's ethos vis-à-vis the claims he makes on language in his nonfiction writings, specifically with the aim of ascertaining their rhetorical impact on his readers.

Sandeep Kaur has argued that *Decolonizing the Mind* is a platform through which Ngũgĩ has explained how he came to write in the Agĩkũyũ language ("Ngũgĩ's Politics of Language"). Kaur further asserts that Ngũgĩ speaks not only for Kenya, but also for the rest of the African continent and that the author proposes a program of radical decolonization in the context of globalization in the text. Although Kaur has acknowledged the fact that the essay is Ngũgĩ's proclamation of his decision to write in Agĩkũyũ language, he has not examined the author's fidelity to his pronouncements on the rejection of English. So, there is need to explore the persuasive appeal and practicality of Ngũgĩ's rhetoric on language in relation to his own life and experience. And the best way we can establish the strength of his arguments and claims in relation to his development as a writer and ideologue would be to evaluate his life writings which have chronicled these trajectories from his childhood to adult life.

According to Kumar Nag, Ngũgĩ's writings are more predisposed towards his anti-imperialism and anti-neocolonialism than African economic and political realities and challenges in most of his essays. This is because the author has been very critical on Africa's subjugation by the West economically, politically and ideologically. Additionally, Nag points out that Ngũgĩ has addressed the quandary of writing in European languages, a habit which inhibits many African

writers from reaching the common people for whom they are writing ("Fighting Neocolonialism"). This argument, however, raises some questions. For example, for whom does Ngũgĩ write? And, for what purpose does he write his works? What kind of reactions does he expect from his readers? These questions underscore the central role that readers play in a writer's works. These are the questions that most of Ngũgĩ's critics of his fiction and nonfiction have failed to address in order to unravel the author's rhetorical and political agenda in his works.

The importance of a writer's intended readers in the interpretive processes of a text should be taken serious. Henry Indangasi has underscored the idea of the changing readership of a writer. According to Indangasi, Ngũgĩ's ideal reader before the collapse of the Soviet bloc was someone with socialist and anti-imperialist sympathies. He, however, points out that this reader has changed with the collapse of the Cold War. Owing to this, he asserts that the reader of Ngũgĩ's works has also changed and this has posed problems to Ngũgĩ's arguments for socialism ("Ngũgĩ's Ideal Reader"). However, Indangasi has limited this important observation to Ngũgĩ's early fiction. Our study takes up Indangasi's argument and extends it to Ngũgĩ's more recent nonfiction writings such as *Wrestling with the Devil* and *Birth of a Dream Weaver*.

Darryl Lorenzo Wellington, in his examination of Ngũgĩ's *In the House of the Interpreter*, has argued that, at Alliance High School, African students' ethnic habits and behavior were supposed to be refined by adopting those of the English ways and Christian principles that were stressed in the school by Carey Francis, the school principal. Moreover, Wellington argues that Carey Francis exemplifies the incongruities of the colonial Empire since he believes that the Mau Mau rebels were evil but he is opposed to their killing by the British soldiers and advocates for diplomacy between the colonial administration and the freedom fighters.  Wellington further compares the memoir to the Afro-American writings by writers such as Richard Wright and Ralph Ellison among others whose works are about Negroes struggling to acquires education in a society characterized by racial predispositions. However, throughout Wellington's article, Ngũgĩ's artistic craftsmanship has not been even hinted at. It would be interesting to find out, for

example, how Ngũgĩ rhetorically portrays racism as a frame for colonial hegemony and Carey Francis as a colonial or racial patriarch in his memoir *In the House of the Interpreter*.

In *Birth of a Dream Weaver*, Ngũgĩ charts out his early developments as a creative writer. Long before the publication of this memoir, some studies had been done on Ngũgĩ's development as a writer. For instance, according to Bernth Lindfors, Ngũgĩ commenced his literary career towards the end of 1960 when he first contributed his short story "The Fig Tree" to *Penpoint*, Makerere's English Department's magazine which was used for the promotion of literary writings of staff and students (*The Blind Men*). Lindfors claims that, even before the publications of his novels, Ngũgĩ became known as a gifted author in 1961 because of the publications of his short fiction and drama in the local magazine. To support his claim further, he notes that by mid-1961 Ngũgĩ's writings had already drew some critical attention. Ngũgĩ's invitation to attend the famous Conference of African Writers of English Expression in 1962 in which one of his own short stories was discussed attests to the validity of Lindfors' observations. Lindfors adds that Ngũgĩ's early success in fiction and drama made a significant impact on the East African scene and that it was enhanced by his extensive engagement in journalism. Lindfors writes that within a period of four years (1961 to 1964) the author produced about eighty pieces for newspapers which included *Sunday Nation*, *Sunday Post* and *Daily Nation* (*The Blind Men*). He points out that Ngũgĩ's major themes included education, racism, and ethnicity, among others. Lindfors informs us further that Ngũgĩ's early ideas were shaped by what he read at Makerere which mainly consisted of European literature. Lindfors' essay is crucial to our study since it provides some insights about Ngũgĩ's early influences as a writer; hence, contributes to our understanding of the author's arguments and claims in *Birth of a Dream Weaver*.

Tom Odhiambo, argues that Ngũgĩ titled his memoir *Birth of a Dream Weaver: A Writer's Awakening* because of his perception of the "evocation of dreams" as the significance of the narrative in the memoir ("Where It All Started"). He intimates that the memoir answers the question on how one becomes a writer since, through the memoir, Ngũgĩ has narrated about what he wrote while he was a student at Makerere University College in Uganda. He further observes that the memoir reveals to the reader the demands of university education which is characterized by the inter-hall competitions that partly impelled Ngũgĩ to begin writing his early plays and

fiction. Thus, according to Odhiambo, Ngũgĩ reveals in this memoir how his early creative outputs were inspired by actual places, people and events. In this context, therefore, Odhiambo insinuates that Ngũgĩ's personal encounter with racism, colonialism and the decolonization process, ethnicity and other sociopolitical realities in Kenya during his youth contributed profoundly to his early creative output. Importantly also is Odhiambo's observation that *Birth of a Dream Weaver* is Ngũgĩ's reflection of the lost glory of Makerere university which was occasioned by the betrayal of the pre-independence hopes. Odhiambo has, however, faulted Ngũgĩ on his depiction of Idi Amin, Milton Obote and Daniel Moi in the memoir by criticizing him for attacking Idi Amin for the collapse of Uganda while mounting a mild criticism on Milton Obote, a fellow former Makerere alumnus. Nevertheless, Odhiambo's claim that Idi Amin was merely a product of circumstances which could have been anticipated is contestable. In this case, Odhiambo's argument seems to embolden acts of dictatorship in Africa by invoking colonialism as a mitigating circumstance for Idi Amin's gross misconduct and dictatorship as a president.

Sarah Ruden, argues that, although *Birth of a Dream Weaver* is an account of Ngũgĩ's university years and beginning as a writer, it is characterized by several deviations and that it condemns the West. She faults Ngũgĩ's depiction of the whites' opposition to African cultural practices as being cruel and inconsiderate ("Voice of Anger"). Ruden further argues that, in this memoir, the author is hostile to Christianity by portraying Christians as hypocrites. Though she brings out the biases in Ngũgĩ's depiction of Europeans' activities in Africa, Ruden fails to acknowledge that the British colonial state in Kenya and the violent confrontation between the Mau Mau and the colonial forces had a profound impact on Ngũgĩ's attitude towards the whites. Ruden also comes out as a white racial supremacist who feels that Ngũgĩ's indictment of the West is unjustifiable despite the role it played in the colonization of Africa as well as its interference in the post-independence African countries. Ruden's article further fails to recognize Ngũgĩ's craftsmanship and its diverse rhetorical appeals to the author's implied different readers.

In his review of *Birth of a Dream Weaver*, Martin Banham has only discussed the main theme of the memoir by merely recounting Ngũgĩ's achievements as a young writer while being a student at Makerere University College. He asserts that the main theme of the memoir, Ngũgĩ's development as a writer at Makerere, is implied in its title that is suggestive of the fact that the

university college provided an appropriate setting for Ngũgĩ's beginnings as a writer. Banham further praises the author's efforts in the production of his early fiction and drama ("Review of Ngugi wa Thiong'o"). Nevertheless, Banham is silent on the artistic and rhetorical aspects in the memoir which Ngũgĩ has employed to influence the reader and advance his political and ideological stance vis-à-vis racism, colonialism and ethnocentrism among others.

Kọ́lá Túbọ̀sún, points out that *Birth of a Dream Weaver* reveals that Makerere University College produced the first set of East Africans with university education during the colonial period. Corresponding with other scholars, Túbọ̀sún notes that, through Ngũgĩ's eyes, the readers experience the colonial East Africa and his growth as an artist and journalist ("Ngũgĩ's Tribute to Memory"). However, the scholar also argues that, when Ngũgĩ was a student at Makerere, the colonial situation in Kenya was worse than that in Uganda since the Africans in the former were more ill-treated. However, Túbọ̀sún fails to note that, despite the relaxed colonial situation in Uganda, racism was still rife there as demonstrated by the ban on Ngũgĩ's play *The Wound in the Heart* which was denied a chance to be performed at Uganda's National Theatre because it has disparagingly depicted a white man as being inhuman and immoral. Furthermore, his article does not appreciate Ngũgĩ's style and its rhetorical appeals in relation to its themes and intended readers.

Nevertheless, I agree with Túbọ̀sún's observation that Ngũgĩ's invitation and participation in the 1962 Conference of African Writers of English Expression was a confirmation of the author's worth as a creative writer and developing ideologue. However, his argument that it was at this conference where Ngũgĩ's anti-English attitude was initiated is contestable since the author's anti-European languages developed later while he was a lecturer at the University of Nairobi. Additionally, Túbọ̀sún erroneously claims that the author's current primary language of creative writing is Gĩkũyũ despite the author's failure to uphold his promise to write in his native Agĩkũyũ language. Túbọ̀sún should have noted that all of Ngũgĩ's nonfiction writings are written in English language despite Ngũgĩ's declaration in later years that he would write in Kiswahili or Gĩkũyũ languages.

Just like Túbọ̀sún, Wrong erroneously believes that Ngũgĩ's anti-European languages position developed when he was an undergraduate student at Makerere ("Starting Out as a Writer,"). For instance, though we may agree with Wrong's argument that *Birth of a Dream Weaver* portrays Ngũgĩ as a politically-aware writer, his observation that he advocated for a rejection of European hegemony is a bit an exaggeration. This is because, as pointed earlier in this section, Ngũgĩ's rejection of English or European languages in writing African literature came out later. In fact, Ngũgĩ's implementation of this started in 1977 with the publication of *Ngaahika Ndeenda* which he co-authored with Ngũgĩ wa Mirii. Unfortunately, the author's act of denouncing English as an irrelevant language for African literature is riddled with problems as he himself has failed to do away with it in his writings.

According to Wrong, Ngũgĩ's ideological and political worldviews in his early 20s differ from his perceptions in his late 70s. Wrong attributes this to Ngũgĩ's inability to detach himself from his personal experiences of colonialism and anti-colonial struggles during the years of his youth. Wrong further points out that, because of his attachment to his past, Ngũgĩ's *Birth of a Dream Weaver* is imbued with an angry tone ("Starting Out as a Writer"). While acknowledging Wrong's observation on Ngũgĩ's worldview in this memoir, I would like to point out that it is not possible for the author's perception of reality as a youth in the 1960s to remain the same as those he has as an old intellectual critic in his 70s. The semblances of Ngũgĩ-the-youth and Ngũgĩ-the-adult can only be attributed to the author's tactical intrusion into the narrative voice in the text as a strategy meant to influence the readers to lean towards his political and ideological agenda.

Chandrahas Choudhury argues that *Birth of a Dream Weaver* portrays Ngũgĩ as a young artist and expresses the author's insightful maturing of his creative and ethical awareness. Choudhury sees the memoir as a revelation of crucial insights about the author's selfhood, literature, history and politics during Ngũgĩ's coming of age as a writer. He accurately recognizes that, in the memoir, Ngũgĩ's boyhood and innocence are over and, therefore, he is no longer passive in his experience of the major events in society. Therefore, Ngũgĩ had started getting involved actively in the fiery discussions on the issues of that time which included the decolonization movements in Africa, racialism, politics, culture and literature. In recognizing the development of Ngũgĩ's early critical mind, Choudhury cites Ngũgĩ's ability to critique the Negritude poetry by

interrogating the idea of embracing blackness unquestioningly. However, though Choudhury recognizes that Ngũgĩ engaged himself in debates on language and literature while being a student at Makerere University, it should be pointed out that his arguments were not driven by an identifiable ideological stance. This happened later when Ngũgĩ was already a lecturer at the University of Nairobi in the late 1960s through 1970s. Choudhury further fails to note that Ngũgĩ's veiled reference to President Moi's dictatorship at this point contravenes the autobiographical norms which require that an autobiographer concentrates on the events of his times; hence, the narrative voice of the young man creeps away and is covertly replaced by that of the 79-year-old Ngũgĩ who has already suffered as a result of the Moi dictatorship.

In reference to the author's detention, Bernth Lindfors asserts that Ngũgĩ was imprisoned due to the sensitive sociopolitical issues that his novel *Petals of Blood* and play *I Will Marry When I Want* (*Ngaahika Ndeenda*) raised about colonial and postcolonial Kenya. He adds that the media, which described the texts as being "explosive" catalyzed the author's detention (*The Blind Men and Elephant* 95).

On the contribution of *Ngaahika Ndeenda* to Ngũgĩ's detention, Lindfors has intimated that the successful production of the play was objectionable to those who were in power, hence necessitated the government's suppression of its performances. Lindfors argues that, though the play had positive impacts in improving the literacy of the people of Limuru and was a community project, its popularity attracted the government's attention. This seems plausible since, as Lindfors argues, if it had been "a flop or a fiasco" in its performance, the government would have just ignored its production. Additionally, Lindfors raises other crucial issues which might have made the play to prompt the government to detain Ngũgĩ. For instance, it raised the critical issue of homeguards, exploitation and appealed for a class warfare. Lindfors argues that these were not insignificant issues in the Kikuyuland which experienced the Mau Mau uprising against the colonial regime. The play portrayed the postcolonial Kenya's exploiters as homeguards who had paradoxically benefited from independence. However, Lindfors' conclusion is misleading in the sense that during the 1970s and 1980s, there were books written and published in the local African languages and Kiswahili but their authors were not detained. Ngũgĩ was rather detained because of rubbing the political class in the wrong way.

In her book *Say It Like Obama*, Shel Leanne has demonstrated the power of rhetorical strategies in influencing a speaker's audience. For instance, she argues that Obama's outstanding communication skills enabled him to win the tightly contested presidency in America in 2008. She points out that Obama's choice of words and vision inspired millions of his audience and persuade them to assent to his ideology as well as become optimistic of his leadership (Leanne xv-xvi). In addition to manipulation of his tone, Leanne adds that Obama knew how to manipulate different rhetorical strategies such as effective use of metaphor and symbolism to influence his perceived audience (xx). In our evaluation of Ngũgĩ's life writings, we have endeavored to establish the extent to which the writer's linguistic choices, style and rhetorical preferences have either succeeded or failed to advance his political and ideological arguments and claims.

In his emphasis on the need to seriously consider a writer's rhetorical strategies, Makau Kitata has demonstrated that it is imperative that while developing themes and characters in literary works, a writer has a rhetorical assignment that he fulfils (Kitata 222). This argument, thus, emphasizes on the symbiotic relationship that involves the writer, the text and the reader in the interpretation of meaning of literary texts. Accordingly, in the evaluation of the rhetorical strategies in Ngũgĩ's memoirs, I have endeavoured to demonstrate how Kitata's ideas may be applicable to the writer's craft in the texts under study.

The current study recognizes the fact that Ngũgĩ's fiction are also heavily imbued with his political and ideological arguments which he has passionately articulated in his life writings and essays as demonstrated by Ojukwu's critical comment: "Ngũgĩ's other prose writings are necessarily an extension of his creative works and *Writers in Politics* is a good example" (Ojukwu 14). Therefore, though the main focus of this study was to make a critical intervention in the scholarship on Ngũgĩ's memoirs, it recognizes the major patterns of scholarship on Ngũgĩ's fiction. It underscores the fact that Ngũgĩ's textual worldview is one in which his theoretical underpinnings which have been succinctly articulated in the large corpus of his nonfiction converges with the practice in his fiction as demonstrated in the extensive scholarship done on his fiction. Therefore, the current study has intricately and extensively engaged with

critical ideas of some of the prominent scholars on Ngũgĩ's fiction such as Carol Sicherman, James Ogude, Even Maina Mwangi, Brandon Nicholls, Florence Ojukwu, Bernth Lindfors, and Simon Gikandi among others.

According to Carol Sicherman, Ngũgĩ 's novels account for Kenya's historical realities and that the author's novels retrospect in time to replicate the sociopolitical realities that include the African people's cultural matters and historical events such as the formation of African independence schools, the Mau Mau revolt against the British colonial hegemony and the decisive period of independence. Sicherman argues that, Ngũgĩ blends fictional characters with the historical ones so as to enhance the "fictional reality" of the texts and invite the reader to contemplate their position in the history of their nations.

The rise and antagonism between the government and missionary-owned schools and the African-owned independent ones which Ngũgĩ has critically recounted in *Dreams in a Time of War* has also been explored by Ken Olende who argues that Ngũgĩ's novel *The River Between* examines the institution of independence schools during the colonial period which results in the leading character, Waiyaki, to be entangled in the tussle between the missionary-owned primary schools and those that are set up by the colonized Africans. However, Olende does not link his arguments with Ngũgĩ's rhetorical agenda in foregrounding the conflict between the colonial government schools and the African independent schools in the text.

Some studies of Ngũgĩ's style of writing have focused mainly on the author's fiction. For instance, in his stylistic examination of the narrative in *A Grain of Wheat*, Sarala Krishnamurthy places emphasis on the cause-and-effect relationship in this novel which he asserts that ascertains the author as a "complex writer" ("A Stylistic Analysis"). He argues that the story in the novel is told indirectly by means of "paraphrase motifs and summary inferences". Krishnamurthy points out that in the novel, Ngũgĩ has used Kihika as a metaphor through which he demonstrates that idealistic African leaders fail to attain their visions due to being betrayed by their own communities and people. However, Krishnamurthy fails to evaluate the author's rhetorical intentions in advancing his political and ideological goals vis-à-vis his implied readership through such metaphorical characters.

## 1.8 Theoretical Framework

In evaluating rhetorical strategies in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's memoirs, I have taken the texts as discourses through which the author is determined to articulate his sociopolitical and ideological agenda to his intended readers in the most appropriate and persuasive way. Owing to the complex web that exists in a communicative event, a rhetorical analysis of Ngũgĩ's life-writings require a multi-theoretical approach to identify, examine and evaluate the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the different rhetorical strategies that the author has employed in these works. However, these theories have been applied to the evaluation of the texts in an interwoven manner.

Since Ngũgĩ's memoirs involve the author's expression of his personal experiences, feelings, attitudes, opinions and worldviews generally, our interpretation of the texts was guided by ideas from the theories of autobiography and creative nonfiction. Autobiographical writing has been conceptualized as life-writing, life narrative, recitations of the self, self-invention and self-discovery (Jerome Bruner 1987; Leigh Gilmore 1994; and Shari Benstock 1988). For Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, this kind of writing is historical and self-reference to the writer, (Smith and Watson 3). The autobiographical storytelling has also been taken as a performative occasion that has the power of discourse that produces effects through replication and includes the role of 'scene' and 'audience' (Butler 20). In this type of writing, George Gusdorf points out that the author is required to dissociate oneself from oneself pertaining oneself so as to effectively reconstruct oneself in one's memoir or life writing (Gusdorf 35). In this study, I take Ngũgĩ, who in this case is the autobiographical speaker, as a subject who is actively involved in recreating events about his own life in relation to particular historical realities.

Theodore A. Rees Cheney, asserts that a creative nonfiction writing is a narrative of factual events and people as well as places (Cheney 1). This kind of writing employs aspects of style normally used in composing fictional works. Cheney's emphasis that creative nonfiction writing should arouse emotions of the reader while educating him/her underscores the rhetorical intentions of the writer of this kind of genre. As such, Cheney declares that the writer of nonfiction should possess the skills of a creative storyteller and the research ability. While

corresponding with Cheney's ideas on nonfiction writings, Philippe Lejeune argues that authors of nonfiction including the autobiography should preserve the truth in their narratives about the people and events they present in their writings (Lejeune 4).

Therefore, in this study, I have attempted to evaluate the extent to which Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's literary craftsmanship in his life-writings conform to the tenets of creative nonfiction and autobiographical writings. For instance, in this study, I have evaluated the authenticity of the narrators' voice in *Dreams in a Time of War*, *In the House of the Interpreter* and *Birth of a Dream Weaver* in which some of Ngũgĩ's advanced adult political and ideological inclinations seem to be voiced through some of the narrators' critiques on colonialism, Christianity, racism and cultural issues as well as linguistic imperialism.

A rhetorical evaluation of Ngũgĩ's memoirs demands that one recognizes the persuasive appeal of such writings. This calls our attention to the theories of rhetoric. According to Aristotle, writers/speakers will normally attack their opponents or defend themselves through their claims and arguments which are intelligently and creatively constructed using a given language (Aristotle 4). This means that speakers or writers will normally defend their claims, ideas and arguments or attack those of their opponents. As such, the narrator in each of Ngũgĩ's memoirs can be seen to be articulating and defending his claims and worldviews or attacking, refuting and discrediting those of the other characters they ideologically or politically differ with. This means that Ngũgĩ writes his memoirs with a clear persuasive intention and a target audience in mind. Aristotle emphasizes that rhetoric includes discerning the available means of persuasion on any subject presented to the audience/reader (Aristotle 10). As such, Ngũgĩ's memoirs can be read as the author's rhetorical speech or linguistic acts whose main intention is to influence or affect the reader in particular ways. Aristotle argues that there are three kinds of persuasive appeals: ethos (depending on the character of the speaker/writer); pathos (involves putting the reader/audience into a certain emotional state); logos (proof, or apparent proof) (10).

To augment Aristotle's ideas on rhetoric, I have employed ideas from the proponents of New Rhetoric to evaluate Ngũgĩ's memoirs. For instance, by employing Kenneth Burke's ideas, I have

focused on Ngũgĩ's memoirs as forms of action since they are intended to influence his perceived readers in specific ways. Specifically, taking the idea of 'identification', I have evaluated Ngũgĩ's rhetorical strategies as deliberate devices meant for the identification of his interests with those of his readers as when he utilizes local Agĩkũyũ or Kiswahili terms and the personal pronouns 'I' and 'we' in his memoirs to create a rapport with his audience. The term 'identification' can also be seen as an end in itself, since Ngũgĩ earnestly yearns to identify himself with some group or other as when he illustrates his arguments with examples of other writers that he cites as having similar thinking and ideologies as his.

Taking Ngũgĩ's memoirs as narrative texts through which a different narrator in each text presents and describes the worlds, events and characters therein, narrative theories were vital for the evaluation of the memoirs. A narrative theory informs us on how a narrative is composed, its figures/tropes and ideological underpinnings and how the reader responds to it. Gerard Genette, one of the proponents of narratology, argues that a narrator is *diegetic*; hence, is a crucial person who is involved in narrative creation in a text (*Narrative Discourse* 162-163). Accordingly, the narrator in Ngũgĩ's memoirs becomes *diegetic* since he constructs the story that he recounts about himself. Therefore, because the different narrators in the memoirs are the sources of the information we derive from reading his narrative discourses, I presuppose that they may decide to tell us the truth in their entire narrations or conceal from us some information about certain events, people or places. On the other hand, the narrators may decide to frustrate or even unashamedly lie to us. What does this suggest? It shows that the readers are beholden to the narrator/writer, whereas, the narrator/writer needs the readers for their political, ideological or social discursive narrative discourses. Therefore, the diegetic narrators in Ngũgĩ's writings take their time to construct the tales they recount to the reader, shape what and how to tell the reader and decide what to include or leave out of their narrations. Richard Bradford coined the term *autodiegetic* narrator to refer to autobiographical protagonists (Bradford 58). This is what happens in Ngũgĩ's memoirs through which the writer assumes the position of the narrators in the five texts under study.

In later developments in narratology, Mieke Bal expanded the definition of a narrative to encompass stories told in any genre or art form. Corresponding with his predecessors, however, Bal emphasizes the notion that, central to any narration, are the story teller/performer and the listener/audience/reader relationship (5). This signals us to the rhetorical roles that are inherent in all narrative discourses. Since we have taken Ngũgĩ's life-writings as avenues through which he is narrating different sociopolitical discourses and expressing his ideological agenda to his perceived readers, we have employed narratology in this study as an effective tool to evaluate not only the narrative structures of the texts but also the linguistic elements through which different characters and goal-oriented events have been narrated to his intended readers. According to Bal, narratives, images, spectacles, events and cultural artifacts can tell a story (3). Bal insists that a clear identification of the structure of a text is necessary in order to interpret and discuss the actual meaning of a literary text. Based on this argument, we, therefore, presuppose that Ngũgĩ's memoirs consist of an important corpus of works which he has created for specific political and ideological purposes or goals.

Equally significant to our study is Walter R. Fisher's narrative paradigm which is one of the latest developments in narratology. According to Fisher, people experience and understand life as a sequence of continuing narratives involving important aspects of plot such as characters, events/incidents and different forms of conflicts (Fisher 24). His motivation in developing narrative paradigm was based on the belief that rhetoric is more than merely creating arguments which are supported with evidence, facts and logic. Therefore, it requires that the plot, characters and actions be scrutinized since a narrative influences people' beliefs, actions and behaviour. In using this theory in analyzing Ngũgĩ's memoirs, we seek to discover the ethical implications and truthfulness of his narratives by evaluating reasons presented to make his claims or arguments valid. This is because, as Fisher points out, in creating stories, people have "good reasons" (Fisher 57) which provide some insight into the proper courses of human action.

According to Fisher, narrative is important in determining the way people speak, think or act and involves the process of using symbols that organize human experience in successive and consequential ways. Fisher points out that, as *homo narrans*, human beings have the ability to

use symbols to communicate with one another (in this case, between the writer and the reader (Fisher 63).

As a form of discourse, therefore, narrative exposes people's being or behaviour and the way they see things in the world. Fisher's model takes a narrative to be more than just an imitation of the world since it has the power to influence the audience to act in a certain way and manner.

Fisher further informs us that a narration is the heart of the narrative paradigm since it consists of meaningful "symbolic actions" (Fisher 58). The theory proposes that human beings are rational and can make decisions on the basis of logical arguments, evidence and reasoning. It foregrounds narrative as the core aspect of communication among human beings. It further presupposes that human beings have the capacity to rationality as a function of "narrative probability and narrative fidelity" (Fisher 71) that determines the degree to which the stories have to make sense and correspond with accepted forms of stories. He notes that stories told enable people to capture and relate personal experiences in the world of reality. Therefore, people look for and narrate stories that validate their efforts, ideas and address problems or challenges in their lives and appeal to their psychological satisfaction.

Narrative paradigm stipulates that stories can be good or bad; hence, by employing narrative rationality, one is able to evaluate the contents of stories as being true or not. Accordingly, persuasive stories have an aspect of coherence in terms of how probable or believable they seem in terms of their consistency of characters and events. The audience becomes persuaded only when they believe that important details and facts have not been left out or possible interpretations have been accounted for. Hence, for Fisher, some narrations/narratives are better, more coherent, and truer to the way the world is (Fisher 68). Based on Fisher's theory, it would be appropriate to argue that some of Ngũgĩ's narratives in his memoirs are persuasive while others may not due to narrative fidelity which demonstrates the nature of truth offered vis-à-vis the reader's expectations.

Additionally, Fisher informs us that a story should have a high level of fidelity, which is enhanced by providing worthy reasons that would propel the reader to accept its ethical

principles which are embedded in its messages and their relevance. This is what will ultimately guide the reader's actions. The question that arises then is: Do Ngũgĩ's narratives in his nonfiction writings exemplify narrative fidelity? I have addressed this question in the succeeding chapters on his memoirs.

In evaluating Ngũgĩ's prison narratives, I have employed Foucault's conceptualization of the role of imprisonment to critique the author's *Detained* and *Wrestling with the Devil*. In his conception of prison, Foucault has discussed the role of the prison as an institution of punishment and discipline because of its design. In theorizing about prison and incarceration in the modern world, Foucault draws his inspiration from Jeremy Bentam's design of a prison he named the Panopticon (*Discipline and Punish* 200). The Panopticon was an institution in which everything on the prison is seen and everyone who is incarcerated is constantly under the surveillance of the state and society through the prison authorities. Foucault asserts that institutions like the prison and the barracks were designed to confine and discipline their members since they compel them to be always aware of their constant visibility to the state and its power (Foucault 201). Therefore, Foucault coined the term Panopticism which he claims is a system or model of how disciplinary power can be seen operating. For Foucault, Panopticism is the condition of the imprisoned convict's feeling as being constantly under surveillance by the state through the state machinery of prison.

Yvonne Jewkes has underscored the importance of Foucault's ideas on prison and detention by asserting that his approach reveals "power relations" and the state's power to "control society" (23). Correspondingly, Keith Soothill points out that the birth of the prison was concerned with changes in the systems of punishment and the state's power over the human body ("Prison Histories" 27). Concurring with Foucault, Soothill argues that the evolution of confinement aimed at ensuring "discipline and subordination" of the state's subjects (27). Therefore, situating the analysis of Ngũgĩ's prison memoirs *Wrestling with the Devil* and *Detained* on Foucault's concept of prison and incarceration facilitates a clear understanding of the intricate relationship between the state and the imprisoned political inmates at Kamĩtĩ Maximum Security Prison in postcolonial Kenya.

## 1.9 Methodology

This study is purely qualitative in design and approach. In the study, I employed close reading and textual analyses of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's memoirs. In terms of sample size, this study focuses on Ngũgĩ five memoirs which form the corpus of his life-writings. The texts have been selected from Ngũgĩ's extensive oeuvre of nonfiction writings that include his essays and autobiographical writings since they are reflections on the progression of the author as an ideologue whose commitment to articulate anti-oppression, anti-imperialism and anti-neocolonialism worldviews can be traced from his childhood. Covering the different phases of Ngũgĩ's life – from the colonial to the postcolonial milieu – the texts can be seen to project the author's shifts in his employment of rhetorical strategies that are meant to correspond with the equally changing readership for his life writings. In addition to the analysis of the primary texts, necessary references have been made to some of his essays, fiction works and critical studies, journal articles and newspaper commentaries on his writings. In the process of evaluating the texts under study, different steps have been involved to validate the rhetorical strategies in each of the texts.

The first step in the evaluation involves identifying the overriding rhetorical strategy in each memoir on the basis of the rhetorical situations and main thematic concerns of the discursive narratives in each text. Then, the artistic choices that the author has used to bolster the dominant rhetorical strategy in each text to project Ngũgĩ's rhetorical intentions have been examined in relation to his ideological and political agenda as well as the author's anticipated responses from his intended readers.

The evaluation of the rhetorical strategies has been done against different theoretical orientations to ascertain Ngũgĩ's consistencies or inconsistencies in his endeavour to project his political and ideological agenda and persuade his intended readers. This enables us to bring out the (in)effectiveness of some of the strategies which the author has employed in the texts. This study, therefore, adopts the qualitative approach in the analysis of the data collected from the author's five memoirs. Thus, detailed descriptions of the various rhetorical strategies, their effectiveness and the kinds of readers they signal have been done against the author's

sociopolitical worldviews and ideological leanings in each of the texts studied. This has been done on the basis of the research objectives and the theoretical underpinnings of this study.

# CHAPTER TWO

# *DREAMS IN A TIME OF WAR* AS A WRITER'S ESTABLISHMENT OF ANTI-COLONIAL EXIGENCY

## 2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the rhetorical strategies that Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o has used to establish the anti-colonial exigency in *Dreams in a Time of War*. The chapter foregrounds the problem of colonialism as the main exigency upon which his anti-colonial ideologies and political worldviews are established during his childhood. It is apparent that, in the memoir, Ngũgĩ's main objective in portraying colonialism as the central exigency in the text is to introduce and prepare the reader psychologically for the narrative of denunciation of colonialism and its diverse ramifications not only on the child narrator and his family, but also on his Gĩkũyũ community and Kenya in general. Being a memoir on his childhood that takes the reader through his experiences from his early childhood to 1953 when he completed his primary school education, *Dreams in a Time of War*, therefore, can be seen as the author's attempt to establish the basis of his anti-colonial, sociopolitical and ideological trajectory that dominate both his fiction and nonfiction.

According to Lloyd Bitzer, the exigency is a crucial component of a rhetorical situation which is a key determinant in a rhetorical criticism of any literary text. In his model of rhetoric, Bitzer conceptualizes a rhetorical situation as a combination of three components namely the exigency, the audience and the constraints. The exigency constitutes "a kind of urgency/problem" which triggers the writer write about it whereas the audience constitutes individuals/persons/characters who are capable of affecting the exigency. The constraints include those factors which can hamper or heighten the possibility that the reader/audience can affect the exigency (*Philosophy of Rhetoric* 1-14). Drawing on Bitzer's conception of exigency, we see Ngũgĩ's *Dreams in a Time of War* as a rhetorical discourse whose main objective is to denounce colonialism as the author experienced it during his childhood. In this case, Ngũgĩ's narrative and arguments in the memoir are intended rhetorically to influence his anti-colonial readership, who include the

colonized in Kenya and Africa in general to assent to his political and ideological agenda in the text.

Ngũgĩ's *Dreams in a Time of War* has explored the theme of colonialism in a similar way he has done in his early fiction and drama. Just like in his early novels, this memoir sets the base upon which the trajectory of his anti-colonial ideological and political developments can be traced and interpreted by his readers. According to Gikandi, Ngũgĩ's early stages in his creative writings were marked by the anti-colonial struggles and the general decolonization process and the unavoidable demise of the story of colonization which had dominated African writings by other writers who preceded him; hence, the narrative of independence dominated the context in which his works were produced. He adds that Ngũgĩ was majorly concerned with the process of colonization and its effects on the Africans and their culture (287). It is these realities that Ngũgĩ establishes in *Dreams in a Time of War* as he recollects his personal experiences of colonialism as a child during the violent confrontation between the British colonial forces and the African resistance mounted by different groups of Kenyan freedom fighters.

It should, therefore, be born in mind that this memoir introduced the author to colonial education and Christianity when he joined primary school level in 1947 through 1953. In this chapter, therefore, I examine the effectiveness and limitations of the rhetorical strategies which Ngũgĩ has employed in *Dreams in a Time of War* to establish his anticolonial exigency in the memoir.

## 2.2 The Epigraph

In *Dreams in a Time of War*, Ngũgĩ has employed the epigraph as a rhetorical strategy to attract the attention of the reader to his anti-colonial narrative in the memoir. The epigraphs, which have been employed at the beginning of the text can be seen as a gateway to the narrative of colonialism in the memoir since they have set the major thematic concerns of the text as well as its predominant tone and mood. There are three explicit and one implicit epigraphs which Ngũgĩ has used to achieve his intended rhetorical goal. Hence, before he takes the reader through his narrative, the reader is presented with quotations from different texts. These epigraphs relate back to the narrative at hand as they foreshadow the events the narrator is going to recount,

introduce the theme of the text and highlight the arguments that the author wants to articulate and communicate to his reader. Thus, each of the epigraphs has been used to set the readers' expectations from the text.

Firstly, Ngũgĩ has used Victor Hugo's quotation "There is nothing like a dream to create the future" (*Dreams* 1) in reference to the French writer's novel, *Les Misérables*, as an epigraph to his memoir, *Dreams in a Time of War*. This epigraph can be interpreted as Ngũgĩ's attempt to attract the readers' attention to the miserable conditions caused by the impact of colonialism on the colonised in Kenya during the anti-colonial struggle. Hugo's novel, *Les Misérables*, was written during the 19th Century to depict the deplorable economic and social conditions in France during that time.

By employing the epigraph from Hugo and referring to his novel, Ngũgĩ has strived to persuasively influence the reader to view colonialism with disdain because of its degrading systems. For instance, at the onset of *Les Miserables*, the reader is confronted by the abject poverty as the family of Jean Valjean and his sister is facing starvation and merely struggling to live. This situation compels Valjean to steal bread for his sister's starving children, a crime which, coupled with his attempt to escape from prison, leads to his arrest and imprisonment for nineteen years. Similarly, in *Dreams in a Time of War*, many families suffered because of the consequences of poverty and deprivation caused by land alienation and economic exploitation of Africans by the colonial white settlers. According to Ahmed, DildarAlvi and Baseer, Victor Hugo has displayed characters who are struggling for survival against "manipulation and exploitation," and that the text is grounded on the "miserable" and struggling members of society (Ahmed, et al. 117).

In the epigraph from Martin Carter's poem, "Looking at Your Hands," Ngũgĩ wants to underscore his commitment to writing about the oppressed and their bravery in struggling against all forms of oppression. In *Decolonising the Mind*, Ngũgĩ states that the main theme of the book is based on Martin Carter's poem in which the author observes the commonplace people "hungering and living in rooms without lights" (*Decolonising* 3). Ngũgĩ further claims that the poem reflects the disgraceful and oppressive conditions experienced in many African countries

and others in which the oppressed have been compelled to fight for liberation in various ways. Ngũgĩ's *Dreams in a Time of War*, can be seen as partly and largely imbued with Carter's revolutionary voice as demonstrated by the struggle against oppression implied in the words "but dream to change the world" in the epigraph that is extrapolated from Carter's short poem (Ngũgĩ *Dreams*; Carter 14)

In this short poem, the persona advocates for action against the forces that subject people to abject poverty and other forms of oppression and exploitation. The expression "dreamed to change the world" implies the persona's insistence on action and, therefore, a call for revolutionary measures by the oppressed and exploited for social transformation in the society represented in the poem. The persona's "dream" can be seen to symbolically suggest a future optimism that will be attained through armed struggle or a revolution. The "hands" in the poem's title implies the poet's passionate call for the oppressed to unite and struggle for freedom. Just the way this poem of protest proposes, Ngũgĩ's *Dreams in a Time of War* is the author's impassioned call to the colonized to join hands, as in the case of the Mau Mau movement and other anticolonial struggles elsewhere in Africa, to fight for their freedom. By quoting these lines, therefore, Ngũgĩ's goal is to persuade the reader to believe that Carter's ideas on the struggle for liberation have greatly inspired him to write his memoir, *Dreams in a Time of War*, through which he has dramatized the Mau Mau's anticolonial struggle in Kenya. He further uses this epigraph to persuade the reader that the colonised should have hopes of liberation even in times of colonialism and war.

Ngũgĩ has used another epigraph from Bertolt Brecht's brief poem "Motto" to express the melancholic tone and mood that dominate *Dreams in a Time of War*. Brecht wrote the poem in the late 1930s to express his feelings about the difficult life in his country during the early times of the First World War. The imagery of created by the phrase "dark times" (Ngũgĩ *Dreams*; Bretch 320) in the poem is suggestive of the hard times in the society represented in the text. Through this epigraph, therefore, Ngũgĩ invites the reader to the narrative of the appalling conditions that Kenyans faced during colonialism which included landlessness, poverty, oppression and exploitation which were caused by the colonial realities they faced. The

conditions were worsened by the fierce war between Mau Mau fighters and the colonial military who were supported by the local collaborators such as the colonial chiefs and home guards.

Ngũgĩ's other epigrahic reference is  the line, "April was the cruelest month," (*Dreams* 1) from Thomas Stearns Eliot's poem "The Waste Land". It is the first line in part one of the poem which is titled "The Burial of the Dead" (Eliot 3). The line can be interpreted as an indication of the unpleasant human experiences that could only be linked with the destruction of human life as suggested by the terms "burial" and "dead". The first six lines of the first stanza of the poem clearly depicts the cruelty of nature on human life (Eliot 3). In these lines of the poem, Eliot describes a depressing condition which has been captured in the imagery of the "breeding lilacs," "dead land," "dull roots," and "dried tubers" (3). These images can only be associated with dreadful conditions and are meant to arouse in the reader a sense of pessimism which is descernible in the speaker's melancholic tone. By using the line in *Dreams in a Time of War*, Ngũgĩ wants to signal to his readers that the story he is going to narrate is full of cruel experiences that were associated with colonialism when he was a child.

According to Anupama Verma, Eliot has used the parable of nature to highlight human degradation in the world. Verma intimates that Eliot must have written this poem to express his worry about the devastation which was left by the First World War in parts of Europe and that it symbolically embodies alienation between the human soul and the normal world. Verma observes that the first lines of the poem portray the destruction of nature through the loss of its quality which symbolically demonstrates the destruction of humanity after the war (Verma 1-3). In *Dreams in a Time of War*, Ngũgĩ has equally recounted the chilling experience of colonialism which was characterised by wanton destruction of human life because of the war between Mau Mau guerrillas and the colonial forces, mass displacement of Africans from their land, detention of many anti-colonial Africans in concentration camps and the imposition of oppressive colonial rules among others.

Corresponding with Verma's observations, Scotty Hendricks asserts that Eliot's poem explores the themes of memory, decay and post-war despair which are presented in such a way as to give the reader a chaotic view of the world ("Is April the cruelest month?"). In view of Hendricks's

observation, I argue that the memory of colonialism has continued to haunt Ngũgĩ since his childhood because of the inhuman activities or events that were associated with it. Therefore, in *Dreams in a Time of War*, Ngũgĩ demonstrates to the reader that his experiences with colonialism and the memories of the same have persistently exacerbated feelings of pain and misery in him.

The opening sentence of *Dreams in a Time of War* invites the reader to the problem of colonialism and sets the melancholic mood and tone that dominate the whole text as it defines the narrator's life and invites the reader to his traumatic experience of colonialism. It also articulates the narrator's reminiscence of the month and the year when the traumatizing experience was permanently imprinted in his childhood memory. Therefore, the narrator's epigraphic statement "T.S. Eliot's line that April was the cruelest month" (*Dreams* 1) evokes the painful experience he encountered in his childhood in the context of colonialism in Kenya. In invoking the painful past experience of the April 1st in 1954, Ngũgĩ wants to assure the reader of the accuracy of that experience in relation to his memory. According to Lejeune, an autobiography is a "retrospective prose narrative" (Lejeune 4) that has been composed by a writer concerning his/her own life and reality. Therefore, it is impossible to talk about the self and one's past without talking about or referring to one's memory. Antonio Damasio points out that the sense of an autobiographical subject arises specifically owing to the recapped presentation of one's own personal memories. In his later work, Damasio emphasizes that autobiographical selves are "autobiographies made conscious" on the basis of personal memories (*The Feeling of What Happens* 210). Therefore, basing on Lejeune's and Damasio's ideas, it is imperative that an autobiographer requires an effective memory to keep images of the past in the mind, make it explicit to the reader as one creates one's autobiographical self in a text.

Ngũgĩ's invocation of the specific past date in his childhood is followed by his exposition of the painful experience by, firstly, situating the context within which he had that experience: that it was chilly Limuru which had been set aside as the White Highlands. Therefore, the author succeeds in establishing the setting within which the events in the whole text happen: it was during the colonial time, 1954; the problem of land alienation is stated and the author points out that he was quite aware of his situation despite his age. Secondly, he recounts the narrow escape of his elder brother, Wallace Mwangi, from being arrested by the colonial police for being

caught with bullets; thereby, revealing that there was a conflict between the colonial state and the colonized Africans. He describes the escape in heroic terms by claiming that it elevated Wallace Mwangi into an instant legend and inspired several accounts of heroism among the people in his village. This establishes a clear demarcation between the colonizer and the colonized, elevates acts of resistance to the colonial master and demonstrates the wishes of the colonized. Therefore, the author succeeds in establishing a degree of binary opposition between the colonizer and the colonized and sets the ground that dramatizes the bitter relationship between the two groups: the hunter designating the powerful colonial oppressor and the hunted, the colonized and oppressed Africans.

The sense of apprehension that many families experienced during the tumultuous years of colonial terror is captured by the narrator's claim that when, on that April day, he finally arrived at home in the evening, he found his mother and other members of the family "huddled together around the fireside" (*Dreams* 4). The revelation to the narrator that the "nameless man" who had narrowly escaped death was his elder brother, Wallace Mwangi, winds up the narrator's sad experience on that dark April day as his mother breaks the silence in the house by blaming the war between Mau Mau and the colonial military. It is mainly this experience that makes the sad day in April a cruel memory to Ngũgĩ who wrote the memoir as an adult – 56 years later. The state of affairs in the narrator's family at this point is what the reader has been prepared to witness as the narrative of colonialism unfolds. Therefore, right from the beginning of his narrative on colonialism, Ngũgĩ has successfully strived to establish the main concerns of the memoir.

Therefore, it is worth noting that in *Dreams in a Time of War*, Ngũgĩ has successfully employed the epigraph to persuade his intended reader to accede to his anti-colonial ideas since the epigraphic style has served various roles in this memoir. Firstly, it has enabled him to be in dialogue with other writers whom he considers significant and whose writings are thematically related to the painful colonial experiences recollected and recounted in this memoir. Secondly, the epigraphic quotations can be interpreted as the author's deliberate efforts to reveal or suggest the main theme, colonialism and its attendant devastating effects on the child narrator and the colonized, which psychologically prepares the readers before the narrator begins to take the

reader through his harrowing experience of colonialism. The epigraphs have also enabled Ngũgĩ to set the melancholic mood and disdainful tone and melancholic mood in the memoir, thereby, influencing his perceived reader to hold colonialism and its structures in contempt. The employment of the epigraph in this memoir can be seen as Ngũgĩ's effective demonstration of how the epigraphic style as a form of intertextuality has not only enabled him to set the appropriate tone and mood for the narrativised experiences and thematic concerns in the text but also to bring out the author's attempt at enhancing his readers' interpretation and understanding of the text. Additionally, it has demonstrated Ngũgĩ's sensibility about the rhetorical implications of the epigraphic style in persuading the reader to accede to his anti-colonial ideas and politics. Finally, the epigraphs used in the memoir have also suggested the author's possible intended reader for this text, in this context, as someone who has anti-colonial and anti-oppression sentiments.

## 2.3 Using the Extended Metaphor of Dreams

In *Dreams in a Time of War*, Ngũgĩ has maintained thematic cohesion in the text by employing the metaphor of "dreams" throughout the memoir in order to get the reader hooked to the text. Thus, in our effort to illuminate the meaning of "dreams" which is embedded in the title of the memoir, we argue that the meaning of this memoir can be comprehended by examining the possible metaphorical or symbolic ramifications of the term. We take the idea of 'dreams' in the title as being metaphoric since it has been extensively foregrounded in the text to express different meanings through its repetitive usage across the plot of the memoir.

According to Halliday and Hasan, cohesion involves a writer's use of certain linguistic resources to link different parts of a text (Halliday and Hasan 48). Through cohesion, a text attains an aspect of unity in terms of its thematic concerns and meaning. Similarly, Dainora Ieva Balevičienė asserts that "without cohesion a text loses itself" and "becomes just a set of unrelated utterances" (10). Balevičienė, further notes that unity in a text is recognized through the use of cohesive devices which aid in creating connections between previous or subsequent "parts of discourse" (15). In *Dreams in a Time of War*, we take the function of the metaphor of "dreams" beyond merely linking the different parts of the text to the title of the memoir, but as a

means to the reader's appropriate interpretation of the text. This is also in line with Vivian Zamel's observation that cohesive devices, in writing or speech, are used to signal the relationships between the ideas in a text (22). Thus, in this study, we take the reader's successful interpretation of the text as largely depended on the cohesive structures that Ngũgĩ has utilized in the memoir.

In psychoanalytic criticism, readers and critics will normally adopt the methods of reading literary texts employed by Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Jacques Lacan and later psychoanalytic developments to interpret literary texts. This type of criticism posits that fiction and nonfiction works, just like dreams, conveys psychological wishes of the writers. Charles Bressler argues that, by employing Freud's psychoanalytic techniques in the interpretation of dreams, a critic can unravel the hidden meanings contained in the symbols employed in a story and attain appropriate and accurate interpretation of a narrative (Bressler 94). Therefore, the term 'dreams' in *Dreams in a Time of War* may be interpreted as an extended metaphor with different symbolic and thematic ramifications in the text vis-à-vis the writer's implied readers. According to Zoya Rezanova and Konstantin Shilyaev, an extended metaphor (which they have called a megametaphor) is a stylistic device which can be employed to provide coherence for "micrometaphors" (31). Accordingly, the metaphor of dreams can be viewed as a megametaphor through which Ngũgĩ has cohered his thematic concerns in this childhood memoir.

Ngũgĩ, in his essay *Penpoints,* argues that the term "dreams" can be used as a metaphor through which images that express the complexities inherent in art and the state become clearly enunciated (*Penpoints* x). He contends that, in a world where such hopes are curtailed by social, economic and political inequalities in many countries, artistic works become the most important ways in keeping alive the people's anticipations of advancement (*Penpoints* 6). It is because of the metaphoric implication of the term "dreams" that Ngũgĩ has also argued that art keeps the writers' and readers' aspirations and hopes that the post-colonial states often suppress. In *Moving the Centre*, Ngũgĩ further argues that the hopes of the oppressed in many African countries are perpetuated through the writings of the artists. He metaphorically refers to their artistic productions to as the voices through which the dreams of the oppressed are expressed (*Moving the Centre* 81).

Right from the title of the memoir, *Dreams in a Time of War*, Ngũgĩ arouses the reader's curiosity to discover the nature of the "dreams" being narrated in the text in order to find out whose "dreams" are being referred to. Reading this memoir, therefore, takes the reader through different "dreams" whose metaphorical implications connect the narrator's experience with colonialism in the text. In this context, thus, we argue that Ngũgĩ has employed the metaphor of 'dreams' as a cohesive strategy which provides the thread that gets the reader hooked to the narrative of colonialism. On the dedication page of the memoir, for instance, Ngũgĩ has referred to the metaphor of dreams where he claims that his mother, Wanjiku, and elder brother, Wallace Mwangi (a.k.a Good Wallace) played a great deal in shaping his dreams.

In the memoir, the metaphor of dreams has been specifically used to refer to Ngũgĩ's childhood desire to acquire formal education which he hoped would deliver him and his family from poverty. This is clearly brought out when the narrator is torn between accompanying his mother to visit his grandmother or being left at home to continue going to school. However, despite the allure of the train and a strong desire to accompany his mother to Elburgon, Ngũgĩ made up his mind to remain and continue going to school because of the promise he had made to his mother to pursue his education whatever the circumstances. In his resolve to stick to the pact regarding school that he had made with his mother, the narrator declares that he could not forsake his "dreams" (49). The narrator expresses his gratitude for having preferred to go to school and forfeit his chance to travel by train when his grandmother finally comes to live with them after being displaced from the Rift Valley by the colonial government (98). The term "dreams" in this context, therefore, has been employed metaphorically to refer to the narrator's ambition and vision in acquiring formal education during colonialism. Thus, the reader, at this point is persuaded by the narrator's determination to honour his pact with his mother and also to empathize with the narrator's desire to acquire education that shall empower him to help his family and community.

In order to underscore his desire for education and overcome poverty in his family, the narrator and his younger brother hatched a plan he describes as "a joint dream" to sell pencils to other pupils at school so that they could raise some money for their tuition fees as well as express their dream of overcoming poverty in their family (64). However, he reveals that their vision

was cut short by one of their uncles who dismissed their plan as a mere delusion by persuading them that their ambition could not be attained because of the small number of pupils who were going to school and the availability of cheap pencils from the Indian shops. Therefore, in this context, the term "dreams" implies the narrator's ambitions of acquiring riches from the business of selling pencils as well as raising money to assist his mother in paying their tuition. This is brought out clearly when the narrator downheartedly declares that his uncle's discouragement "deflated our dreams of easy riches" and that the structure they had constructed for their business plan remained there for many months, "a forlorn monument to a dream" (65). At this point, the reader sympathizes with the narrator whose intentions of raising money to help his mother to pay his school fees failed to materialize.

In his transfer from Kamandũra, a *Kĩrore* school (colonial government and missionary supported school), to Manguo, a *Karĩng'a* school (African independent school), the narrator's determination to pursue formal education did not waver despite the political and cultural implications which were associated with the schools. These political and cultural issues symbolized by the schools are implied in the narrator's claim that in moving from Kamandũra to Manguo, he was "crossing a great historic divide" that begun before he was born and which were later captured in his novel, *The River Between* (*Dreams* 72). However, the narrator claims that during that time, he was not concerned with understanding that historical reality since he was only interested in realizing his "dreams of education in accordance with the pact" he had made with his mother (*Dreams* 72). This persuades the reader about his fidelity to his contract with his mother as well as his commitment to pursue his education despite the harsh colonial reality then. The author's implied readers are persuaded by the rhetorical appeal exerted on them by the narrator's strong convictions of acquiring education despite the colonial challenges. This is what Edward P.J. Corbett, in *Rhetorical Analyses of Literary Works*, emphasizes when he posits that a writer's or speaker's reputation or ethical appeal is exerted primarily by what they say in a particular writing/speech before a particular audience (*Rhetorical Analyses*).
The narrator informs the reader that when he passed the Kenya African Preliminary Examinations (KAPE), he was excited since he had got a chance to continue pursuing his dreams of education. He describes his excitement and anticipation to board a train to Alliance High School as a ride to "paradise" that would carry his "dreams in a time of war" (*Dreams*

157). However, the narrator's excitement of boarding a train to school was cut short by the strict colonial regulations during the state of emergency that required him to produce a government-issued travel pass. At this point, the narrator attracts the readers' empathy for him as he emotionally recounts how the train left with his "dreams" and "future" without him. The narrator's disillusionment is also linked to the anticipated disappointment that his mother would suffer as expressed in his claim, "I don't know how my mother will receive this, for mine was also her dream" (*Dreams* 157).

The disappointment of missing the train that would take him to the school of his dreams is only dissipated by Chris Kahara, a black station master at the railway station who rescued him by helping him board a goods train to school. The narrator's determination to get to school by any means is brought out when he claims that he was prepared to run through the risky Ondiri marshes to the place of his "dreams". Though the marshes were associated with scary stories about man-eating ogres, the narrator says that he was ready to wallow through it in order to achieve his goal. That is why the slow-moving goods train made the narrator to be gripped by intense fear of not arriving at school in time as emotionally expressed when he claims that he had become "numb with fear" at the thought that something unpleasant would happen and bar him from "catching up to my dreams" (*Dreams* 158). This fear haunts him even after he had successfully joined Alliance High School as revealed in his other memoir *In the House of the Interpreter* where he recounts his perpetual fear of the colonial agents who he imagined would destroy his "dreams" (25) because of his brother's involvement in the Mau Mau war.

Ngũgĩ's aspirations of acquiring formal education as a tool for overcoming the challenges of colonialism in his memoirs are similar to those of Njoroge, one of the characters in his novel, *Weep Not, Child*. Just like Ngũgĩ had desired to pass KAPE in order to join Alliance High School, Njoroge similarly has great hopes of acquiring a good education when he gets an opportunity to join Siriana Secondary School. The author has expressed Njoroge's ambitions by employing the metaphor of dreams as indicated when the narrative voice reveals that, to Njoroge, going there was "nearly the realization of his dreams" (*Weep Not, Child* 122).

In *Dreams in a Time of War*, Ngũgĩ has further employed the metaphor of dreams to refer to other characters' aspirations or hopes during the colonial period. According to Muchiri, the 'dreams' that the author mentions in memoir metaphorically implicates the optimism that the colonized had harboured in different circumstances or levels (87). However, this is a broad statement which does not specifically indicate the kinds of things that are metaphorically encapsulated in the term "hope" as well as the rhetorical impact of the recurrence of the term "dreams" in the memoir. For instance, Ngũgĩ has employed the metaphor of dreams in reference to Wallace Mwangi's aspirations of achieving different things. The narrator reveals that, at first, Mwangi had wanted to become a scout but his dream was short-lived because of the resistance he got from his mother who rejected it due to the negative connotations associated with the term which, in the Agĩkũyũ language, means a person who buries dead hyenas. After dropping his ambitions of acquiring formal education and becoming a scout, Mwangi had other dreams of becoming a legal secretary and later, a carpenter. Since Mwangi had heeded his mother's concerns, she funded "his other dreams" (*Dreams* 92) by using money she got from selling her goats and black wattle trees to pay the rent money for a building where he set up his workshop.

During colonialism, Kenyans had a lot of hope that their leaders would triumph over the injustice they were facing. The narrator had similar optimistic feelings which were overcome by the sense of hopelessness he experienced after learning about the arrest of Jomo Kenyatta, the banning of Mau Mau songs and deterrence of people from talking about Waiyaki, Kenyatta and Mbiyu. To express his disappointment, the narrator says that the banning of the African-supported Kenya Teachers' College at Gĩthũngũri and all African independent schools was a blow to his "dreams of an education" (*Dreams* 97). He expresses his feelings of disillusionment by claiming that he experienced a difficult period on the uncertainties caused by contradictory information which would not be confirmed whether it was factual or not and which he got after the ban on African independent schools by the colonial government. The reader, at this point, is made to hate the colonial government whose activities and policies subjected the child narrator to psychological torment and feelings of disenchantment.

The colonized people had hopes that the colonial government would be defeated by the freedom fighters. In *Dreams in a Time of War*, Ngũgĩ has employed the metaphor of dreams to capture those hopes and great anticipation that the colonized Africans had on the collapse of colonialism. The decolonisation of Africa could be achieved through different means including the violent confrontation between freedom fighters and the colonial government. The narrator, for instance, claims that during the war between Mau Mau and the colonial forces, it was the oral narrations about the confrontations between the guerrilla fighters and the colonial government that kept the colonized people's "dreams alive" (*Dreams* 121) even in times of war. He further says that, later, he captured this experience in his early fiction, particularly in *Weep Not, Child*, where he claims to have given the main character, Njoroge, "an aura of fact and rumor" and a mixture of emotions as well as expectations (*Dreams* 121) as the colonized lived in very difficult times in Kenya during the violent struggle for liberation from colonial administration. According to Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, a literary text can be taken as a writer's dream or desire and, as such, it can be analyzed like a dream. Therefore, Ngũgĩ's act of writing the novel can be seen as the author's way of venting out his suppressed desires for freedom since, as Bressler argues, a literary text, just like a dream, reveals only the manifest content of a story (Bressler 95).

Therefore, this section demonstrates that Ngũgĩ has ostensibly employed the extended metaphor of dreams in *Dreams in a Time of War* to symbolically articulate different implications of the term "dreams" and enhance his rhetorical appeal to his implied reader to accede to his anticolonial politics and ideological inclinations in the text. As a thematic cohesive strategy, the metaphor of dreams demonstrates the author's focus and commitment to persuading his readers that, despite the difficulties occasioned by the harrowing colonial experiences, the narrator, his family and Kenyan communities at large had different expectations or optimisms which they harboured in their hearts and minds and which they anticipated to be realized.

## 2.4 The Family as a Frame for Anti-colonialism

Through life writing, writers draw readers to their family stories which facilitate their understanding of the writers' identity as well as their relationship with other family members,

their experiences within their families and the place of their families in the wider context of their villages, communities or even nations. In *Dreams in a Time of War*, Ngũgĩ takes us through his childhood memories on his family's experiences vis-à-vis the colonial realities that affected not only his family, but also his community and Kenya, generally. Therefore, in advancing his anticolonial sentiments, Ngũgĩ draws from the memories of the experiences in his family and those of others during the colonial period and weaves them through his childhood narrative to enable the reader to contemplate the cruel character of colonialism and its impact on the colonized as demonstrated in the subsequent sub-sections.

### 2.4.1 Foregrounding Family Impoverishment

Colonialism had far reaching impacts on Ngũgĩ's family as well as those of other people in his community and the Kenyan society, generally. These impacts were experienced at the social, economic and political levels as each African family grappled with the painful reality of colonialism and the African resistance to it. Ngũgĩ has used the economic challenges in his family as well as those of other families in his community to mount his anticolonial views in the memoir, *Dreams in a Time of War*. By so doing, the author has attempted to influence the reader to identify with the African family. Ruth F. Atsango argues that the act of reading other people's stories gives the reader a chance to comprehend their "inner beings", empathize with their feelings and lived experiences (Atsango 164). To underscore the importance of one's family to an autobiographical writer, Fass S. Paula has pointed out that writers of memoirs builds their personalities that invite the readers into their past and the memories of their families (Paula 110). Therefore, drawing from his own memories about his experiences as a child is what Ngũgĩ has achieved in *Dreams in a Time of War* by taking the reader through the narrative of how his family was adversely affected negatively by colonialism.

In *Dreams in a Time of War*, the narrator begins by portraying himself as a naïve child in a poor African family during colonialism. By taking this position, the narrator influences the reader to empathize with him as he recounts his suffering and that of his entire family. Thus, from the start, the reader becomes aware of the pathetic situation in his family occasioned by colonialism and feels the pain of the child narrator. For instance, as the narrator treks a six-mile distance to

and from Kinyogori Intermediate School, the reader's sympathy for him is aroused. His revelation that he used to isolate himself from other "kids" and hide in the bush during lunch time when they ate their food which they brought from their homes, the reader's emotions of pity and sorrow are aroused. He invokes the image of the orphaned child character, Oliver Twist, from Charles Dickens' novel, *Oliver Twist*, whose hunger forces him to beg for more food from an adult character to demonstrate the desperate state in which he was because of the poverty in his family (*Dreams* 1). This arouses the reader's emotions of empathy for him and symbolically exposes the reality of the abject poverty that many families faced as a result of the colonial impact on the colonized Africans.

The narrator reveals that he was born in 1938 "under the shadow of another war" (*Dreams* 5) in reference to the Second World War. By stating that he was born during a period of war, the narrator signals the reader to the fact that his birth coincided with hard times that were triggered by the war against colonialism as well as the repercussions of the world war. Despite being a child then, the narrator attempts to rely on the power of his memory in his recollection of the events of his childhood within both his family and community during the colonial time. István Dobos, has underscored the importance of memory in life writing when he asserts that the connections among the time captured, the memory expressed, and one's identity can be demonstrated through the autobiographers' act of telling stories in several versions ("Autobiographical Reading" 16). For instance, Ngũgĩ recalls that some of his family members were working as labourers in the plantation farms that were owned by colonial white settlers and their Africans collaborators (*Dreams* 5). This happened after the loss of Ngũgĩ's family's land which consequently accelerated the disintegration of his family.

In order to foreground the poverty in his family further, Ngũgĩ has contrasted his family with that of Kahahu's, a rich Christian convert. He, for instance, claims that his family and that of the Kahahu's "inhabited opposite spheres" because of the conspicuous differences between the two families in terms of property ownership, dressing styles and mannerisms. He says that the Kahahu family had an estate of motor vehicles, a magnificent modern house and exuded immense economic power in contrast to Ngũgĩ's family that was characterized by poverty and tradition. The clothes that Kahahu's children wore have been described as being "glaring" in

contrast with the white cotton wraps which were sometimes dyed blue and held together with safety pins and a belt of knitted wool that were worn by the narrator and the members of his family (*Dreams* 36). The narrator also claims that the Kahahus "exuded modernity" (36) and his homestead remained a mystery to him. The detailed description creates a clear mental picture of the differences that existed between the families of the collaborators of the colonial regime and those who were not.

The privileged position of the Kahahus can be compared with that of Howlands in Ngũgĩ's novel *Weep Not, Child*. Through this description of the contrastive dissimilarities in terms of property and other basic necessities, the reader gets a picture of the pathetic economic situation in Ngũgĩ's family. In contrasting the two families, Ngũgĩ succeeds to create a clear imagery out of the nature of the type of houses, clothing and other property the characters owned. This has a strong rhetorical impact on the reader. Keith and Lundberg have discussed the impact of visual and material symbols in rhetorical discourses on the audience or readers. They argue that through visual symbols, the reader can gain better understanding of life by exploring the things we see and physically interact with and that symbols can be used to influence the implied reader to behave in specific ways (Keith and Lundberg 9).

It is partly because of the abject poverty in his family that made the narrator to keep to himself his desires to go to school and be like Kahahu's children. Therefore, he informs the reader that it came to him as a surprise when his mother asked him whether he would like to go to school. Even after joining school, the narrator's life is portrayed as being difficult since his mother could not afford even kerosene and this made him to suffer as he could not read at night due to lack of a proper source of light. The reader sympathizes with the narrator as the extreme poverty in the family places the child-narrator in a state of suffering. The narrator demonstrates his suffering and frustrations when he reveals that nighttime was a difficult situation for him since he "read by the light of an unreliable" kerosene lantern and relied mostly on firelight as his mother could not afford to buy kerosene (*Dreams* 41). Because the narrator's difficult life was caused by colonialism, the readers' hatred of the colonial system is aroused.

The challenges of poverty that was imposed on Ngũgĩ's mother and family further complicated the situation for the narrator. For instance, as a child, Ngũgĩ became a mole catcher in order to

help his mother in raising some money for his tuition. He and his younger brother were forced to work at the Kahahu's pyrethrum field and he helped his mother at the Indian's shop where she was employed to sort potatoes. He also says that at one point he was involved in scrambling for decaying bread with other people. This act symbolically captures accurately the degree of abject poverty and the struggle to survive in the prevailing harsh economic situation during the colonial period which was occasioned by the loss of land and property among many African families, not only in Ngũgĩ's community but also the rest of Kenya and other colonies in Africa. By exposing the terrible circumstances of poverty at his family and his position of desperation, the author strives to attract the sympathy of the reader not only to the narrator but also to his entire family. This aspect of child labour during colonial time further invites the readers to empathize with children as well as hate the whole colonial situation.

By exposing the poverty in his family, Ngũgĩ has successfully attempted to persuade his implied readers that colonialism did not only result in the oppression of the colonized, but also that it subjected them to economic impoverishment at the individual, family, community and national levels. This impoverishment took different symbolic forms that include lack of fundamental survival human needs and landlessness which were a result of deprivation of land by colonial government.

### 2.4.2 The Diminished Father's Authority

In *Dreams in a Time of War*, the concepts of masculinity and fatherhood in African communities have been affected by the socioeconomic challenges which faced many families during the colonial period. As a result, most of the men lost their status as the protectors and providers of basic needs for their families. This is what happened to Ngũgĩ's father whose economic and social downfall rendered him ineffective as a father and the head of his family. In fact, the narrator has not mentioned any contribution from his father in the whole of his struggle to acquire education or even in helping him to overcome different problems he faced as a child. Throughout the text, there is no evidence of Thiong'o's sons trying to emulate him as a result of his deterioration into a violent and irresponsible drunk. Instead of emulating his father, the narrator identifies himself as a child brought up by a single mother after the separation of his parents. This situation resulted in young

Ngũgĩ living a life of solitude due to feelings of being alienated from his father's larger family and home. This was worsened when his father expelled him and his young brother, Njinju, from the family and ordered them to follow their mother by using cruel words that hurt the narrator which marked them as being not part of his children.

The portrayal of the father figure in the memoir is contrary to what some scholars have underscored in their studies about fatherhood in Africa. For instance, Antony Mukasa Mate, in his study on masculinities in Kenyan fiction, argues that in many traditional African societies, African sons develop their masculinity by looking upon their fathers as their role models. He also points out that possession of wealth is a crucial factor in the "construction of masculinity" in African communities (Mate 144). However, in *Dreams in a Time of War*, Ngũgĩ projects his father as a failed patriarch who is emasculated economically by the negative repercussions of colonialism. As a result of that, we see Ngũgĩ's family being transformed into a dysfunctional homestead as the head of the family, Ngũgĩ's father, is economically destroyed and his masculinity and social standing deminish.

In narrating his alienation from his father's family, the narrator exposes his dilemma to the reader and intensifies his feelings of estrangement from his extended family by saying that "it is not a good thing to have your own father deny you as one of his children" (*Dreams* 62). Coupled with his knowledge that his family was landless, he sees his rejection by his father as deepening his sense of himself as an outsider not only in his own family but also his community's land. This estrangement of the narrator appeals to different emotions on the part of the reader. The reader's empathy for his precarious position and for his mother whose children had been expelled by their father is intensified. The author arouses also the reader's anger for the colonial situation which led to the disintegration of Ngũgĩ's family that was brought about by the loss of their family land. In this context, the reader is made to identify with the child narrator's situation. According to Kenneth Burke, identification is an effective persuasive strategy in rhetorical discourses since the reader, as he/she is taken through the narrator's emotional experience, is unconsciously influenced by the perceived empathy or analogy evoked by the interaction between the writer and the reader (Burke 43).

In *Dreams in a Time of War*, Ngũgĩ portrays colonialism as a force that socially and economically emasculated the African man. This has been captured through the narrative about the rise and fall of his father. In the narrative about his father, the narrator begins by declaring that his father was "known all over the region" and that his patriarchy established itself in two distinct phases: his united homestead and central role as the head of the family and, his expulsion from his land which commenced the disintegration of his family (55). His father had commanded respect from his family and community before losing his land and livestock. However, with the loss of both his land and his livestock he lost all the things that symbolized his manhood. As a result, he abandoned his *thingira*, a symbol of his traditional position as the head of the family. Therefore, through the abandonment of his father's *thingira*, Ngũgĩ symbolically demonstrates the disintegration of the African family and attracts the reader's sympathy for family members whose lives were affected badly.

The reader is further exposed to other devastating effects of the loss of the narrator's father's wealth which included becoming a drunk and being involved in frequent cases of domestic violence that eventually resulted in his separation with the narrator's mother. The once proud man also started going to other homes for free local brew called *muratina* since he could no longer afford to make his own at is home. The reader's sympathetic feelings for the fallen patriarch is aroused also through the revelation that he deteriorated so much that even his youngest wife started to beat him. The narrator's sympathy for both his frustrated father also intensifies the reader's empathy for not only the narrator's father but also for the narrator and his siblings who were not spared by their father's desperate behaviour and dependence on his children for financial upkeep. The narrator recollects how his father's act of demanding for money from their wages and constant harassment meted out on them resulted in his own children avoiding him and even his daughters escaping into early marriages. Therefore, the ultimate impact of the emasculation of the African man during colonialism resulted in the destruction of the African family and undermined the unity that was once enjoyed within the traditional family setting.

Some studies on masculinity in African literature have been conducted by different scholars across the African continent. Most of these studies have discussed both the construction of

masculinity in the African families as well as the challenges that have destabilized the concept and role of the African man at the family and community levels.

Christophe Broqua and Anne Doquet have observed that the concept and practice of masculinity in Africa have been greatly affected by colonial conquests which altered their forms, distabilized the traditionally existing power systems, weakened the powers of the village elders and subordinated the colonised black men. They further assert that violence was traditionally a demonstration of masculinity in African comminuties. However, with the advent of colonialism and modernity, this aspect of masculinity has been shunned since it is now many africans perceive it "negatively" (Broqua and Doquet IV). They point out that violence as a central consideration in the definition of african masculinity has declined because it has been banned in the postcolonial world. Broqua and Doquet also argue that there are other factors such as freedom and power that can be used in the categorization of men into hierarchical masculinity. For instance, they have argued that captives and their descendants are subject to the "same stereotypes as women" and, therefore, such men will suffer social infriority as captives. A man from this category of the oppressed men may be a patriarch in his family but is perceived as inferior among his peers. In *Dreams in a Time of War,* Ngũgĩ's father may be seen to be in the category of such men because of the loss of his wealth and social standing in his community which used to attract respect for him from both his family members and peers.

Ken Lipenga Jr. has intimated that in literary works in written by African writers, the father figure is considered an important role model for the boy child (Lipanga 28). He further notes that in the African contexts, the sons are normally encouraged to emulate their fathers by displaying forms of masculinities to attract their "fathers' approval" (28). In reference to Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Lipenga observes that ownership of property and a title that signify a man's success in life are the hallmarks of true African masculinity. He cites Okonkwo's arrogant statement, "This meeting is for men," which he utters to rebuke and undermine another man in a meeting to demonstrate the valididty of his argument on the construction of masculinity in the Umuofian society. Placed in the same socioeconomic pedestal as Okonkwo, Ngũgĩ's fallen father would assume the position of the man that Okonkwo rebukes at the meeting. In *Dreams in a Time of War*, however, this does not happen on the part of Ngũgĩ's father whose role in his family diminishes as the narrative of

colonialism and his socioeconomic transformation unfolds. The reader is, therefore, made to believe that the economic emasculation of Ngũgĩ's father destroyed the masculinity which he displayed while he was a propertied man. This further arouses the reader's empathy for him and other men who faced the same fate in the context of colonialism.

In *Dreams in a Time of War*, therefore, Ngũgĩ's portrayal of the degeneration of the father figure within his family can be interpreted as symbolically representing what was happening in most of the African families that were adversely affected the hazards of the colonial period. Through the downfall of his own father and disintegration of his family, Ngũgĩ, thus, succeeds in effectively demonstrating to the reader that most of the African men were economically emasculated by the existing colonial structures; consequently, the African family structures and unity were irreparably damaged. This is likely to enrage the readers and influence them to detest colonialism and its structures.

### 2.4.3 Family Betrayals

In *Dreams in a Time of War*, Ngũgĩ portrays colonialism as a divisive system that resulted in creating disunity between members of the same families. For instance, whereas Wallace Mwangi was among the Mau Mau fighters that waged war against the colonial establishment, his half-brother, Tumbo, was an informer serving the colonial government as a "low-level undercover intelligence" (*Dreams* 20). Moreover, though Kabae and Tumbo were working for the colonial state, their own younger brother was killed by the very government they were supporting. The split in the narrator's family has been emphasized through the narrator's declaration that his brothers who had loved each another were "now at war" (*Dreams* 133). This split is further demonstrated by the humourous description of the coincidental meeting of Wallace Mwangi and Tumbo at their brother's (Kabae's) gate whereby, on encountering one another, they run in different directions for fear of each other. This incident is a clear demonstration that even members of the same family no longer trusted one another as a result of the betrayals that existed amongst the Africans during the colonial period that arose due to their divided allegiances.

Ngũgĩ's encounter with such acts of betrayal in his childhood must have impacted negatively on his memory. Because of that, his fiction is characterized by various incidences of betrayal. For instance, in his analysis of the theme of betrayal, James S. Robson argues that, in most of the novels written by Ngũgĩ, betrayal is a major thematic concern in different historical settings: the first three novels during the colonial context while *Petals of Blood* within the post-colonial situation in Kenya. He points out that the main focus of the texts is on the incongruities of colonialism and neocolonialism through which the theme of betrayal has been critically examined. In each of these novels, Robson notes that betrayal is presented as a matter of choice by the protagonists: Waiyaki leaves *kiama* and infringes his oath of 'purity' in *The River Between*; Mugo betrays for parochial gains in *A Grain of Wheat* and Jacob becomes an informer of Howlands in *Weep Not, Child* ("Fight Against Colonialism").

In *Dreams in a Time of War*, Ngũgĩ further demonstrates how colonialism created suspicion amongst family members and affected the narrator directly as demonstrated by his own grandfather's decision to cut links with him and stopping him from coming to his house as a scribe and a bird of good omen. Ngũgĩ narrates the painful experience of being rejected by his own grandfather which was caused by his brother's decision to join the Mau Mau fighters. The narrator's painful realisation about his rejection by his grandfather is illustrated by his revelation that the old man was no longer eager to welcome him every time he visited him early in the morning (*Dreams* 134). As a child narrator, therefore, Ngũgĩ has attracted the sympathy of the reader who is likely to experience the pain of rejection by a close relative just as it happened to the narrator. However, just like the child narrator, the reader cannot condemn the grandfather for his behaviour since he was forced by the harsh colonial regime's crackdown on the Mau Mau collaborators which triggered his behavior.

The suspicion and mistrust amongst members of the same family is also demonstrated when the narrator's half-brother, Kabae, came to wish him good luck in the exams after his brother Wallace had done so earlier on. During his visit, Kabae came with a gun which the narrator says sent mixed signals to him and his family. That is why the narrator wonders whether Kabae's act of displaying his gun was meant to send a warning to the family or he was merely demonstrating

his pride in possessing such a dangerous weapon (*Dreams* 139). The narrator expresses his intense suspicion and fear by claiming that his "anxiety became sheer panic" and that his mother's "eyes were cold with disapproval" (139) whenever Kabae visited them. The narrator reveals that when he finally left their house, the intense apprehensive atmosphere dissipated (139). He describes the contradiction of having members of the same family on both sides of the colonial struggle by saying that the "guerrilla and the king's soldier" both came to wish him success in his examinations using "almost identical" words to him (*Dreams* 139). Ngũgĩ's aim at revealing the intense suspicion amongst members of the same family is intended to persuade the reader to understand the magnitude of the dangers that were associated with colonialism amongst the colonized as well as between the colonial agents and the colonized.

Apart from affecting individual families, colonialism created suspicion and disunity amongst friends and even members of the same villages. This becomes demonstrated by the narrator's claim that his brother's act of joining the anti-colonial guerrillas changed his family's "external relationship" to their "immediate world" (*Dreams* 134). This suspicion amongst the Africans comes out through the intense fear that the narrator experienced whenever he met anyone working for the colonial state. He says that he always froze whenever he met Kahanya and Gikonyo, his brother's friends before he joined Mau Mau guerrillas. His fear was worsened by Kahanya's sarcastic talk about Wallace Mwangi's rise to become a Mau Mau captain. This situation is ironical since even Kahanya had also taken the Mau Mau oath and was Wallace Mwangi's closest friend, had trained him carpentry and employed him as his assistant at his workshop. Therefore, both the narrator and his brother's wife were shocked at the thought of Kahanya joining the colonial home guards. The whole paradox of Africans turning against each other and thus mounting a serious disunity amongst themselves puzzled the narrator as exemplified in the rhetorical question:

> "How do I make sense of these contradictions in a struggle, which, through Ngandi's rendering, I had seen as one between the anticolonial and the colonial, good and evil? What is now emerging around me is murky." (*Dreams* 134)

The question that the narrator has raised above brings out the ironical situation that prevailed during colonialism as friends among the colonized took sides by either supporting or fighting the colonial state. It is also meant to influence the author's perceived audience/reader to with the author's depiction of colonialism as a terrible experience that befell the colonized Africans and destroyed their unity and sense of brotherhood.

### 2.4.4 Family Executions

In *Dreams in a Time of War*, Ngũgĩ has recounted how various families disintegrated as a result of members of African families were being detained in concentration camps or executed on suspicions of collaborating with the Mau Mau guerrillas. Members of different families in Ngũgĩ's village who were suspected of supporting the freedom movement were mercilessly executed by the state during the colonial period. The narrator recounts various acts of extrajudicial executions of Africans suspected to be supporting the Mau Mau fighters some of whom were well-known to him such as Kĩmũchũ, Njerandi, Elijah Karanja and Mwangi who were executed in the thick Kĩneniĩ forest. In order to appeal to the reader's empathy for the affected families, the narrator points out that Ndũng'ũ and Njoroge had lost both of their parents (Ngũgĩ *Dreams* 100). This scenario presents a grim picture of the colonial situation that was characterised by acts of executing Africans and thus inflicting immense fear among many African families. Ngũgĩ's description of the African paramilitary that executed their fellow Africans as a 'gang' (100) is meant to criminalize them for assisting the colonial state in oppressing and killing Africans.

The fear that gripped most families during the confrontations between the military and the fighters of the Mau Mau movement has been demonstrated through the behaviour of the narrator's grandfather. For instance, to appeal to the reader's fear for the colonized, the author uses expressions such as a "shadow of death" in his grandfather's home and "terror" that invaded his community. He describes how his grandfather was "quaking with fear" (*Dreams* 100), hid in his daughter's hut during the nights and used a bedpan to relieve himself in his daughter's hut for fear of being captured at night by the colonial police. Through these revelations, Ngũgĩ appeals

not only for the reader's pity for the terrified grandfather, but also the fear for the lives of those found in such a terrific colonial situation.

The executions of Africans did not only occur at the narrator's village, but also in different parts of the country. Through Ngandi's stories, it is revealed that a group of Africans were tied together and a British officer shot dead all of them using a machine gun at a place called Lari. To appeal to the reader's anger for the colonial forces, the author claims that the "captives fell in a heap" and that the officer shot the already dead Africans again to ensure that none of them would survive (*Dreams* 114). Ngũgĩ's choice of words in this context appeals to the pathos of the readers whose strong anti-colonial emotions are likely to be aroused through such words or expressions.

In *Dreams in a Time of War*, Ngũgĩ has narrated about the cruelty with which the colonial military forces attacked the African villages. He graphically describes the daily routine of the dreadful activities that were executed by the agents of the colonial administration by using terms that evoke feelings of fear in the reader. The author has used terms such as "raids" and "screenings" (130) to create a picture of the ruthless nature of the colonial military when they invaded people's homes and inspected those arrested. The words "screams" and "sirens" (130) have been employed to create the terrifying sound images from the Home Guard posts during the debasing treatment of the Africans captured and tortured by the home guards and other colonial security personnel. Such images appeal to the reader's emotions of fear for the victims of acts of colonial mistreatments as well as arouse anger in the anticolonial reader.

Ngũgĩ further shows that the colonial state impacted terribly on Ngũgĩ's family since a member of his own family was a casualty of the various killings of Africans by the colonial police. The narrator recounts how his deaf half-brother, Gĩthogo, was killed by a British soldier during a raid at Limuru town where he worked in a butcher's shop. The author's claim that he was shot from the back as he attempted to run away invites the reader's anger at the colonial police officers who killed him. This scenario compells the reader to condemn the brutish act that ended the life of the innocent deaf boy. The narrator's description of the death as "tragic" (*Dreams* 129)

appeals to the reader's emotions of pity for the killed boy as well as sympathy for his family. Ironically, the dead boy's elder brother, Joseph Kabae, supported the colonial government by working for it as an informer. The author concludes the story about Githogo's death by asserting that it "exemplified what was beginning to happen to families everywhere" (129) to demonstrate to the reader that acts of unwarranted killings of the Africans during the colonial period were widespread in the country and elsewhere in Africa. Therefore, this claim can be seen as Ngũgĩ's attempt to convince the reader that Githogo's death symbolically demonstrated the brutality of colonialism that befell many innocent Africans who were killed during that period.

From the foregoing discussion in this section, it is clear that colonialism destroyed the African family. Ngũgĩ has successfully portrayed the colonial state as not only having destroyed the African family, but also the unity of African communities. This has been achieved through acts of mass displacement of some communities during colonialism that portray the colonial administration as being inhuman and thereby attracting the reader's condemnation. For instance, the narrator has recounted how he witnessed the suffering of the refugees of the Gĩkũyũ, Embu and Meru people who were displaced from the Rift Valley. Among those who were thrown away from the Rift Valley was his maternal grandmother. The narrator's claim that the displaced "had been thrown off trains and trucks" and that they were "huddled in groups" and looked "forlorn and lost" appeals to the reader's outrage at the colonial government while sympathizing with the displaced Africans. The reader is therefore made to develop feelings of dejection at the thought of seeing the colonial master disintegrate the once united African family and society. The desolation created by the relocation of the colonised from their homes makes the reader to empathize with the narrator while developing a repulsive attitude towards the colonial state and its enforcement agents.

This section, therefore, demonstrates that Ngũgĩ's employment of the African family as a frame for expressing his anti-colonial attitude in *Dreams in a Time of War* is a powerful rhetorical strategy that can persuade his implied readers to accede to his anti-colonial arguments. In the memoir, he has successfully projected the idea that colonialism had far reaching destructive impacts on African families by exposing its resultant impacts on the African families through foregrounding his family's abject poverty, his father's diminished authority due to his economic

impoverishment, the disunity and betrayals among family members and friends as well as the executions of many members of different families by both the state military and freedom fighters. The family, therefore, becomes an effective rhetorical strategy that arouses Ngũgĩ's implied readers' empathy for the child narrator, his family and that of others and contempt for the colonial regime and its structures.

## 2.5 Adopting Adult Voice to Complement the Child Narrator

The narrator in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Dreams in a Time of War* is supposedly a child. Therefore, the reader expects to be taken through the narrative of colonialism during Ngũgĩ's childhood from a child's point of view or voice. As such, being a childhood memoir, the reader expects Ngũgĩ to be consistent in his narrative of colonialism from the eyes, the memory and the perspective of a child narrator. However, this is not the case in this memoir since the author has also adopted the adult voice in various contexts in order to complement the child narrator's memories and interpretation of some events in the historicity of colonialism in Kenya, Africa and the world.

Consequently, when reading the memoir, the reader's attention is drawn by different circumstances whereby Ngũgĩ's adult voice deliberately intervenes in the child narrator's recollection of his childhood experience of colonialism through the critical interpretation and understanding of the historical events narrativised in the memoir. By shifting the narrative voice, the author exposes his adult knowledge of various historical events as well as successfully foregrounds his political and ideological rhetoric in the memoir; hence, persuading the reader to approve his views on colonialism, the claims he makes about himself, his family and the predominant historical issues in *Dreams in a Time of War*. Additionally, this strategy has enabled Ngũgĩ to articulate his cultural, religious and political ideologies that dominate his adult essays and fiction. Therefore, this strategy may be perceived as the author's deliberate experimentation and manipulation of some tenets of the autobiographical genre, which though it complements the child narrator's voice, it equally problematizes some of the child narrator's claims in the memoir. Consequently, what the narrator says in some instances may be viewed by his implied reader as

the author's deliberate strategy of advancing some of his ideological and political agenda in the text.

Proponents of the classical Greek rhetoric have concurred that a writer's or speaker's ethos (one's credibility or ability to attract audience's trust) is imperative in any rhetorical discourse owing to its persuasive appeal to the one's perceived audience. According to Keith and Lundberg, writers/speakers can only gain the audience's trust or believability by ensuring the credibility of their character. In *Dreams in a Time of War,* however, the child narrator's credibility has been compromised through the intrusion of Ngũgĩ's adult voice into the child narrator's perspective which may easily compromise the reader's conviction on some of the narrator's claims and arguments in this memoir. In fact, the contravention of the autobiographical point of view in the memoir compels the readers to engage with the author beyond the child narrator's perspective. The reader's engagement is based on the view that some accounts of the narrator are beyond the purview of a child. Lejeune, in his idea of an autobiographical pact in life-writing points out that the contract presupposes that the author, the narrator and the protagonist share the same name in the text; hence, the need to uphold the virtue of honesty and truthfulness about one's past rather than on the historical accuracy of the narration. The implication of Lejeune's idea, therefore, is that in reading an autobiographical text, there is need to verify some of the claims that the narrator makes.

Examples involving the author's employment of the adult voice in *Dreams in a Time of War* abound. For instance, the child narrator's elaborate rendition of the historicity of the Berlin Conference of 1885 which resulted in the partition of Africa into spheres of influence among the European colonial powers as if he had knowledge of the complex historical event may attract the reader's curiosity on the child narrator's claims. Furthermore, the child narrator demonstrates an ability to provide historical details about the rivalry between Germany and Britain over the control of East Africa and the assassination of Franz Ferdinand who was the heir to Austro-Hungarian on 28$^{th}$ June 1914 as if he had actually known these historical events as a child. The accuracy with which the child narrator recounts the events may attract the reader's doubts on the claims in the narrator's narrative in the memoir. This is because, the narrator does not acknowledge the sources of all these historical events in his narration of the same.

Again, the reader may be intrigued that, at his tender age, the child narrator is able to comprehend and provide details about Queen Victoria's act of taking over the East African Protectorate between the years 1890 and 1896 (*Dreams* 9-10). Such details on this historical happening can only be attributed to an adult character who has received adequate formal education and specifically in history as a subject.

Another noticeable digression from the child narrator's voice is clearly evident in the narrator's historical exposition of the construction of the Mombasa-Uganda railway line which he claims eased the traffic of white colonial settlers into the interior of Kenya from 1902. However, it is worth noting that Ngũgĩ was born in 1938, hence, he was not there when the construction of the railway began. The credibility of the child narrator's voice, at this point, is subjected to the reader's trust due to a lack of acknowledgement of the source of the historical information by the narrator.

Similarly, the narrator's claim that he was able to link the historical facts about the First World War with the birth of his father is an autobiographical invention in the text since he talks as if he were a grown up. Also, he exudes detailed knowledge of the events associated with the First World War which happened long before he was born. However, since the narrator was a child, it was not possible for him to have acquired the knowledge on the history of the First World War which he claims ended with a Treaty of Versailles of June 1919 and which facilitated the rewarding of white ex-soldiers with African lands. This can be treated as the author's adult voice which has been adopted to advance and enhance the child narrator's narrative and claims in the memoir. For instance, his act of condemning the act of rewarding the white soldiers with the land that belonged to African soldiers who had survived the war may be interpreted as the author's attempt to foreground the unfairness, hence, effectively serving his rhetorical intention of infuriating the reader as well as strategically convey his political and ideological agenda.

Readers who are well-acquainted with the history of East Africa are aware that the settlement of white settlers met resistance from Africans and that the East African Association, founded in 1921, was a countrywide African political organization which was led by Harry Thuku. Therefore, the child narrator's claim that Thuku's political activities had links with Marcus

Garvey's black nationalism in America and Gandhi's Indian nationalism may be interpreted as Ngũgĩ's adult knowledge of the history of these issues. Thus, the narrator could not have known those historical happenings as a child since he was born in 1938. For that reason, the lack of any hint of acknowledgement of the sources of these historical facts points to the understanding that the child narrator was relying on his memory, which may raise the reader's misgivings on the authenticity of the narrator's claims and intellectual ability to grasp the intricate historical events.

Therefore, the narrator's claim that both Gandhi and Thuku advocated for civil disobedience brings out Ngũgĩ's Marxist ideology and advocacy for resistance against oppression. This is clearly depicted in the narrator's claim that the British arrested Thuku in 1922 and detained him at Kismayu in Somalia for seven years to suppress the Kenyan links to the explosive political and ideological movements which were shaping the world history then. Moreover, the narrator's claims about the event involving the killing of 150 workers and a female leader, Nyanjirũ Mũthoni, who were protesting the arrest of Thuku outside Nairobi's Central Police Station by the colonial police and white settlers who were drinking beer at the Norfolk Hotel as if he were an eye witness, advances Ngũgĩ's Marxist advocacy and may influence the reader to approve of his political leanings.

The narrative of the formation and role of the King's African Rifles (KAR) during the Second World War cannot be taken by the reader as being part of the autobiographical materials that comes from the child narrator's knowledge about these issues. The details provided about KAR and the song cited by the narrator points clearly to Ngũgĩ's adult voice. This is because the child narrator grasps the specifics about KAR such as its formation in 1902, its key architects and the complex nature of the British Indirect Rule which was initiated by Captain Lugard (*Dreams* 20). The song that the child narrator cites which he claims was in Kiswahili language is presented as though he knew it word for word (*Dreams* 21). The translated version of the song reinforces the possibility of Ngũgĩ's artistic manipulation of the child narrator's voice to enhance the narrator's claims and narrative to advance his political, ideological and anti-colonial agenda.

The history of Benito Mussolini and his conquest of Ethiopia in 1936 has been presented as the child narrator's knowledge of world history at his tender age (*Dreams* 21). Though he claims that

he heard about these historical events during the evening oral narrations by adults, it is unbelievable that, from an autobiographical standpoint, the child narrator is able to expound on them just as an expert in history can. This can be attributed to Ngũgĩ's experiment with the autobiographical style to document history. Nevertheless, it is still a violation of the autobiographical genre since the narrator is talking about things and events he did not witness.

The narrator's account of his mother's preparation to visit her relatives who were living in the Rift Valley is interrupted by a detailed history of the construction of the Mombasa-Uganda railway which he claims commenced in 1896 at Kilindini in Mombasa and was completed in 1901 at Kisumu. The author's adult voice usurps the narrator's story about his mother and digresses into the negative impacts of the Kenya-Uganda railway during colonialism as it provided employment opportunities for the landless Africans, resulted in the growth of various towns and facilitated easy access to the Kenyan heartland by the British settlers and Indian businessmen. The author's depiction of the railway as a factor which promoted the British colonialism in Kenya, can be discerned from the narrator's assertion that African land which was forcefully taken away from the colonized was demarcated into "White Highlands only, the Crown lands owned by the colonial state on behalf of the British King, and the African Reservations for the natives" (*Dreams* 47). Nevertheless, the child narrator does not acknowledge the source of these critical historical facts on the events which seriously affected and shaped his childhood.

Through the adoption of the adult voice to augment the child narrator's memory, Ngũgĩ has explored and examined the advent of Christianity in Kenya. The reader is made aware of the fact that when Christianity took root in Kenya, the colonial state left the education matters under the control of Protestant and Catholic missions such as the Church Missionary Society, the Church of Scotland Mission and the Gospel Missionary Society which were founded in 1799, 1891 and 1898 respectively. When narrating about these historical events, the child narrator talks as if he actually had knowledge of all these details. In this context, Ngũgĩ has again deliberately abandoned the requirements of the autobiographical genre and exposed his adult knowledge on

the history of Christianity and colonial education in Kenya which he must have researched on so as to effectively advance his anti-Christian, anti-colonial education and anti-colonialism rhetoric.

Some studies have argued that Ngũgĩ's reliance on past historical events that happened long before he was born in *Dreams in a Time of War* informs the reader more on the history of Kenya and enables the reader to comprehend and situate the author within the history of colonialism. For instance, Otieno defends Ngũgĩ's digression to historical events he did not witness as a child or which happened before his birth in order to effectively advance the plot and narrative of his memoir (51 - 52). However, it is worth noting that Otieno ignores the fact that, behind the child narrator, Ngũgĩ's adult voice takes over the narrator's narrative in order to effectively advance the author's ideological and political rhetoric by stringing out the detailed historical accounts of Kenya which the narrator did not witness. Readers who hold that honesty and truth are indispensable in ascertaining the credibility of the narrative of events in life writing are confronted with such a reckoning. Paul John Eakin underscores the importance of the truth of a narrator's story, arguments and claims in life writing and emphasizes the act of upholding the tenets of autobiographical writing and contractual relationship between the writer and one's audience. He further directs that, when an autobiographical writer contravenes the reader's trust, that writer should "suffer the consequences" of that contravention (*Living Autobiographically* 20). Therefore, Ngũgĩ's digression from the autobiographical requirements compromises his ethos, consequently, lowers the persuasive appeal of the child narrator's narrative as well as the claims and arguments he makes.

The meticulousness with which the child narrator recounts and disapproves of the unjust colonial legal system that caused his father's loss of land and the details that characterize this narrative creates the impression that he actually witnessed the whole transaction, hence, a violation of the requirements of an autobiographical account. This is because the memoir by definition is about what a narrator saw, experienced, observed or was told. Since he the child narrator in this memoir did not witness the event involving his father's loss of land, it is apparent that the author has violated the autobiographical standards. As such, the questions that the narrative voice raises vis-à-vis the illegality and unjust transactions involved in the land question presuppose an adult understanding of the whole issue of the narrator's father's land problems and exude the authority

of an eye witness (*Dreams* 11). However, it is important to underscore the fact that, autobiographical writings rely heavily on the writer's ability to retrieve and narrate what is in his memory. John R. Searle emphasizes the indispensable role of memory in an autobiographical writer's sense of oneself and truth in an autobiography since the autobiographer consciously recounts the various events that one experienced in one's past life. Therefore, although the author may successfully succeed to persuade his audience to approve arguments and claims as well as effectively articulate his anti-colonial ideological and political rhetoric, the reader will have to grapple with a tone independent of the child's.

Another stylistic aspect on Ngũgĩ's adoption of the adult voice involves the narrator's claim that tea was among the first cash crops to have been introduced in Kenya from India during the colonial period, and specifically in Limuru in 1903 (*Dreams* 33). Furthermore, the narrator, though still a child, is able to differentiate the various dialects of the Hindu language among the members of the Indian community that include the Sikhs, Jains, Hindus and Guajarati (*Dreams* 34), something which is likely to raise doubts in the reader concerning how he was able differentiate the dialects. However, despite citing the actual year when the historical event involving the introduction of tea in Kenya took place, it should be pointed out that the child narrator did not witness this event. The reader's sympathy for the child narrator may be aroused for being involved in child labour in the pyrethrum and tea plantations but his claims, which depict him as being knowledgeable on historical issues that are beyond the grasp of a child, create a sense of a child being forced to mature too early by circumstances. Thus, these revelations demonstrate the author's deliberate violation of the autobiographical principle which requires the main autobiographical narrator to recount only the things which one actually knows well, has witnessed or recalls.

Some things in *Dreams in a Time of War* appear to have been exaggerated by the author to attain certain political or ideological objectives and influence the reader to support his views. For instance, after being to school for only one year, the narrator claims that he was able to be promoted from pre-primary to grade two. At this point, we would like to clarify to the reader that, when Ngũgĩ started going to school, there was no pre-primary school level in Kenya's

education system. Pupils started school at class one. Further, the use of the phrase “grade two” betrays Ngũgĩ’s American influence since in Kenya during the colonial period the classes were referred to as standard one, standard two, standard three, etcetera. The author has deliberately done this to justify some claims he has made in the memoir. One such claim is that in only one year of being to school, the narrator was able to read well long passages and interpret their messages with the critical mind of an adult. A good example of exaggeration of issues can be discerned in his claim that after reading his favourite passage repeatedly, he began “hearing music in the words” and draws metaphorical and symbolic implications of the lines in that passage. Moreover, the narrator’s claim that he could still hear the music in the lines of the song/stories when not reading them hints at the author’s adult voice intervention in the narrative process and invites the audience seek the symbolic and metaphorical implications of the texts rather than following the narrator’s narrative and point of view. This is akin to an adult’s critical interpretation of a literary text. These claims expose the author’s adult anti-colonial worldview as well as his ideological and political rhetoric whose principal aim is to criminalise the colonial state’s act of appropriating the productive land which initially and traditionally belonged to the colonized Africans.

These claims reveal that Ngũgĩ has deliberately recreated the truth about them in order to attain a certain rhetorical impact in the memoir. This is possible because of the long lapse of time between his childhood and the time he wrote the memoir. In his discussion on the autobiographical truth in life writing, Gusdorf has recommended that the reader should pursue the significance of autobiography “beyond truth and falsity” in a text (“Conditions and Limits of Autobiography” 89). He proposes that the truth value of the captured past memories in an autobiography is rather a reconstructed past that may or may not be the exact reality (Gusdorf 85).

Correspondingly, Smith and Watson argue that, as a result of the reconstructive character of memory, the self in life writing may be construed as being fragmented and fluid because truthfulness becomes a more complex phenomenon of the narrators who struggle to shape an identity out of a nebulous partiality. However, it should be pointed out that this situation can only

occur when a writer blatantly digresses from the autobiographical norms by narrating or talking about those events which one did not witness in a memoir.

Drawing from the observations made by Gusdorf and Smith and Watson, we can argue that the narrator's interpretation of the implications of the stories he claims to have read from the Old Testament after being to school for only one year betrays Ngũgĩ's deliberate attempt to manipulate the child narrator's narrative perspective by adopting that of an adult in order to effectively advance his political and ideological rhetoric and agenda. For example, the narrator claims that he identified with the Biblical David, who, like the hare in the African trickster narratives, had killed Goliath, who he compares with a giant (*Dreams* 41). His description of David as an ideal person in his mind is suggestive of the adult author's manipulation of the child narrator's narrative perspective. It sounds as if Ngũgĩ-the-adult voice and critic is speaking to the readers and imploring them become anticolonial advocates. The same could be said of the narrator's comment that, while in church, the words "*I was blind and now I see*, from the hymn 'Amazing Grace'" reminded him about the day he learnt to read. The reader is left wondering: how did the child narrator know that the line came from the hymn, "Amazing Grace"? Ngũgĩ, at this point, can be seen to directly indulge in the child narrator's story to assert his biased interpretation of the Bible to suit his anticolonial and ideological views. The reader may also find it difficult and unbelievable that the narrator could read the Bible and comprehend it after being to school for such a short time.

Moreover, through the adult narrative perspective, the narrator is able to critically comment on the alienating effect of the colonial education system on him. He recalls an occasion when he and his younger brother went out for sports together but on seeing other pupils in school uniform, the narrator felt embarrassed to walk along with his brother who was in some old traditional garb (*Dreams* 45). Since he did not want to be seen walking with his poorly dressed brother, he asked him to take a different path around the field. The narrator's critical evaluation of that experience and the wisdom that he exudes at this point when he asserts that education alienated him from himself and his family is beyond the mental ability of a child. However, through the author's

employment of the adult voice in this context enables him to voice his political ideologies on the colonial education system.

Through such infringement of the autobiographical standards, the reader's trust of the narrator's claims may be eroded. Our observation is supported by other scholars. For example, according to Thompson, being persuasive is demonstrated when a writer speaks from his heart, head and soul (*Dreams* 8). To underscore the importance of a speaker/writer's credibility in the process of persuading his/her audience, Thompson argues that any audience that is confronted by a writer/speaker should critically ponder about the real identity of that speaker/writer. Thompson concludes by asserting that one's credibility can bring about a sense of trust and confidence with other people. From Thompson's concerns, it is evident that Ngũgĩ-the-child as the key narrator in the text fails to conform to the standards of the typical autobiographical narrators. Therefore, Ngũgĩ's adoption of the adult voice in the child narrator's narrative may not enhance the author's persuasive appeal in some of his claims.

Ngũgĩ has further employed his adult perspective through the child narrator in order to articulate his anti-racist ideas to his implied audience. This has interfered with the child narrator's story about what he remembers from his childhood. To achieve his rhetorical intention, the author has used the railway and the train to express his anti-racist feelings as demonstrated through the narrator's claim that the passenger train was demarcated into "the first class for Europeans only, second class for Indians only, and third class for Africans" (*Dreams* 48). To express his disgust at racial discrimination, Ngũgĩ deliberately omits the word 'only' from the label 'third class for Africans' to imply that there was nothing special with this class and the black people who boarded it did not matter or their race was insignificant. In some of his essays and fiction such as *Re-membering Africa* and *Wizard of the Crow*, Ngũgĩ has disapproved racism by asserting that, in racial politics, racial discrimination is usually appropriated by people whose main goal is to serve the interests of the dominant race; hence, it is "a conscious ideology" (*Re-membering* 83) which undermines the integrity of a group through domination and colonization and as well as economic and political issues.

Additionally, by adopting the adult voice in *Dreams in a Time of War*, Ngũgĩ has digressed from the autobiographical norms and engaged in the political and ideological rhetoric on the cultural practice of female circumcision among the communities in Kenya which consider it an important cultural rite of passage. For example, in foregrounding the conflict between Christianity and the Agĩkũyũ cultural practices, the narrator claims that the missionary societies derogatorily described female circumcision as being "barbaric and un-Christian" and that they enforced regulations which compelled the African teachers in missionary schools to sign a declaration of disowning their culture and Jomo Kenyatta's anti-colonial advocacy. At this point, again, the reader may question how the child narrator knew these details yet he was not a teacher himself. Similar arguments have been expressed in the author's fiction and essays where he has ruthlessly fought cultural imperialism. In the preface to *Writers in Politics*, Ngũgĩ admits that most of his ideological debates focus on questions on culture, education, language, literature and politics and belief that culture is a people's hallmark of identity (9).

Ngũgĩ's ideological convictions can equally be detected in the exposition of the child narrator's experience and interpretation of the songs and the biblical quotations when he first attended a church service at Manguo School. The narrator's claim that the hymns sung on that day evoked "contemporary events and experiences through biblical imagery" (*Dreams* 73) is an exaggeration of the child's ability to critically delineate the symbolic implications of the songs in relation to the colonial realities. The author's revolutionary and anti-oppression advocacy is demonstrated by his metaphorical parallelism of the Biblical oppressed Israelites and the colonized Africans who are in dire and urgent need of freedom. In this context, therefore, the author problematizes the credibility of the child narrator's intellectual ability and claim that he could read and connect the Old Testament stories and the Christian hymns to the turbulent colonial realities that affected his family and the Agĩkũyũ community (*Dreams* 88).

In *Dreams in a Time of War*, Ngũgĩ has further employed the adult narrative perspective through adult characters so as to advance his ideological arguments. Although the adult characters have been used to talk about some events in the text that the child narrator had not witnessed, there are some instances where Ngũgĩ intrudes into what the characters are saying. In such circumstances, the author is able to express his ideological and political arguments against colonialism and other

forms of oppression and exploitation. For instance, the narrator paraphrases Ngandi's narrative of displacement of Africans from their land by stating that their displacement and loss was equivalent to the story of Kenya's colonized people and their resistance. At this point, it is also apparent that the child narrator can critically interpret Ngandi's arguments. Therefore, through Ngandi, Ngũgĩ's advocacy for anti-colonialism initiatives through armed struggle comes out clearly. He has only used Ngandi as his mouthpiece through whom he can indirectly express his anti-colonial ideology. It is as if the author has transferred his arguments in his essays into the memoir. For example, in *Homecoming*, Ngũgĩ has argued that, in 1952, the colonial regime was involved in acts of "indiscriminate terrorism" which forced "workers and peasants to take to the forests" to counter "white violence" and their "savage acts" (*Homecoming* 29). However, the author's skewed defense of the Mau Mau activities and absolving the fighters from any crimes may raise some questions from the readers. This is because, though they had a just cause, the Mau Mau guerrillas also committed atrocities against their fellow Africans whom they killed for not taking the oath or being perceived as betrayers.

In his autobiography, Benjamin E. Kipkorir, who was Ngũgĩ's school mate at Alliance, has recounted the terror that the Mau Mau caused to the Gĩkũyũ community as well as to the Alliance High School. Kipkorir informs us that the threat of Mau Mau's acts of violence and oathing activities affected the life at Alliance High School. He reveals that, at school, every student was required to keep a matchet under his bed at night in order to fend off any Mau Mau attack (Kipkorir 140).

Furthermore, through Ngandi, Ngũgĩ has been able to express his support for Pan-Africanist and anti-colonialism ideas which are beyond the understanding of the child narrator. This is expressed through Ngandi's response to the narrator's inquiry on the authenticity of rumours he had heard that Black Americans and black South Africans would come to assist Kenyans in their anti-colonial resistance. In his response, Ngandi claims that black Americans and South Africans were sympathetic to the plight of the colonized Kenyans. Just like Ngũgĩ's arguments and claims in his essays, Ngandi also claims that Bishop Alexander from South Africa visited Kenya between 1935 and 1937 as a guest of KISA and Karĩng'a (African independent schools) and that Black Americans had already been involved in the Kenyan fight against colonialism and that

Marcus Garvey's ideas in his journal, *Negro World*, reached the KCA leaders in the 1920s (*Dreams* 120). In his book, *Re-membering Africa*, Ngũgĩ has expressed his pro-Pan-African sentiments which are similar to Ngandi's where he argues that Garveyism and Pan-Africanism are the most outstanding visions for re-joining the dismembered Africans both in Africa and in the diaspora (*Re-membering Africa* 26).

Based on the aforementioned incidences that have demonstrated Ngũgĩ's adoption of the adult voice to complement the memory and narrative of the child narrator, it would be fair to argue that his attempt to persuade the reader on some of his claims in the memoir becomes problematic as this strategy partly hampers the full attainment of his perceived rhetorical appeal. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that Ngũgĩ's adoption of the adult voice in the narrative about some historical events and in the interpretation of colonialism effectively complements the memory and recollections of Ngũgĩ the child; hence, enables him to put certain events and experiences in perspective.

## 2.6 Invoking the Politics of Land and Dispossession

Ngũgĩ has invoked the issues of land and dispossession in *Dreams in a Time of War* to express his strong anticolonial ideas and arouse the reader's contempt for colonialism. As one of the major aspects of his anticolonial exigency in the memoir, Ngũgĩ has foregrounded the loss of land to the white settlers and to fellow Africans to demonstrate to the reader the impact of the dispossession on the Africans. The main conflict between the Africans and the colonial government in the memoir revolves around the politics of dispossession of Africans of their land. In fact, the main catalyst behind the rise of the Mau Mau war against the colonial state was the loss of land by the Africans.

Right from the beginning of the memoir, Ngũgĩ has clearly demonstrated that, as a child, he witnessed how his family was affected as a result of the loss of their family land during colonialism. The loss of his family land had far reaching consequences which culminated in the disintegration of his family after his father's separation from Ngũgĩ's mother and his other wives. As a result of that, his mother and step-mothers were forced to trek some distance to take

food to his father and also started working in fields that were away from their compound. The narrator tells us that his sisters and brothers became labourers in the pyrethrum fields and the European-owned tea plantations. The reader, at this point sympathizes with the child narrator as he suffers due to the impact of loss of land that resulted in poverty in his family and subsequently led to the disintegration of his family.

In invoking the politics of land in *Dreams in a Time of War*, Ngũgĩ has employed irony to expose to the reader the paradox of the dilemma that faced the landless Africans in their own country. The narrator says that, as a child, he was shocked at the realization that the land on which his family was living was not theirs and that it belonged to a wealthy African called Kahahu. The author uses the term *ahoi* (tenants at will) to describe the unwarranted situation in which his family was and expresses the whole incongruity of being landless in one's own homeland by critically interrogating himself on how they became *ahoi* on their ancestral land (6). The ironical tone in the questions raised by the narrator, in this context, serves the purpose of interrogating the illegitimate displacement of the Africans from their ancestral land by the colonialists and their collaborators. Through the questions, Ngũgĩ expresses the narrator's disappointment at the loss of his father's land.

Ngũgĩ further shows that some Africans lost their land through dubious and corrupt systems that were perpetuated by the colonial legal systems. For instance, the narrator has expressed his outrage at the unjust colonial legal system of solving land disputes. In this case, the author has portrayed the replacement of the traditional legal system by the colonial one as an unfortunate experience for the colonized Africans who lost their land unfairly to the white settlers and their African collaborators. The narrator recounts painfully how his father lost his piece of land to Kahahu and Matumbĩ through a fraudulent resale of the land by Kĩbũkũ. The narrator claims that his father had acquired the piece of land from Kĩbũkũ through traditional verbal legal system which involved payments made using goats before witnesses but Kibuku later on sold the same piece of land to Kahahu through the colonial legal system which involved signed documents.

This scenario brings out the irony of the triumph of acts of injustice by undermining the African traditional legal systems. The question that the narrator raises above is meant to bring out the

incongruity apparent in the whole land sale process and also arouse anger in the reader for the unfair way that the narrator's father lost his land. It also appeals to the reader's sympathy for the narrator's father because of the unfair colonial legal system that disregarded the just traditional legal system of solving land disputes. This is demonstrated by the narrator's assertion that the colonial legal system trounced the traditional one in the process of resolving the land conflict. In expressing his ironical tone further, Ngũgĩ has exposed the paradox of Africans losing land to fellow Africans who collaborated with the colonialist.

This paradox serves two purposes in this context. Firstly, it expresses Ngũgĩ's fury and ironical tone at the act of his father's loss of land to a fellow African. It also expresses the author's attack on Western religion and the colonial legal frameworks that produced Africans whose behaviour was similar to that of the colonialists. It is incongruous to talk about "White Highlands" in the context of Africa since the land that was appropriated by the white settlers belonged to the colonized blacks. Therefore, Ngũgĩ succeeds in manipulating the reader to resent the colonial system through which Africans faced different forms of injustice related to the land question.

The author portrays the unfair loss of land by the Africans to fellow Africans as a main cause of the conflict amongst the Africans in his community. This is demonstrated by the narrator's revelation that the illegal double transaction of land strained the relationship between his father and Kahahu (*Dreams* 11). This tension among the Africans has been expressed further in Ngũgĩ's other writings such as *Weep Not, Child* in which two characters, Ngotho and Jacob, harbour hatred against each other due to the problem associated with the former's loss of land. This is the reality that Ngũgĩ brings out in *Dreams in a Time of War* when he links land loss to the family conflicts in the text. The irony of losing land to fellow Africans by those who became landless influences the reader to hate those who betrayed their fellow Africans by contributing to their state of landlessness and suffering. The betrayers, in this context, constitute what Bitzer calls constraints since they are part of the roadblocks to dealing with the exigency that has been established in the text.

Ngũgĩ has further condemned the colonial state's use of African land as a form of reward for white soldiers returning from the First and Second World Wars. This comes out through

Ngandi's rhetorical question which expresses the paradox of rewarding white soldiers with land taken from Africans whereas their African counterparts returning from the same wars are ignored. The white soldiers were additionally rewarded with jobs but the African ones returning from the wars were not although both groups had fought for the British. It would be expected that the British should have also rewarded the African soldiers who had fought and defended her interests during the war. Ngandi's question, "Do you see the unfairness?" (*Dreams* 113) underscores the irony in the injustice that the African soldiers were subjected to.

Land can be seen as an important metaphor in most of Ngũgĩ's writings because of the symbolic implications it bears in relation to the unity or disunity amongst the Africans, families and even Kenyans in general. The Africans are portrayed as having a special attachment to their land and, therefore, when dislocated from it, their families and even communities disintegrate. For instance, the narrator in *In the House of the Interpreter* recounts the great attachment that his mother had to land. He says that his mother's "love of the soil was deep" (62). By so doing, Ngũgĩ demonstrates to the reader the great importance attached to the land by the Africans who lost it to the white settlers and the colonial state. In his invocation of the importance of land and one's labour, the author has condemned the colonial state for taking away such a highly valued asset from the bona fide owners, the blacks.

In *Decolonising the Mind*, Ngũgĩ has underscored the importance of land to the colonized by arguing that the land question is a significant factor in understanding Kenya's history and the contemporary Kenyan politics. Similarly, in *In the House of the Interpreter*, the colonialist acts ruthlessly in abrogating the African land to the white settlers. The narrator, for instance, recounts how he once arrived at his home from Alliance High School only to find that his mother's hut, that of his brother and all the homesteads in the whole village had been razed to the ground by the colonial military. The desperate situation in which he found himself then and the way he describes it attracts the reader's empathy and pity on him. The narrator raises a rhetorical question which expresses his accusatory tone and invites the reader's contempt for the colonial state. The use of words such as "charred funeral pyres" to describe the wanton destruction of his village and community evokes images of the death of the narrator's community, its people and their history.

Ngũgĩ further demonstrates the ruthlessness with which the colonialist evicted the Africans from their land that resulted in their individual and collective suffering. For instance, the narrator has recounted acts of forced internal displacement of the Agĩkũyũ people and the destruction of their homes. He claims that the colonial state was involved in bulldozing and burning them to demonstrate the excessive force which was used in displacing them from their land. To criminalize the colonial act of displacement of Africans, Ngũgĩ has described it as 'mass fraud' (22).

Therefore, from the foregoing discussion it is ostensibly convincing that the dispossession of Africans of their land had far reaching implications on the Ngugi the child, his family and Kenyans at large. Apart from resulting in the general impoverishment of the colonized Kenyans, it also contributed significantly to the disintegration of many families and created disunity amongst the Africans as well as motivated the brutal war between the Mau Mau and the colonial government.

## 2.7 Idolization of the Mother Figure

In *Dreams in a Time of War*, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o has strived to idolize his mother by portraying her as one of the most important persons who had a profound influence on him in relation to his childhood experience of colonialism. The author has elevated the mother-figure while submerging that of the father-figure in the context of his encounter with the various challenges of colonialism. He presents his mother as his anchor, mentor and source of inspiration during the tumultuous colonial period in Kenya and his childhood. He has created his mother as a larger-than-life figure without whom he would have collapsed during the painful experience of colonialism in his childhood. This idolization of the mother-figure in the memoir can be seen as his deliberate attempt to endear his mother to the reader and influence the reader's reactions to different experiences that she went through during colonialism. Therefore, the narrator has successfully intertwined his mother's suffering and her contribution to the achievement of his goals in acquiring education with the narrative of colonialism in this memoir.

The elevation of the mother-figure in this memoir may come as a surprise to the readers who are well-acquainted with Ngũgĩ's portrayal of female characters in his fiction as being an exploited lot. In most of his fiction writings, most of the main female characters are subordinated to their male counterparts. Evan Mwangi has argued that Ngũgĩ's early plays are dominated by the gross repression of the female subjectivity and that their suppression by masculinity symbolizes failure of the nascent East African nations (93). Similarly, Brendon Nicholls argues that in Ngũgĩ's writings "gender oppression" is profoundly connected to the construction of Kenya's postcolonial nationhood, but with the female character being placed in an oppressive and exploited relationship to national subjectivity. Additionally, Nicholls argues that gender subordination is significantly critical to Ngũgĩ's political mission right from his first novels (Nicholls 3). However, in *Dreams in a Time War*, Ngũgĩ has elevated the impact of the female character in the main plot of his life by intertwining his destiny with his mother's story within the colonial context.

In his study on the relationship of women and patriarchal power in Ngũgĩ's novels, Albert Mugambi Rutere has observed that the success of women's struggle against patriarchy depends on their initiative to challenge the existing power relations. Among the strategies he has specifically identified include being empowered through education and adopting "tactical silence and subversion" (Rutere i). He further points out that Ngũgĩ creates strong female characters in his works since he perceives women as being resistant and inspiring models to women. However, in *Dreams in a Time of War*, Ngũgĩ does not seem to advocate for a gender sensitive society, since, just like in Margaret Ogola's *The River and the Source*, he has submerged the male character and elevated that of the female by monologically venerating the virtues of his mother only. This kind of portrayal of his mother, though it creates an admirable character in the female character, exposes the author's covert biases against his father. The reader, in this situation, is left wondering whether what Rutere calls "a gender sensitive society" could be one of Ngũgĩ's vision in this memoir.

In his idolization of his mother, Ngũgĩ has adopted the monologic approach in assigning her an indispensable position in his early childhood and youthful life. In this case, the author has

submerged the other voices in the memoirs and allowed only his own voice to take control of the whole narrative about his mother. According to Kitata, in a monologic approach, the writer's voice becomes the only voice that articulates or advances the main ideas in a text in relation to the main ideas or characters in the concerned text (Kitata 31). Therefore, in Ngũgĩ's memoirs, the author's idolization of the mother in the context of colonialism tantamount to his declaration of the mother's indispensable role in his survival against the terrific experiences that he went through which were occasioned by the cruel colonial reality in Kenya.

By adopting the monologic approach in his discursive presentation of his mother's image, Ngũgĩ has strived to elicit different reactions from the readers towards his mother. Through idolization of his mother, Ngũgĩ creates an extraordinary woman whose resilience, perseverance and strength during the colonial experience attracts not only the admiration of the other characters in the memoirs, but also that of the readers. By idolizing his mother through the monologic strategy, the author accomplishes an important ramification of the position she occupies in his life. He is simply declaring to the reader that the mother-figure occupied an indispensable position in the survival of most African families as the men were destroyed or emasculated by the destructive impact of colonialism.

In *Dreams in a Time of War*, Ngũgĩ introduces his mother to the reader by describing the strong bond that existed between him and her. Therefore, right from the onset, he makes a declaration of that special rapport between him and his mother. This is expressed in the narrator's claim that, as a child, he had wanted to be with his mother all the time and that he would cry for many hours till he was nicknamed "Kĩrĩri" (28), literally meaning 'crying baby' in the Agĩkũyũ language. The narrator's claim attests to the strong mother-child bond that existed between the two. The strong bond between the narrator and his mother led to child rivalry for his mother's affection between him and his younger brother, Njinju, with whom he had always "fought to be the one next to Mother's breasts" whenever they slept in the same bed with their mother (44).

Remi Akujobi argues that motherhood in the African society is associated with a woman's ability to conceive and give birth to children. He further contends that it is intensely determined by the

sociocultural context. He emphasizes that motherhood is a kind of "moral transformation" which makes the woman come to terms with her strong attachment to her child (Akujobi 2). It is such a kind of attachment which Ngũgĩ has romanticized in *Dreams in a Time of War* in his veneration of the mother-figure during the colonial period. However, Ngũgĩ's idolization of his mother goes beyond merely the childbearing responsibility and extends to the mother's ability to nurture her children despite the difficult colonial realities facing the Africans.

During colonial time, Africans lacked certain fundamental services such as hospital facilities in their villages. They also lacked the financial resources that could enable them access such services in the missionary or colonial government hospitals. This is the situation that Ngũgĩ's family and that of other Africans found themselves in. Therefore, when the narrator developed an eye problem, it was his mother who took him to a traditional medicine man for treatment which failed to cure the problem. The narrator also recalls how he was taken to King George VI Hospital in Nairobi by his mother and Lord Reverend Stanley Kahahu. Therefore, his mother was concerned about his suffering whereas his father has not been mentioned in connection to this experience. The narrator recounts this experience and reveals that only his mother and a neighbour had visited him in hospital where he had been admitted. Again, the narrator expresses his strong bond with his mother while he was hospitalized by claiming he missed his mother as his condition improved (*Dreams* 29). By claiming that he missed his mother and home, Ngũgĩ persuades the reader that during the colonial period, it was the mother-figure that upheld the disintegrating African families.

Equally, Ngũgĩ has elevated the mother-figure by portraying his mother as a caring and responsible person. The narrator reveals this when he narrates how his mother nursed him when a barbed wire tore into the flesh of his left foot. He narrates that experience with a ting of nostalgia to demonstrate his gratitude for his mother, who, despite there being no medical clinics or a doctor to take her child for treatment, had just washed the wound using salt water till he could walk again. The scar that remained afterwards has become a constant reminder of that experience to Ngũgĩ, as attested by the narrator's claim that it became a scar that remains to date.

The mother-figure has further been idolized by portraying the female character as a person who played a great role of imparting discipline to children during the colonial period. For instance, the narrator recalls how his mother ensured that her children did not get involved in dangerous games or be in bad company. He recounts how his mother had forbidden him and his younger brother from being involved in dangerous sports, or those that included gambling practices. She had also disliked any games that involved many boys and which were far away from their home *Dreams* (31). This is a demonstration that Ngũgĩ's mother was not only concerned with the discipline of her children, but also with their security during the insecure period of colonialism. The reader, at this point, is influenced to admire the mother-figure for her mothering efforts that are geared towards ensuring that the African child did not get into any danger during the colonial period.

According to Martha Joy Rose, motherhood is an "institution" and social system through which the act of mothering is demonstrated (Rose 29). She conceptualizes mothering as the actions that are performed by an individual, in this context, the mother. She recognizes the fact that a mother's ability to execute her 'mothering' roles is affected by external forces such as the social, political and cultural issues. In *Dreams in a Time of War*, we examine Ngũgĩ's mother's experience, identity and the different ways through which her mothering abilities are enacted in the memoir.

In his veneration of the mother-figure in his desire to get education and fulfill his dreams of a better life, Ngũgĩ claims that, were it not for his mother, he would not have received formal education. It should be noted that Ngũgĩ's mother, just like the others during the colonial period, faced the problem of poverty and therefore could not afford to pay fees for her children in the newly introduced formal education. That is why the narrator expressed his disbelief when his mother had asked him if he wanted to go to school. He says that the offer to go to school deprived him of words and that his mother had to ask him whether he wanted to go to school again (37). The narrator confesses that his mother's question was imprinted on his mind forever and this foregrounds one of the most memorable events in his life as illustrated in his claim that his mother's "question and the scene were forever engraved in my mind" (*Dreams* 36).

Despite the abject poverty in the family, Ngũgĩ's mother struggled to raise some money by doing menial jobs in order to take her children to school. However, before taking the narrator to school, there was a contractual obligation that the mother and the child put in place to ensure that, despite the poverty in the family, the narrator would persevere and complete his education. Through a conversation that ensued between the narrator and his mother that served as a contract between the two, the narrator's determination to achieve his dreams in education are set and his promise to persevere in the face of poverty in his family is articulated (*Dreams* 37). However, it is worth noting that, in this contract, Ngũgĩ's father has not featured anywhere. The narrator, in fact, confesses that his father was not involved in the decision on his going to school and claims that the idea was his mother's "dream". He also informs us that his mother single-handedly raised the money for tuition and his uniform by selling her crops produce in the local market. The claim that his mother was the sole architect for the initiation of his formal education strengthens the bond that existed between the two. This is reinforced by the narrator's self-introduction at school on his first day, when he declares that "I am Ngũgĩ wa Wanjiku" since at his home he had always identified with his mother (*Dreams* 38). This further submerges the narrator's father and elevates the status of his mother; hence idolizing the mother-figure for single-handedly taking the initiative to take him to school. By so doing, Ngũgĩ attracts the reader's admiration for his mother, who, despite the difficult colonial situation, had gone against the odds to educate her children.

After joining school, the narrator's mother was the only person who was always concerned with the academic progress of the narrator. This is an indication that she was interested and determined to see her son succeed in education. For instance, at one time, the narrator says that when he told his mother that he scored ten out of ten in an assignment they were given by their teacher, she had asked him if he had done the best (*Dreams* 39). The repetition of his mother's question, "Is that the best you could have done?" emphasizes the mother's concern for his performance at school and also acts as a motivation for him to work hard in his studies. Therefore, in expressing his gratitude for having been taken to school, the narrator recognizes only his mother's efforts and does not mention anything to do with his father. This can be interpreted as the author's act of idolizing the mother-figure in the text in order to endear her to his readers. The readers' admiration for Ngũgĩ's mother is further enhanced by the narrator's

silent gratitude: “Thank you, Mother, thank you” (*Dreams* 41). By appreciating his mother’s efforts, the narrator also endears himself to the reader.

It is revealed that the narrator’s mother derived happiness and optimism from his good progress at school. For example, on his achievement in writing an essay in Gĩkũyũ language, the narrator was pleased that his good scores in the class exercises “had made her happy and had brought collective honor and pride” to their new community (*Dreams* 76). The fact that the teacher’s recognition of his success in class reached his mother even before the narrator went home underscores further his mother’s interest in his education, hence, attracts the readers’ admiration for her as a responsible parent.

Ngũgĩ’s mother’s concern for his education in primary school level is further extended to his secondary school education as demonstrated in the narrative about his secondary school education in the memoir *In the House of the Interpreter* in which the narrator has also idolized his mother by attributing his motivation to work hard while being a student of Alliance High School. For instance, when placed in Stream B at Alliance High School which had less bright students compared to those in stream A, the narrator says that he did not lose hope and pride in himself because what mattered was his pact with his mother to do the best always. At the end of the first year at Alliance High School, the narrator took a good position in his class and declares that he would take his success back to his mother. This indicates that the narrator worked hard in school not only for his academic success but also to make his mother happy.

Similarly, when the narrator passed the Overseas Cambridge School Certificate with distinctions in all subjects, he did not share the joy with his friends or the public but declares that he will share the good news with his mother first. This claim underscores his honor and commitment to the covenant with his mother to work hard and do his best at school. Additionally, he informs us that, upon receiving his first salary and three months’ arrears, he rejected entreaties from his friends to while away in the city in order to reach home and see his mother first. This act is a mark of the narrator’s great recognition and exaltation of his mother's role and influence in his education and life generally during the colonial period. The narrator's commitment to his

mother's happiness and approval of his success is a mark of the idolization of the mother-figure in the memoir which is meant to attract the reader's admiration for her.

In *Dreams in a Time of War*, Ngũgĩ has additionally idolized the mother-figure in the text by portraying his mother as the head of the family even before her separation with his father. Therefore, when expelled by his father from his home, the narrator, though psychologically affected by the cruel act, still felt safe going to his mother. He narrates the melancholic experience which he terms 'expulsion' from his father's home that 'baffled' him because of its humiliating nature. However, the narrator says that he only got the consolation from the knowledge that his mother had always been the head of their immediate household as revealed through his declaration that "home would always be whenever she was". Despite that consolation, the narrator still regrets that it is bad to have one's own father deny one as one of his children (*Dreams* 62).

Similarly, in *In the House of the Interpreter,* Ngũgĩ associates his home with his mother whenever he came back from school. His psychological preoccupation with his mother's love and care elevates her presence and impact on him as compared to any other member of his family. That is why he further declares that he would be delightful in his anticipated smile and warmth of his mother (2). At this point the credibility of his mother is elevated, hence, attracting the reader's love and admiration for her.

In idolizing the mother-figure in the text, Ngũgĩ has portrayed women as the ones who took up the role of reconstructing their families after the destruction of African homes by the colonial military. For example, the narrator recounts that when he came home from school, he found his mother and sister-in-law thatching a new hut at a new concentration village after being relocated by the colonial government. He painfully recollects the experience by informing the reader that, while some of the men had joined the anti-colonial Mau Mau war and the others had been imprisoned, the women who remained at home "willed themselves into old and new roles" that include, among others, feeding and clothing the children, fetching water, working in the fields, building and setting up new homes in the concentration villages (*In the House* 4).

It is because of his association of home with his mother that the narrator's childhood memories continue to affect him when he joined secondary school. *In the House of the Interpreter* reveals when the narrator expresses his nostalgic feelings towards his mother's fire-roasted potatoes which he claims connected him to the old lifestyle at the village before its destruction by the British soldiers. Thus, the fire-roasted potatoes had a long-lasting impression on the narrator's memory and becomes a reminder about his mother and childhood home.

In *Dreams in a Time of War*, Ngũgĩ's further portrays his mother as a resilient woman who could endure difficult circumstances and troublesome people in the context of colonialism. In this case, the narrator refers to the conflict between his mother and grandmother which affected his glamour of eventually having a grandmother like other children. The narrator reveals how his mother endured his grandmother's resentful attitude, cantankerous behaviour and incredibly painful hold on his mother. His claim that his mother could "intensify her efforts" to provide for the grandmother's "spoken and unspoken" demands without success is a demonstration that she was indeed a strong woman (99). The tension between the two, Ngũgĩ's mother and grandmother, was only reduced when the narrator's elder brother, Good Wallace, built a separate hut for the latter.

Ngũgĩ's mother's resilience is equally expressed through the way she used to handle the information about the narrow escape of her son, Good Wallace, from death when shot at by the colonial police for being found in possession of bullets. The narrator recounts the harrowing experience that gripped his family on learning about Wallace's narrow escape and the confusion and apprehension that descended into his family by using highly emotive terms such as being "huddled together" in their house as their mother warmed them about the effects of the State of Emergency (*Dreams* 131 – 132).

This portrayal of his mother's resilience and persevering character corresponds to the author's portrayal of his female characters in some of his writings. Brendon Nicholls has pointed out that, though Ngũgĩ's writings subordinate women to their male counterparts, the female characters exhibit a strong character through their resilience (*Dreams* 4). These qualities are also

inherent in Ngũgĩ's mother as presented in *Dreams in a Time of War* and can be seen as the ones that endear he to the author's readers.

Ngũgĩ has extended his mother's resilient behaviour to his other memoir, *In the House of the interpreter* in which she is portrayed as a persevering and resilient person who was capable of keeping painful colonial experiences to herself in order to shield her children from psychological torment. The narrator reveals this when he refers to his mother's detention at the home guard post and her interrogation about her son's involvement in the Mau Mau activities. She kept secret her tribulations and experiences at the home guard post by talking little about the ordeal she had undergone at the home guard post (*In the House* 30). Also, she did not complain even during difficult times and was always happy to see the narrator and hear about his progress in school where she felt surer his safety (62). This demonstrates that Ngũgĩ's mother and other women were apprehensive of the violence in the country during the colonial period and therefore always feared for the safety of their children. This endears her to the reader as her love for her family and children comes out strongly.

Owing to her resilience, the narrator's mother was able to encourage him to persevere difficult times such as when he was detained. For example, he says that, while being in detention at the home guard post, the narrator's optimism that he would be set free was motivated by his mother's words which emphasized that even a long night will ultimately end with the coming of dawn (*In the House* 125).

In idolizing the mother-figure further in *In the House of the Interpreter*, Ngugi has presented the mother-figure as a symbol of forgiveness and reconciliation. For instance, she had advised the narrator and his younger brother to respect their father and avoid judging him on his failures. She once censured the narrator's younger brother, Njinju, for complaining that his father only visited them whenever he was hungry to which she advised them not to judge him since he was still their father. This can be seen as the author's strategy to endear her to the reader and demonstrate that during the colonial period, it was the mothers who strived to uphold family unity despite the challenges imposed on their families by colonialism.

Nevertheless, despite the idolization of the mother-figure in *Dreams in a Time of War*, Ngũgĩ still seems to be trapped in his past contradictions in his portrayal of women vis-à-vis the African family, the Gĩkũyũ nation or the formation of Kenyan nation. For instance, though the memoir's main theme is the anti-colonialism struggle, none of the female characters in this memoir plays an active role in the active politics of liberation. The women characters only perform domestic duties or are depicted as special symbols through which the collapse of the family, failure of the Gĩkũyũ nationalism and the formation of Kenyan nation are articulated. For instance, the narrator intimates that his father's youngest wife had an affair with a foreman while working at a tea plantation. This partly contributed to the frustrations and emasculation of his father who had already fallen socially and economically. In this context, the downfall of Ngũgĩ's father assumes a symbolic significance since it also represents the fall the Kenyan nation to the colonialist. According to Nicholls, Ngũgĩ's consistent and symbolic equation of a woman's body with the body of the state denies the female characters in his fiction the anticipated agency of their liberation (Nicholls 58). Therefore, despite the successful idolization of the mother-figure in the memoir, Ngũgĩ's mother, just like other female characters silently suffers in the context of the patriarchal, societal or colonially established realities.

## 2.8 Provision of Evidence as Sources of Narration

In order to render his narrative of colonialism and its devastating impact on the colonized with some sense of objectivity and persuade the reader to comply with his claims and arguments in *Dreams in a Time of War*, Ngũgĩ has provided various forms of evidence which take either textual or paratextual designs. According to Gerard Genette, a literary work consists of a meaningful text; however, the text's meaning is reinforced by what he terms the "paratext of the work" (Genette1991, 261). He points out that the paratextual elements of a text include textual and non-textual forms that enhance the "communicatory instance" (266) between the addresser (writer or speaker) and addressee (reader or audience). In this memoir, Ngũgĩ has used the personal testimony and photographs as paratexual elements in order to bolster his claims and arguments and persuade his implied audience to assent to his anti-colonial politics, ideology and worldview.

### 2.8.1 Personal Testimony

Within a rhetorical context, speakers and writers evoke various aspects of the logos to support their claims and arguments. Logos focuses on the text itself in terms of data, examples, statistics, facts and reasoning among others which are part of a speaker's or writer's message. In the memoir, Ngũgĩ has appealed to the Aristotelian logos by supporting his claims in the narrative of colonialism in various ways in order to make the reader view them as being reliable and logical. Keith and Lundberg, for example, have argued that examples in texts are crucial ways through which arguments or claims "get adapted to specific audiences" to enhance their persuasive or rhetorical appeal (36 - 37).

Sharon Crowley and Debra Hawhee have argued that a testimony consists of statements which are made by people who were physically present during the occurrence of an event (2004). In this case, the reader of Ngũgĩ's childhood memoir is expected to take the narrator's evidence as reliable and credible. According Nan Johnson, a testimony is a form of an argument which is used by a person to influence someone by presenting evidence to support one's claims (*Nineteenth-Century Rhetoric*). Based on this argument, I argue that Ngũgĩ has portrayed the narrator in *Dreams in a Time of War* as a person who is testifying before the reader about the colonial experiences that he witnessed.

In his employment of the personal testimony, Ngũgĩ has cited the actual years when some key events that he witnessed or which directly affected him occurred. In this memoir, the narrator, for instance, recalls that 1948 was the year he was transferred from Kamandura primary school to Mangua in a sudden and an unexpected decision made by his mother and brother, Wallace Mwangi. Citation of the actual years or dates when the events occurred gives credibility to the narrator's experiences, makes his narrative reliable and thus persuades the reader to trust him. According to Omuteche and Kesero, the dates in an autobiography serve a special purpose in a text as they support the truth value of their writings. They have also argued that the presence of the actual dates in an autobiographical writing provide evidence that "accounts for its veracity and sincerity" (6).

Ngũgĩ employs testimony as a rhetorical strategy to attract his implied audience's belief in the trustworthiness of the issues he claims to have witnessed when he was young. A testimony is part of the real examples (as opposed to hypothetical ones) or things from one's personal experiences (*The Essential Guide to Rhetoric*). In the memoir, the narrator recalls having witnessed some things about the Second World War such as seeing the soldiers who participated in the war. The narrator further claims that there was the evidence of soldiers from the Second World War who were seen passing through Limuru (*Dreams* 22). The narrator's revelation that his own brothers participated in the war enhances his testimony of having witnessed some things related to the war. For instance, he claims that in 1945, he had heard that his cousin, Mwangi, was killed in the Second World War but Kabae had survived and returned home. Furthermore, the narrator's revelation of his personal encounter with one of the prominent political figures during colonialism in Kenya, Mbiyu Koinange, along a path in his village is one of his testimonies. He claims that he and his younger brother even interacted with him (*Dreams* 90).

From the revelation above, it is evident that Ngũgĩ has used a testimony to demonstrate that some historical figures referred to in the memoir actually existed and that he saw or knew them in person. This kind of information makes the reader to trust the narrative about colonialism and some of the key actors who were involved in it in one way or another. The testimony, in this context, has a greater rhetorical appeal to the reader because of the truth value suggested by the evidence adduced in it. Roy Pascal points out that readers normally expect truth from nonfiction writers; therefore, a writer's attempt to provide a true account of his experience succeeds in persuading his reader (*Design and Truth in Autobiography*).

In his narrative about displacement, the narrator claims that he actually saw the Agĩkũyũ, Embu and Meru refugees who had been displaced from Rift Valley. To strengthen this claim, the narrator reveals that among those who were thrown out from the Rift Valley by the colonial state was his maternal grandmother. He recounts this experience by describing the desperation that was exhibited by the displaced people he saw at Limuru marketplace who were "huddled in groups" and looked "forlorn and lost". Ngũgĩ describes them as "a mass of displaced people" to create the image of the magnitude of the seriousness of displacement of the Africans from their lands (*Dreams* 97). The narrator further reveals that all the ethnic groups from Kenya's central

region were being evicted by the colonial state from the Rift Valley and that the same experience was taking place in many other parts of the central Kenya. The author reveals that most of the deportees from the Rift Valley region forgotten their ancestral origins since they were already descendants of those who had decided to settle in the Rift Valley as their homes many years ago. This indicates that colonialism not only led to the physical displacement of the colonized from their places of origin, it also resulted in disconnecting them from their culture and history.

In some of his essays, Ngũgĩ has pursued in details the impact of dislocating people from their places of origin and forcing them into colonialism or slavery. For example, the author parallels the dislocation of the colonized from their land with the metaphorical dismemberment of a person's body into pieces. He asserts that colonialism resulted in alienation the African from both his ancestral land and the self (*Re-membering* 3). For Ngũgĩ, the establishment of commercial tea and pyrethrum plantations such as those owned by Howlands in *Weep Not, Child* and the settler-owned plantations in *Dreams in a Time of War* led to the dismemberment of the African from his land. By losing the land to the colonizer, the colonized also lost his independence as revealed in Ngũgĩ's claim that before the colonial conquest, the African was his own subject but through colonial subjugation he became a subject to the colonizer.

In *Dreams in a Time of War*, the narrator reveals that he learnt about most of the events that were taking place during colonialism from stories told by the adult characters such as Ngandi. To render credibility to Ngandi's narrative about colonialism, Ngũgĩ has used the personal testimony such as when he claims that some of the betrayers of the freedom fighters that Mzee Ngandi talked about were well-known to him. One such betrayer was called Gĩciriri, who the author claims was well-known to everybody in the village and whom the narrator used to see in Limuru. The narrator even claims to have known Gĩciriri's friend, Kĩmũchũ, who had been assassinated by unknown people. Moreover, the narrator convinces the reader of his knowledge about Gĩciriri by claiming that one of his children, Wanjikũ, had been in the same school with him.

As part of the testimony strategy, Ngũgĩ has invoked the impact of some colonial experience on his memory as exemplified when he describes chillingly one of his encounters with the ruthless

colonial soldiers which he claims was forever imprinted in his memory (*Dreams* 128)". The narrator elaborates this claim by testifying that he personally was almost shot dead by the British soldiers when he was on his way to school after lunch. He recounts how he had encountered the 'Johnnies', as the British soldiers were referred to then, who had invaded his village and were firing their guns indiscriminately. The narrator recounts how he heard terrifying screams and shouts during that incident and how he had escaped death narrowly. He describes his terrifying experience by claiming that it left him "shaken" (*Dreams* 129).

The testimony is a strategy that Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o has employed in his other memoirs in order to make the discourse on colonialism believable. In *In the House of the Interpreter*, the narrator recounts his traumatizing visit to the colonial military post where he had gone to get a clearance letter from the chief to show that he had not gained allegiance to the Mau Mau movement through the act of taking the prescribed oath. He describes the intense fear inflicted on him by the mystery of its "threatening watchtower" and his awareness that his mother had been "incarcerated there for three months answering questions" because of his brother's act of joining the Mau Mau (*In the House* 43). The narrator also reveals that he witnessed Princess Margaret's visit to Kenya in October 1959 when he among a group of fifty boys and twenty scouts who went to Nairobi to welcome the princess by lining along the streets and waving small pieces of the Union Jack at the motorcade escorting her. To express its lasting impact on his memory, the narrator claims that it was "the milling of the crowd of children waving the flag that left the biggest impression" on him (*In the House* 69).

Ngũgĩ's employment of the personal testimony can be interpreted as an effective rhetorical strategy which he has deliberately adopted in order to enhance his rapport with his implied reader, hence, evoking the reader's empathy for him as he recounts his terrifying experiences during his childhood in the colonial Kenya.

### 2.8.2 Photographs

In *Dreams in a Time of War*, Ngũgĩ has supported his narrative of colonialism by using different photographs to enable the reader to visualize the reality of the events and claims that

the narrator makes in the memoir. The photographs that the author has used have mainly captured different realities in the past that are related to his own experiences, his family and different events during the colonial time. The various photographs can therefore be taken as repertoires of some of the critical events and memories that the author would like to narrate to his readers.

According to Isaac E. Ukpokolo, photographs are important in keeping people's memories since most people value them for different reasons such as preserving important moments, events and experiences (Ukpokolo 291). Ukpokolo argues that among the reasons that make people to keep photographs is their worth and power to enable them remember significant past events. For him, photography, just like writing and videography, enables people to preserve memories more concretely. To stress the importance of photographs in preserving the past, Ukpokolo has emphasized that photography brings into the present the past experiences and realities (Ukpokolo 291).

Elizabeth Edwards has raised critical questions whose implicature articulates the importance of photographs documenting a writer's past which interrogate the historicity of an event/incident and project the tone of the historical even narrativised (Edwards 15). Some of the questions Edwards has raised point to the fact that photographs have implied meaningful historical revelations, "heuristic potential of condensed evidence", and "their own agency" as well as "performative qualities" which may be truthful or not (Edwards 15).

Therefore, in discussing the use photographs in *Dreams in a Time of War*, it is important that the questions raised by Edward above should be accorded serious consideration. In this memoir, Ngũgĩ has used seventeen photographs that have captured different events and some characters in the text. However, all of the photographs in the text are placed between page 70 and 71, except that of his mother which also appears at the beginning of the text. These pictures have been used to reinforce the narrated events by providing the visual imagery to the reader and making the events and characters presented to stick in the reader's memory. They can be seen as the author's attempt to provide evidence for some of the events or people he has talked about in his narration of events in the text. Julia Adeney Thomas, in her essay "The Evidence of Sight",

has argued that photographs offer direct access to past truths and experiences. This implies that owing to their power to show the past reality, their truth value therefore is easily trusted by the reader.

Omuteche and Kesero concur with the argument that photographs have a strong rhetorical appeal to the reader because of their ability to exemplify past historical realities as well as attract the reader's trust on the narrative of events. They have, thus, expressed this when they argue that life writers enhance the "historicity of the autobiography", and the "truthfulness, and factuality" of their claims/narratives by adding photographs to their writings as demonstrated below:

> Autobiography and photography are closely connected as they are usually taken to operate in some stronger ontological sphere, hence photographs complement the truth value in autobiographical writing. (Omuteche and Kesero 5-6)

Among the photographs that the author has used in *Dreams in a Time of War* to support his narration are those of his immediate family members who include his mother, Wanjiku wa Ngũgĩ, his elder brother, Wallace Mwangi and his younger brother, Allan Njinju. The picture of his mother appears twice in the text, one is placed before he begins narrating the events in the text and the other one is at the middle of the memoir. The repetition of the same picture of his mother in the text may be seen as Ngũgĩ's deliberate attempt to endear his mother, who he has idolized throughout the text, to the reader. The caption that accompanies the picture of Wallace Mwangi indicates that it was taken shortly before he escaped to the forest where he joined the Mau Mau guerrillas. In this case, the reader is provided with evidence of how exactly Mwangi looked like in terms of age and physical appearance when he joined the Mau Mau fighters, hence, persuades the reader on the credibility of the narrator's narrative about him. However, his younger brother's picture, Nijnu's, which he claims was taken years later does not fit well into the mood and tone created by the narrative of colonialism. It seems the photograph was taken when he was already an adult and was living a comfortable life as suggested by his decent dressing, the smile on his face and the relaxed posture he portrays.

One of the pictures the author has used shows a white boy pointing a gun at a black child to demonstrate that even children of the colonial masters molested and mistreated those of the colonized Africans. Ngũgĩ has narrated in some of his memoirs how the colonial settlers used the

gun to intimidate and kill their African victims as a kind of sport that brought out some sadistic pleasure. For instance, in *Detained*, Ngũgĩ graphically describes the humiliating and painful death of Waiyaki as "a cruel colonial sport" (45-46). Similarly, in *Birth of a Dream Weaver*, Ngũgĩ describes the habit of whites' acts of setting dogs on Africans or shooting them as a kind of sport from which they derived pleasure during colonialism.

In *Dreams in a Time of War, s*even photographs have been used to show various acts of subjugation of the Africans by the colonial agents in different ways. One of the photographs shows a picture of the British soldiers guarding captured Africans at what the caption describes as "a screening camp". However, looking keenly at this photograph, we note that the Africans under arrest are sitting in the middle of a road. In the fore, there are two European police officers armed with guns guarding the captives. Though this picture reveals one of the oppressive acts of the colonial state, its caption stating that the screening exercise was done at a camp is not accurate. This is because, in this particular photograph, the African who are being guarded by white police or military personnel are all squatting position in what clearly appears to be a road. The author has also provided another photo which depicts a mass trial of Africans who Ngũgĩ claims that were later executed in batches of up to fifty members.

A photograph which attracts the reader's fear is the one showing British soldiers who had captured a Mau Mau guerrilla in a forested area in Kenya. This photograph shows that the three British white soldiers in it had subdued the Mua Mau guerrilla as indicated by his raised hands. One of the soldiers was frisking the guerrilla fighter who was unarmed. The way the soldiers have readied their guns creates the impression that they could shoot the guerrilla fighter if he had attempted to defy their orders. Another photo which attracts the reader's empathy for the colonized is the one that shows a fortified Home Guard Post with suspected Mau Mua guerrillas who were detained behind barbed wire and were awaiting screening and interrogation. In the picture, we see a home guard armed with a gun guarding the fortified post. In the post, there is a watchtower that is raised to a high position from which the home guards kept a close surveillance on what was taking place amongst the detained Africans. In the Home Guard Post, we can also see that the Africans are sitting on the ground. This creates the impression that they were actually

subdued by the home guards monitoring them. Ngũgĩ claims that his own mother was detained in such a Home Guard post.

Ngũgĩ has used a different photograph to depict a similar scenario in his other memoir, *In the House of the Interpreter*. In this case, the photograph shows black suspects who were arrested by the colonial forces in military comb through parts of Nairobi's Eastlands in 1953 (31). The blacks who are squatting are surrounded by white British soldiers with guns guarding them. This picture clearly supports the narrative that the British colonial state conducted arbitrary raids in towns and rural market places, carried out mass arrests and committed other atrocities such as conducting public hangings of the colonized. These photographs further reinforce the writer's denunciation of the activities of the colonial military during the state of emergency in Kenya and, therefore, persuade the reader that colonialism was indeed a terrible experience for the colonized.

In *Dreams in a Time of War*, Ngũgĩ has further presented a picture showing the Tory Colonial Secretary, Alan Lennox-Boyd, who was inspecting a group of loyalist Kikuyu home guards. This supports his claims of betrayal amongst the colonized themselves and contributes to the irony of the decolonization process in Kenya and other colonized African countries. Ngũgĩ has strongly condemned the home guards in most of his fiction and nonfiction writings for their involvement in the entrenchment of colonialism in Kenya. According to James Ogude, the home guards and other collaborators of the colonial state in Ngũgĩ's early fiction contributed to disunity among the Africans and undermined the bond that united the Africans. He describes them as "colonial surrogates" (Ngũgĩ's Novels 52) whose character is used to redefine the emergent new relationships within the wider colonial world. Therefore, just like in his fiction, Ngũgĩ has portrayed the Africans who collaborated with the colonial state as traitors to attract the reader's contempt and condemnation of such characters.

Although the photos used in *Dreams in a Time of War* have depicted to the reader some of the colonial experiences, the author has not positioned them in different parts of the text where the narrated events or experiences are mentioned. He has placed all of them within the same position in the text, between pages 70 and 71. Nevertheless, despite having placed the photographs showing different people, events and experiences during the colonial period in one place in the

memoir, Ngũgĩ's strategy achieves what Thomas terms the "evidence of sight"; hence, becomes an effective employment of paratextual elements whose illocutionary force reinforces the author's narrative about the historicity of colonialism in Kenya. The strategy also enhances the credibility and factuality of his anticolonial arguments and claims, thereby enabling the author to effectively attempt to persuade his implied audience.

## 2.9 Juxtaposing Orality with Literacy in Subverting Colonial Hegemony

In *Dreams in a Time of War*, Ngũgĩ has juxtaposed orality with literacy to subvert colonial hegemony by extoling the truth value of the spoken word over the one that is communicated through the colonial controlled media such as pictures, the electronic (radio and/or television) and the printed/written word. The author seems to believe that orality is imbued with some degree of rhetorical power over the other forms of communication, hence, can be more persuasive to his implied reader than those employed by the colonial empire that are largely in form of written newspapers.

The role and power of the oral medium and its attendant character in human interactions have been acknowledged by various scholars. Walter Ong in *Orality and Literacy* has discussed the nature and role of orality in the interpretation of reality and its relation with literacy. He has underscored the fluidity of the nature of orality and oral literary discourse in its transmission from the performer to the different audiences. Further, Ong emphasizes that the spoken word or orality remains the primary means of communication between and amongst the human kind (Ong 6-8); hence, both the literate and the non-literate societies are indebted to the spoken word produced and transmitted from one person to another. Similarly, Peter S.O. Amuka, also underscores the indispensability of the verbal word by declaring, "the written word may not exist without its oral base but the oral version exists and has always existed without the written" (Amuka 9). This points to the foregrounding of the power relations between the oral word and its written version whereby the power of the former supersedes that of the latter.
In *Dreams in a Time of War*, Ngũgĩ seems to accord the oral word power over literacy in his attempt to influence the reader to assent to his political and ideological rhetoric by elevating the

truth value of the information about colonialism that is conveyed orally over the one that is communicated through the electronic, written or pictorial means. Therefore, in this memoir, Ngũgĩ has tried to refute different claims made by the colonial state that were disseminated through the colonial-controlled media such as newspapers and the radio. Instead, the author has projected the oral media and publications in Gĩkũyũ and other African languages as authentic sources of accurate news and the truth for the colonized Africans. In this context, the colonial version of news in the newspapers written in English are depicted as being propagandist in nature because of their negative portrayal of the Mau Mau fighters. However, the narrator's claim that the oral news in Gĩkũyũ language and the ones in papers written in English often provided inconsistent views of same event problematizes the truth value of both the colonial discourse as well as Ngũgĩ's counter-discourse. Therefore, though Ngũgĩ's intention is to persuade the reader to mistrust the colonial narrative on the conflict between the colonized and the colonial state, there is need to critically examine his counter-narrative since, just like that of the colonial state, his projection of the conflict may be prejudiced. As such, some claims or arguments may be persuasive while others can be seen as his propagandist strategy that is geared towards manipulating his anti-colonial reader in different ways.

Thus, in *Dreams in a Time of War*, orality assumes political and ideological dimensions through which Ngũgĩ contradicts the claims of the colonial state. Akintunde Akinyemi has underscored the political role of the oral tradition when he asserts that the oral word can be an influential political tool in modern-day Africa; hence, can be deployed as an integral strategy in political rhetoric ("African Oral Tradition" 63). Similarly, in highlighting the epistemological character of orality, Amuka opines that the oral media is a significant mode of transmitting knowledge from the performer to the audience; hence, is an effective "type of a style" (6) that impacts on the interpretation of a text by the performer as well as the audience in a performance. For Amuka, the performance of a text may take the written or oral forms; however, he emphasizes that the origin of the written form is "always the oral" (6). Thus, the written accounts must necessarily be "oralised" in order for them to be meaningful to both the writer/speaker and the reader/audience (6). By emphasizing that the oral performance has a "recognizable structure" and that the interpretation of such a performance itself is "a process of creation," Amuka signals to an

implied rhetorical intention of the performer (writer or speaker) that one wants to attain in their audience.

Therefore, apart from being an extensive area of knowledge through which a community preserves and transmits cultural practices, beliefs, information and messages across generations, orality in a literary text can also be applied by an individual or a community to critique the sociopolitical realities in society. Since orality is a participatory experience in a community, its performance assumes an exchange between the performers and an audience; thereby, attaining its rhetorical impact on those involved. It is on this basis that this study argues that Ngũgĩ has employed orality to counter the colonial discourses on colonialism in Kenya and other colonized Africans states.

Muchugu Kiiru has underscored the fact that aspects of orality in a literary text are crucial because of their involvement of a writer's audience in the narrative of the text. For instance, he notes that songs and oral narratives in a text may be used to comment on the various events in a text as well as provide some relief to the audience ("Oral Features"). Therefore, aspects of orality such as the direct conversations between the narrator and other characters in *Dreams in a Time of War* establishes a strong rapport between the reader and the narrator and critically engages the reader on the events being narrated or the ideas expressed in the memoir. By so doing, the reader can intelligently interact with the author whose main goal is to influence them to trust the credibility and reliability of the claims and arguments in the text.

In *Dreams in a Time of War*, some of the claims that have been advanced vis-à-vis the anti-colonial struggle, the white settlers and the Africans who were perceived as colonial loyalists seem to be controversial. This is because the narrative of Mau Mau has been manipulated by some people to achieve different goals during the struggle for independence and even in the postcolonial Kenya. Galia Sabar-Friedman has argued that studies that have been conducted by different scholars have not clearly defined Mau Mau; hence, he has problematized its historicity. He argues that the different Mau Mau narratives reflect the "logos of political power and ideological orientation" in different studies and periods (Sabar-Friedman 101).

According to Sabar-Friedman, facts about Mau Mau have been manipulated by different people for different political and ideological motives. He identifies three versions of what he terms the "Mau Mau myth": The African, Euro-African, and European myths. He asserts that the African myth countered the European myth by justifying the Mau Mau activities and rebellion as well as deconstructing the negative images of the Mau Mau which had been advanced the colonial Empire. The Euro-African myth which was developed during the years 1961 to 1963 was a hybrid of the first two and involved the view of Mau Mau as loathsome and shameful (103) in the 1960s by the newly independent African leaders.

In *Dreams in a Time of War*, Ngũgĩ falls in the category of scholars who have advanced and defended the perspective taken by the African myth of the Mau Mau movement. Therefore, his projection of the Gĩkũyũ oral media as the authentic source of facts about Mau Mau can be interpreted as one of the partisan narratives about the freedom fighters. This is because, its subjective claims or arguments about Mau Mau have excluded or invalidated other perspectives on the anticolonial revolt in Kenya. Thus, as much as Ngũgĩ has strived to persuade the reader intellectually and emotionally through his claims and arguments in the memoir, there is need to critically evaluate them.

In *Dreams in a Time of War*, Ngũgĩ has attempted to exonerate the Mau Mau fighters from their involvement in the killings of many members of the Agĩkũyũ community and blamed only the colonial forces on the deaths of Africans. He has done this by advancing his arguments and claims through adult characters in the memoir. For example, the narrator recounts that in 1953, a colonial chief and some of his family members were killed and that a publication by colonial state displayed rotting animal carcasses and human corpses. The said publication also showed pictures of various colonial state officers inspecting the grisly scenes of the dead. However, on showing the newspaper to an older person, Mzee Ngandi, the information on the newspaper was dismissed as being full of lies and taken as propaganda against the Mau Mau fighters. In his dismissal of the information, Ngandi argues that every event reported by the media has "more than one side to it" and that what the narrator had read and seen in colonial newspapers or heard on radio was merely the "colonial view" (*Dreams* 112). He defends the Mau Mau by advising the narrator to ignore the colonial perspective and underscoring the fact that the freedom warriors

did not have modern media through which they could report their version of the struggle (*Dreams* 112).

The reader, at this point may be influenced to mistrust the information from the colonial government-controlled media such as the *East African Standard* newspaper and the radio since they are portrayed as instruments that were used to spread the colonial government's propaganda about the atrocities committed to the Africans. They can also be seen as being part of the instruments of colonial coercion since the banning of the newspapers written in Gĩkũyũ language and the Mau Mau movement and its activities was done through the colonial press or media. However, despite the colonial forces' act of killing many Africans, it should be pointed out that the Mau Mau also committed a lot of atrocities to their own people.

According to Margaret Wangui Gachihi, in her assessment of the relationship between Mau Mau and Christianity in Kikuyuland, the guerrillas did not only target the "government operatives" (Gachihi 139); they also attacked innocent people whom they had absolutely no evidence of their betrayal. For instance, the Mau Mau fighters targeted the Agĩkũyũ Christian community as demonstrated by their acts of murdering "teachers in mission schools, evangelists, catechists" (139) and destroying their property. At this point, I would like to argue that, despite the Mau Mau's good intention of fighting for land and freedom of the Africans, the reader may not be convinced that all those who became Christians were government loyalists. Just as we condemn the colonial government and white settlers for killing and oppressing the Africans, we should equally vilify some unorthodox and criminal activities in which the Mau Mau fighters were involved. Ngũgĩ's failure to acknowledge the wrongs committed by the Mau Mau guerrillas can therefore be seen as his partisan analysis of the confrontation between the colonial government and the African freedom fighters.

Worse still, Mau Mau adherents did not spare other leaders who were equally fighting for freedom, especially those who preferred to employ the non-violent constitutional approach in the struggle for freedom. Ali A. Mazrui and Michael Tidy have described the group whose approach to the struggle for freedom was non-violent as "moderates" who included Kenya African Union (KAU) leaders like Jomo Kenyatta, Oginga Odinga, Mbiyu Koinange, Achieng

Oneko, Tom Mbotela and Ambrose Ofafa among others. Instead of appreciating their efforts in the struggle for freedom, Mau Mau guerrillas assassinated Tom Mbotela, the KAU Vice-President, and Councilor Ambrose Ofafa because they were not members of the militant group (*Nationalism*). With such evidence about Mau Mau's brutal acts against fellow Africans with the same objective of the acquisition of freedom and land, the reader's sympathy or support for the fighters diminishes.

Corresponding with Mazrui and Tidy, Assa Okoth has documented the casualties of the violent confrontation between the colonial military and the Mau Mau fighters. For instance, Okoth reveals that during the Mua Mau insurrection, many people, mostly the Africans, lost their lives as demonstrated from the statistics provided. For instance, by the time the revolt was defeated in 1956, casualty figures indicated that 11,503 Mau Mau, and 1,920 Africans and many members of the Agĩkũyũ died of famine and disease (A History of Africa).

The *Oxford Dictionary of World History* has traced the development of the militant Mau Mau movement and revealed that the fighters not only imposed violent oaths on its followers but was also anti-Christian and anti-Europeans. According to this source, the Mau Mau movement was involved in an operation of violence, killing more than 2000 Africans who did not support its programme and 230 Europeans. These studies clearly show that both the Mau Mau fighters and the colonial state impacted negatively on the Africans. From these figures, it is apparent that the freedom fighters, ironically, killed more of their own people than the enemy forces.

Closely associated with the Mau Mau fighters was the taking of oaths by its members as well as their supporters which symbolically demonstrated their loyalty to the freedom cause. Nevertheless, there is need to re-examine the role and the impact of the Mau Mau oathing exercise which Ngũgĩ has portrayed positively in most of his writings. We do not dispute the positive role it played in cementing loyalty and commitment to the freedom struggle. However, it should be pointed out that, in some circumstances, the oath was administered forcibly to those who were not willing to take it such as Christians, teachers and non-Mau Mau adherents. Findings by Gachihi's study reveal that those who were attacked in Agĩkũyũ villages by the guerrillas were those who were totally anti-Mau Mau activities (Gachihi 140).

Gachihi further shows that, on the part of the Mau Mau, it was definite that no one was exempted from taking the oath. She reveals that the freedom fighters forced thousands of Kikuyu to partake the binding oath (143). They administered two different kinds of oaths namely *muuma wa uiguano* (the oath of unity) and a more dangerous one which sanctioned the killing of those who were anti-oathing (143). It is the latter kind of oathing which compelled the Mau Mau fighters to kill many people who were perceived to be pro-government or were unwilling to take the oath. The fighters, in most cases, forced many villagers to take the oath since they felt that they were duly bound by the need to participate in the freedom struggle.

In defending the Mau Mau fighters further through the oral renditions by Mzee Ngandi in *Dreams in a Time of War*, Ngũgĩ has blamed the colonial military for what has been historically described as the Lari Massacre. For instance, Mzee Ngandi claims that, though the Lari massacre of the Africans was a true account, the Mau Mau guerrillas were not to blame for it since they were under strict orders from their leader Dedan Kimathi not to kill indiscriminately (113). He argues that the Mau Mau fighters' acts of burning the houses of the colonial chiefs and killing the collaborators of the colonial regime was a retaliation against the colonial forces' act of burning the houses and forceful eviction of the Agĩkũyũ people. Ngandi's claim that the Lari killings by the Mau Mau were not crazy acts aims at justifying their acts of murder and arson. To criminalize the colonial military, Ngandi describes their attack on Agĩkũyũ people emotionally by claiming that they "executed people" and left their bodies in forests to rot or be eaten by beasts (*Dreams* 113). By claiming that the executed Africans were left in the open to rot, Ngũgĩ aims at inflaming the emotions of the reader and make him/her to side with the colonized.

Ngandi's claims and arguments advanced above would be effective in manipulating the reader in his favour if only the author were to be impartial in his analysis of the crisis at Lari. However, a reader who is well-acquainted with the historical facts about the formation and operations of the Mau Mau may not fully accede to the author's counter-narrative. Evidence from historical sources has partly indicted the Mau Mau militants for the mass killing of the residents of Lari. For instance, according to Gachihi, the Lari massacre of March 26, 1953 by the colonial government forces was a "counterinsurgency" against the Mau Mau and its supporters after the guerrillas attacked the residents of "Kanguyai village of Lari District". Gachihi reveals that when

the Mau Mau attacked the village, they brutally murdered a chief, killed "between 74 and 100 loyalists and their families" and set on fire many huts in the village (*Dreams* 124). In retaliation, the colonial military also killed many Agĩkũyũ people. To express the senseless and indiscriminate killing of many Africans, Gichihi has described the colonial forces' act as a "counter-massacre" (*Dreams* 125) in which many residents lost their lives. Therefore, it would be appropriate to blame, not only the colonial government, but also the Mau Mau fighters for the serious loss of life by the Agĩkũyũ community.

Kipkorir, in his memoir *Descent from Cherang'any Hills*, has revealed that both the colonizer and the freedom movement are to blame for the Lari Massacre. In reference to the Lari Massacre of 26th March 1953, Kipkorir notes that there were many acts of terrorism that were committed by both the Mau Mau and the government forces that affected even the students of AHS (Alliance High School) boys and teachers.

By blaming the Mau Mau for engaging in some inhuman acts does not mean that the reasons that led to the rise of the militant movement should be ignored. This is because the arguments advanced by Ngandi to justify their anticolonial war are persuasive to the reader. According to Ngandi, what catalyzed the armed conflict was European occupation of African land and the unfair settlement of English soldiers on African land after the First and Second World Wars. He points out that the English soldiers who returned from the war were rewarded with jobs and the land that was forcibly taken away from Africans. Ironically, the Africans who were in the same war as fighters and Carrier Corps were not rewarded with anything but had their land taken away and left jobless (*Dreams* 113). Ngandi's accusatory question "Do you see the unfairness?" criminalizes the colonial government for the unjust practices. The choice of terms such as "theft of African land" further criminalizes the British colonial administration and justifies the Mau Mau resistance against colonialism. Such terms are loaded with moral implications for the writer and the audience.

James Phelan argues that literature is more than just a linguistic structure of a text and regards it as being imbued with rhetorical literary ethics which makes it "a communicative event" and "a rhetorical action" that has the "potential power" to influence an audience in a given manner on various aspects of human experience (Phelan 56). In this context, therefore, Ngũgĩ's choice of

words and the logic of his argument on the injustices occasioned by the colonizer in *Dreams in a Time of War* are likely to irk the reader and drive him/her to condemn colonialism. Hence, Ngandi's reasons in the defense of the Mau Mau can be seen as Ngũgĩ's invocation of the Aristotelian logos which requires that a speaker or writer employs logic in his argumentation. In reference to Plato and Aristotle, Keith and Lundberg have pointed out that "rhetoric and logic are necessary counterparts", are "mutually complementary" because "logic requires persuasion, and persuasion requires logic" (5). Ngũgĩ's claims and arguments about what triggered the beginnings of Mau Mau are similar to those of other scholars and therefore are persuasive to the reader. For instance, according to Mazrui and Tidy those who were behind the emergency of Mau Mau were the landless and peasants (119).

The persuasive appeal of Ngũgĩ's claims above can be enhanced by Kipkorir's narrative about Mau Mau in his autobiography *Descent from Cherang'any Hills*. He has given an account of the Mau Mau conflict with the British colonial government and its impact on the life at Alliance High School. He argues that Mau Mau arose due to the conflict about the Agĩkũyũ community's access to land and the injustices meted on people. He further informs us that the immediate causes of the Mau Mau uprising can be traced to the displacement of Kikuyu squatters from Olenguruone and other places in the Rift Valley. Therefore, with these claims, Ngũgĩ's justification for the Mau Mau uprising rhetorically influences the anti-colonial readers to detest colonialists and their rule in Kenya.

Nonetheless, Ngũgĩ's counter-narrative on some colonial claims about the nature and ideological leanings of the Mau Mau can also be seen to be contrary to the historical reality and facts about the movement. In *Dreams in a Time of War*, the narrator's argument that the colonial government wrongly portrayed the Mau Mau fighters as "atavistic, anti-progress, anti-religion, and anti-modernity" may not be persuasive to a reader who is well-informed about the history of the militant movement. The narrator presents his brother, Wallace Mwangi, as an example of a good and caring Mau Mau fighter to counter the colonial claims about the freedom fighters. Though the reader may admire Mwangi's courage and caring character for daring to come home to wish the narrator success in his examination during the crackdown on the Mau Mau revolt,

this does not negate the whole ideology and objective behind the formation the movement. We know that the Mau Mau fighters were very much opposed to most of the things that were associated with the entrenchment of colonialism such as Christianity, education and Western culture.

According to Mazrui and Tidy, “Mau Mau in Kenya had the garb of traditionalism which was at times almost primeval” (119). The Mau Mau oath was administered as a way of forceful act of seeking loyalty to the Kikuyu nationalism (119). This demonstrates that among the agenda of the Mua Mau movement was the fight against aspects of modernism which were associated with Christian missionary as well as the colonial state’s activities. Similarly, Gachihi has pointed out that the Christian missionaries in Kenya forged a close relationship with the colonial state that undermined the African cultural practices. She argues that the Christian culture which was closely associated with Western culture can be viewed as “a tool of colonial domination” and therefore, authenticates partly the Mau Mau war as a cultural revolution. To qualify her argument, Gachihi asserts that Mau Mau was not only about liberation, but also was against “cultural domination” (226). Therefore, Ngũgĩ’s claim that the colonial newspapers’ portrayal of Mau Mau as being anti-religion and anti-modernity were falsely representing the freedom fighters can be seen as the author’s subjective counter-narrative.

In *Dreams in a Time of War*, the narrator raises critical assertions against the colonial discourse which are likely to persuade the reader to identify with some arguments in Ngũgĩ’s counter-narrative. The narrator’s claim that the government-controlled media was biased in its reporting is, to a large extent, persuasive as it reported only negative things about the Mau Mau. For example, the narrator reveals that the media reported the government’s victories against Mau Mau whereas there was no any information on Mau Mau victories (142). The narrator further points out that the newspapers did not report the cruel acts of the colonial state that involved the implementation of the Operation Anvil, a program which he describes as a “devilish scheme” that was enforced by General Erskine in order to displace many members of the communities from Central Kenya and Nairobi (*Dreams* 142). This portrays the colonial government as being propagandist and dishonest and easily appeals to the reader’s contempt for it.

We are aware that from 1952, the violent clash between the Mau Mau fighters and the colonial military was at its peak. Though Mau Mau was militarily defeated, it does not mean that its war was a futile undertaking since the colonial government was equally affected in different social, political and economic ways. For instance, Mazrui and Tidy have documented some of the victories of the Mau Mau which include going to the offensive, using the forests and raiding on loyalists' home guard posts and police stations (122). The scholars have commended the guerrilla movement as the most successful anti-colonial war despite using "rudimentary weapons", the fighters were able to battle the British soldiers for about four years.

However, some of the colonial claims made in the colonial-controlled media were correct since many Gĩkũyũ people and Mau Mau fighters were killed or detained in concentration camps by the colonial government. For instance, Mazrui and Tidy have said that in Nyeri and Kiambu "several hundred thousand Kikuyu were forcibly resettled in new fortified villages under the control of the security forces". They have also written that in operation Anvil in Nairobi, about 90,000 Gĩkũyũ men aged between 16 and 35 were held in detention camps, "the most notorious being Hola where several dozen detainees were tortured and killed" (121).

## 2.10 Conclusion

The rhetorical strategies Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o has employed in *Dreams in a Time of War* reveals that his experience of the cruel character of colonialism as a child during the 1940s and 1950s had an indelible mark on his memory. Specifically traumatizing to Ngũgĩ as a child was the disintegration of his family as a result of his family's loss of their land, the economic emasculation of his father and his mother's desperate struggle to single-handedly take care of her children. Ngũgĩ's employment of the African family as a frame for expressing his anti-colonial attitude by highlighting the resultant impacts of colonialism on his family such poverty, his father's diminished authority due to his economic impoverishment, family disunity occasioned by betrayals among family members and executions of family members by the colonial forces becomes effective rhetorical strategy that arouses sympathy for the child narrator and contempt for the colonial regime. Therefore, the adoption of the monologic idolization of the mother-

figure by foregrounding his mother's persevering, determined and resilient character as she suffers the trauma of colonialism as well as the disintegration of her family endears her to the reader whose emotional response to her suffering will certainly be intensely aroused. In invoking the politics of land and the dispossession of the same from the Africans during colonialism, Ngũgĩ effectively exposes the emotional and symbolic attachment that the colonized had for their land. This further reinforces his anti-colonial ideas as well as effectively invites the anti-colonial reader's disapproval of the white settlers' unjust displacement of the Africans from their lands.

Ngũgĩ's juxtaposition of orality with literacy in articulating his anticolonial counter-narrative, however, can be seen as the author's political and propagandist strategy. From the discussion in this chapter, it is clear that Ngũgĩ's counter-narrative, just like that of the colonial state, is consciously partisan in its arguments or claims on the activities of the Mau Mau fighters. For instance, whereas, Ngũgĩ would like to portray the Mau Mau fighters positively as nationalist fighters, he conceals their senseless murders of many Agĩkũyũ people whom they perceived as colonial loyalists. Therefore, though I strongly acknowledge their contribution in the freedom struggle, I would like to point out that some of their activities such as the forced oathing practice, murdering of those whose loyalty for Mau Mau was in doubt and wanton destruction of the property of the Agĩkũyũ Christian community among others may attract the reader's disapproval. Furthermore, Ngũgĩ's adoption of the adult voice to complement the child narrator's narrative on and interpretation of colonialism weakens the rhetorical impact of his childhood narrative. Instead, it bolsters Ngũgĩ's attempt to advance his adult knowledge on Kenyan history while at the same time manipulating the reader to assent to his political and ideological agenda.

# CHAPTER THREE

## *IN THE HOUSE OF THE INTERPRETER* AND THE AMBIVALENCE OF ANTI-COLONIAL DISCOURSE

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the rhetorical strategies Ngũgĩ has employed in his memoir, *In the House of the Interpreter*, to expose the ambivalence of colonialism in the text. The main argument in this chapter, therefore, is that, in debunking the colonial discourse in the memoir, Ngũgĩ exposes his ambivalent stance on the impact of colonialism and its structures on him and the Kenyan society. Whereas the author successfully reveals the negative impacts of the colonial structures and systems in the text, he, however, conceals some implications of colonialism on his development and that of the Kenyan society in general. In the memoir, Ngũgĩ critiques the colonial education system, Christianity, racism and some characters as he comes of age as a student at Alliance High School.

The memoir is a sequel to Ngũgĩ's childhood memoir, *Dreams in a Time of War*. The memoir covers the years 1955 to 1959 when Ngũgĩ was a secondary school student at Alliance High School, which was headed by a patronizing patriarch, Carey Francis. The book is named in honour of the convictions of Carey Francis who regarded Alliance High School as a modern version of the Interpreter's House in John Bunyan's 17th Century novel *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Alliance High School, in Carey Francis' convictions, was a place where the character of the African students was to be refined into men of high levels of integrity and discipline as implied in the description of the Interpreter's House as a place unacceptable character would be moulded into the acceptable ones.

The events in the memoir start in 1955 when Ngũgĩ has completed his first term at Alliance High School and returned home where he found that the whole of his village had been completely devastated by the colonial police. He found that his family and the entire village had been relocated to a newly established concentration village. Therefore, just like in *Dreams in a Time of War*, this memoir begins on a sad mood and establishes the background upon which the theme of colonialism that is characterised by acts of dislocation, fear, violence and terror is developed

throughout the text. Throughout the memoir, Ngũgĩ refers to Alliance as his “sanctuary,” since it sheltered him from the vicious anti-colonial violence.

### 3.2 Portraying Formal Education as a Means to Colonial Hegemony

Education is pivotal to Ngũgĩ’s criticism of the colonial system in Kenya as well as in other countries that experienced colonialism. In his critique of the colonial education system, Ngũgĩ has interrogated the main goal of the curriculum, the language issues and the neo-colonial impact of education on the colonized. In *Re-membering Africa*, Ngũgĩ has argued that the colonial education system is one of the worst dismembering practices in the colonised states. He raises the question of the colonial language in liquidating that of the colonized Africans and in facilitating what he calls plantation of European memory in the minds of the colonized. Ngũgĩ has further argued that, in the context of colonialism, the colonialist’s language, religion and education are strategically employed to “achieve loss of memory and dismember” the colonized from their social and historical being (16). Similarly, in *Homecoming*, Ngũgĩ has argued that the colonial education system takes Europe as the epicenter of the universe and man's history. This implies that the colonial education system disregarded all forms of the traditional education systems of the colonised people and advocated for the worldview of the colonisers.

According to Simon Gikandi, there are a number of reasons that compel Ngũgĩ to employ education as a critique of the postcolonial Kenyan society. Gikandi argues that colonial education was intertwined with the social being of the formerly colonized people and that it was central to the ideological tussle over the control of colonial infrastructures in the colonized countries (Gikandi 262). In reference to Ngũgĩ’s early fiction, Gikandi asserts that education played a key role in alienating the Africans from their culture, created identity crisis in Ngũgĩ’s characters and was a significant determinant a “bourgeois identity” (82). Although Gikandi succeeds to bring out the negative influence of the colonial education on the colonized African, I would like to point out that he has not recognized the significant role it played in producing many African leaders and writers who used the knowledge they gained to counter colonialism and advocate for respect of the African cultural and traditional worldviews.

Despite the tremendous impact of education on Ngũgĩ's intellectual and ideological developments, the author has portrayed formal education as being irrelevant for the colonized Africans in his memoir, *In the House of the Interpreter*. He has criticized this kind of education to influence the reader to dislike it and mistrust the intention of the colonial state in introducing this kind of education in Africa. For example, he claims that the literature classes at Alliance High School were based on English texts and that Europe was always used as a cultural reference during lessons (Ngũgĩ 39). This can be seen as the colonialist's attempt to mentally colonize the Africans since Europe was made a reference point for all human experiences through the content of what was being taught in the subjects offered in African schools. That is why the narrator sarcastically describes the rivers in Europe in Geography lessons as "civilized waters in Europe" (Ngũgĩ 41) to articulate his contempt at such an education and evoke in the reader a contemptuous attitude towards that kind of education. Similarly, in *Writers in Politics*, Ngũgĩ argues that this kind of education was the central part of imperialism in its colonial and neocolonial phases (Ngũgĩ 5).

To advance his claim on the irrelevance of the type of knowledge taught at African schools and appeal to the reader's disapproval of the colonial education system, the narrator further reveals that, in history classes, the students were taught about the England of the 17$^{th}$ and 19$^{th}$ centuries while being denied any knowledge about the history of Africa (*In the House* 42). It is ironical that even the African history that the African students were taught was merely the story of Europeans in Africa. The author further reveals how the colonialist has been involved in the distortion of history by exonerating the English from cruel acts meted out on the Africans through slavery and colonialism. He asserts that the teachers at Alliance High School offered their objective history of Africa from an imperialist point of view and that even the questions in examinations were biased and that the candidates only provided answers they knew were false in order to pass that examination and secure their future in the colonial government. The narrator's argument that their future structured in England is a clear mark of the dissatisfaction derived from this kind of education on the part of the African students. By attacking the colonial education system and its content and goal, Ngũgĩ aims at convincing the reader that it is an irrelevant endeavour that is full of distorted history and knowledge which was inappropriate vis-à-vis their current challenges or realities.

In castigating the colonial education system further in *In the House of the Interpreter*, Ngũgĩ has attempted to subvert some of the claims presented in Western literature that portray Africa negatively to appeal to the reader's contempt for such an education. The narrator, for example, argues that *King Solomon's Mines* and Stevenson's *Treasure Island* are texts on adventure that depict Africa as a continent that is characterized by savage backgrounds. This demonstrates the author's strategy to counter the colonial legacy of portraying Africa negatively in Western literature as exemplified by the narrator's argument that such literature was meant to advocate the dictum that "imperialism was normal, resistance to it immoral" (101). The narrator also claims that, even though he was attracted by the romantic adventures in such European texts, he would not escape the theme of colonialism and oppression. It is because of such convictions which have motivated him to claim that the impact of such literature is to produce an African who is totally humiliated of one's origins (*Writers in Politics* 23) due to the negative portrayal of Africa in Western literature.

In *In the House of the Interpreter*, Ngũgĩ has contrasted the portrayal of Africa in Western literature with other works from Africa and African-American literature. For example, the narrator says that when he read Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country*, he was inspired to look for books that reflected his social reality and that of his community during the colonial period. Owing to his encounter with this novel, the narrator has expressed his yearning for books that could appeal to his body and soul since the ones in their school library were about imperial narratives that were meant to disfigure his body and soul. This indicates the author's tactic to discredit Western literatures as irrelevant because of being used to propagate false virtues of colonialism and imperialism to the colonized blacks as demonstrated in *King Solomon's Mines* and *Treasure Island*. The author's criticism of Western literature comes out clearly in his essays in which he has argued that it alienates the African from himself (*Decolonising* 12), and that the colonial student was distorted by Western literature in different ways (*Writers in Politics* 15). At this point, the reader is influenced to view Western literature with a certain degree of skepticism.

Ngũgĩ depicts the school system and the culture associated with it as an instrument of colonial entrenchment in his memoir. He has particularly criticized the symbolic significance of the raising of the Union Jack and the recitation of the British national anthem that were part of the

culture of the Alliance High School community. Both the Union Jack and the British national anthem have, therefore, been presented as symbols of oppression with the singing of the anthem and the raising of the Union Jack demonstrating conquest of the Africans by the British Empire. The narrator claims that, though he sung the British national anthem, he regrets that he did not detect the irony of participating in the whole singing ritual since the words in the anthem contradicted the mission of the Mau Mau war whose objective was to ensure that the queen and her colonizing country were defeated in Kenya (11). The narrator, in underscoring the symbolic significance of the Union Jack during the colonial period, says that, in the concentration villages and the home guard posts, the most conspicuous feature was the watchtower which was erected within the colonial-controlled institutions from which the colonizer's flag flapped its power of subjugation (24). In his book, *In the Name of the Mother*, Ngũgĩ concretizes this claim by arguing that the colonial education system facilitates the entrenchment of the colonizer's culture on the colonized people's minds (11 – 33). Resistance to such colonial strategies were met by coercion as demonstrated in *Petals of Blood* wherein students at Siriana School "saluted the British flag every morning and every evening" and those who opposed this culture are expelled from school (Ngũgĩ 35). By invoking the symbolic implications of these instruments of colonial hegemony in the school system, Ngũgĩ aims at influencing the reader to condemn the practices and things that undermined the freedom of the Africans and promoted colonialism in Kenya.

Ngũgĩ has further demonstrated how the colonial education system was strategically presented with the aim of imparting the culture of the coloniser on the minds of the colonised. The narrator, for instance, claims that the first English lesson they attended at Alliance High School was a tour of a real Englishman's house. The lesson which involved exposing the African students to all aspects of the English lifestyle can be seen as the coloniser's attempt to inculcate European culture on the colonised while undermining that of the Africans. Ngũgĩ has undermined that kind of European lifestyle in order to counter the colonial habit of indoctrination of the Africans into European culture by satirically attacking such efforts and their resultant effects. For instance, to undermine the English lifestyle, the narrator humorously ridicules the concepts related to a three-course meal such as dessert, starter, soup, dish and the idea of table manners (*In the House* 13). Ngũgĩ, at this point, aims at convincing the reader that underlying the colonial

education is a covert objective of brainwashing the Africans by depicting their culture and lifestyle as barbaric while portraying that of the English as civil and amicable.

In associating the school culture with colonialism, Ngũgĩ has recounted his experience of the culture of bullying at Alliance High School. The culture of bullying others involved students from the upper forms molesting those who were newly admitted into the school by derogatively calling them ‘jiggers’ or ‘mono’ and sometimes physically tormenting others (*In the House* 17). This can be seen as Ngũgĩ’s idea that the colonial education created classes amongst the African students since those who were ahead of the others felt that they were superior to their juniors. The narrator further claims that the acts of bullying were “brutal” and “humiliating” to the form ones who were the main victims. The narrator also says that, in dormitories, the *monos* and the *jiggers* (as the new comers were called) were not allowed to express themselves since they were “put in their place, seen not heard” (*In the House* 18). This culture is a replica of the general character of colonialism that denied the colonised any opportunity to express their complaints.

Additionally, Ngũgĩ has portrayed the school administration style as oppressive just like that of the colonial regime. The authoritarian behaviour of Alliance High School’s principal Carey Francis exhibits the intolerant character of the colonial administrators. The narrator claims that when Carey Francis took over the headship of Alliance High School, he started by imposing strict discipline through a dictatorial leadership system. His act of overhauling his predecessor’s lenient approach to handling the African students and replacing it with his strict and uncompromising stance is similar to the colonialists’ brutal way of dealing with the colonised. Ngũgĩ’s claim that Carey Francis wanted to “overthrow” Grieves’s lenient administrative system, is suggestive of the excessive force that he used to impose his leadership in the school. The drastic changes he enforced are compared with a revolution to suggest the cruelty with which they were imposed on the students and teachers. The narrator also claims that he expelled African teachers who failed to observe his strict code of behavior within the school while others were forced to leave in protest. Furthermore, the principal forced students to grow vegetables in assigned parcels in order to contribute to the British war effort. However, when they rebelled against the directive, he responded with different forms of cruel punitive actions such as flogging and expulsions from school.

Philip Ochieng who was a student at Alliance has compared Carey Francis' use of the cane to discipline his students to "the special rod with which little Philip Pirrip's sister ruthlessly whipped him" in Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* ("Why We Have Fond Memories"). In retrospect, Ochieng claims that Carey Francis' cane "was sharp" to underscore the principal's use of corporal punishment as a corrective measure at Alliance. Moreover, he adds that the purpose of the cane was to mould his boys into bureaucrats in loyal service to Britain's comprehensive imperial interests to show the reader that Carey Francis' major aim was to entrench colonial culture among the students. Ochieng's claims reveal that Carey Francis, though he had a good intention of imparting quality education to the African students, he also aspired to perpetuate the interests of his country, Britain, in Africa.

The administrative system at Alliance was a replica of that of the colonial regime. The narrator claims that it was characterised by a hierarchical and mysterious prefects' system which resembled the British colonial administration in the colonial Kenya whereby prefects were part of the schools' administrative system while the teachers focused only on education issues. On his part, he positioned himself as the chief administrative and academic leader (28). This kind of administration is a replica of the home guard system whereby the colonial governor used some Africans to monitor and control fellow colonised Africans in the villages and concentration camps.

Using a pencil as a symbol of colonial education, Ngũgĩ has attempted to downplay its importance to the colonized who lost their land to the colonial state. By comparing the pencil and land in terms of their relative advantages to the colonized Africans, the author wants to demonstrate to the reader that education had no value like their confiscated land. This comes out vividly when the narrator recounts his contribution to a debate at Alliance on the negative impacts of colonial education in Africa (Ngũgĩ 75). In the debate, the narrator uses the analogy of someone taking away another person's land in exchange for a pencil. By using the images of the land and the pencil, the narrator succeeds to persuade his fellow students that the land that the colonial state had taken from the Africans could not be compensated through the education provided by the colonialist. At this point, the author attracts the reader's attention to the contrastive relative importance of colonial education with the land that was forcibly taken away

from the colonized blacks. At the end of the debate, Ngũgĩ acknowledges the impact of images in clearly expressing and concretizing his ideas (Ngũgĩ 75).

Nevertheless, in this thesis, I partly disagree with Ngũgĩ's criticism of education as argued by the narrator while he was at Alliance High School. Considering the fact that *In the House of the Interpreter* is told from the perspective of Ngũgĩ as a student at Alliance, it is clear that his criticism of education is just an afterthought or hindsight which he is presenting to the reader as that of an already ideologically developed adult scholar. Ngũgĩ, as a secondary school student, wished to acquire formal education to enable him overcome the economic problems that his family was facing as a result of poverty and landlessness. Berth Lindfors informs us that, when Ngũgĩ was later a student at Makerere University College, he had written articles in the *Sunday Nation* which extolled the virtues of education and advocated for the colonial government to provide adult education, improve the curriculum and make it racially integrated (Lindfors 74).

### 3.3 Christianity as a Frame for Colonialism

*In the House of the Interpreter* is a demonstration of the author's ambivalent position on Christianity. This is because, though he was a member of the Christian Union at Alliance High School, he has paradoxically used this memoir to articulate his anti-Christian and anticolonial ideas which he might not have had as a secondary school student then. Just like in most of his other nonfiction writings, Ngũgĩ has disparaged the role of Christianity in the entrenchment of colonialism in Kenya and imparting of neocolonial mentality among the Africans. In this context, Christianity is coupled with education since both of them are associated with what Gikandi refers to as "colonial modernity" (Gikandi 21). Therefore, in circumstances where the author has criticized education in his memoirs, Christianity also features and is portrayed as one of the tools through which colonialism was firmly established in Kenya and the rest of Africa.

Reading *In the House of the Interpreter*, one realizes the strong impact of Christianity in influencing the construction of the author's identity and development of his ideologies on religion, culture and art. However, unlike in *Dreams in a Time of War* where the author has associated Christianity with acts that were undermining the Agĩkũyũ culture by both the

Europeans and African converts during colonialism, *In the House of the Interpreter* offers the reader Ngũgĩ's criticism of Christian doctrines along his ideological and political arguments on language, colonialism and racism.

Ngũgĩ's first contact with Christianity has been presented in *Dreams in a Time of War*. The narrator claims that his first encounter with Christianity was when he joined Kamandũra School (the first school he joined as a child) where prayers were said by the teachers before classes began. At this point, the reader's attention is, however, attracted by the narrator's behaviour at his first experience with the Christian tradition when he reveals that he did not close his eyes as the other pupils did during prayers. The narrator claims that the habit of praying in silence while closing one's eyes was a puzzle to him (*Dreams* 39). Ngũgĩ, at this point, contrasts the Christian rituals of prayers with that of the Agĩkũyũ beliefs through his father's morning prayers which involved pouring libation on the ground and praying aloud while facing Mount Kenya. However, though the narrator's unease with Christian rituals at his tender age can be seen as Ngũgĩ's early discomfort with Christianity, this can be linked with the author's hindsight as an adult with an intellectual ability that can critically contrast it with his Agĩkũyũ religious and cultural practices.

A case in point which reveals Ngũgĩ's hindsight is the narrator's claim that he dropped his baptismal name "James" in 1969 and reverted to his traditional African name "Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o" after his realization of the irony of being a Christian while he embraced the Agĩkũyũ culture (*Dreams* 109; *Writers in Politics* xxi). This kind of argument is found in Ngũgĩ's latter essays which he wrote as an already accomplished ideologue. For instance, in *Re-membering Africa*, Ngũgĩ likens the acquisition of a Christian name when one is baptized to an act of dismembering the Africans from their identity. In this case, he argues that, by giving the colonized Africans new names, Europe "planted its memory" on their bodies", thereby undermining their culture and traditions (*Re-membering Africa* 6). Therefore, when reading *In the House of the Interpreter*, it is imperative that one is aware of Ngũgĩ's position on Christianity as articulated in both his other nonfiction as well as fictional writings.

*In the House of the Interpreter* can be seen as Ngũgĩ's attempt to challenge different ideas on the Christian faith which he claims were inculcated in the minds of the Africans. He has done this by exposing the underlying religious misconceptions propagated by the white missionaries, teachers and the African converts during colonialism in Kenya to persuade the reader to mistrust them. For instance, the narrator's act of challenging Smith's (his literature teacher at Alliance) argument that Jesus "spoke very simple English" can be seen as Ngũgĩ's attempt to disqualify certain myths that were imparted on the minds of African students. Smith had also claimed that the King James English version was the "authorized translation of the Bible" that had inspired many English writers and that it "had excellent English" (Ngũgĩ 14). The narrator's challenge of the teacher is meant to show the reader that, contrary to the association of Christianity with the Europeans, this religion did not originate in Europe. Smith's arrogant response to the narrator's concerns points to the fact that the white teachers did not like any challenge on the type of knowledge they imparted on the Africans and that the latter were supposed to imbibe it dogmatically. In this context, therefore, Ngũgĩ is attempting to convince the reader to accede to his perception that Christianity played a great role in entrenching the British colonial hegemony and the culture of the colonialist in Kenya during the colonial and even postcolonial contexts. However, the question which I raise at this point is: Did Ngũgĩ, as a member of the Christian Union at Alliance possess these ideas then? Certainly, he did not.

Ngũgĩ's anti-Christian ideas developed much latter after his thinking had already been influenced by the different books he had read while being a student at Makerere University and Leeds University. Lindfors has pointed out that in the works which Ngũgĩ wrote in the early 1960s when he was a student at Makerere, there is no evidence to suggest that he had been influenced by people who have shaped his ideologies such as Frantz Fanon, George Lamming, Marcus Garvey and Karl Marx among others (Lindfors 76). Therefore, it is actually inconceivable that, as a high school student, Ngũgĩ was capable of associating Christianity, the Bible and English language with colonialism. This can only be seen as Ngũgĩ's afterthought which should be understood as his deliberate manipulation of the narrator of *In the House of the Interpreter* to express his adult ideologies. It is also clear that Ngũgĩ is advocating for a rejection of the hegemonic implications of the English language vis-à-vis his advocacy for the Agĩkũyũ cultural nationalism which he has tried to present in most of his essays such as *Decolonising the Mind*, *Writers in*

*Politics* and *Re-membering Africa.* The author further asserts that, though the imposition of the colonial languages on the colonised did not succeed in destroying those of the colonised people, the written language was the "most effective area of domination" of the colonizer. Ngugi has expressed this linguistic hegemonic character by underscoring the idea that, in formal education, the African child was taught using a foreign language and that the books they read and their language of conceptualizing the world was foreign (*Decolonising* 17).

Besides, Ngũgĩ depicts Christianity in *In the House of the Interpreter* as a religion whose doctrines and proclamations remained a mystery and irrelevant to the African converts. As a result, some of the Africans believed in certain concepts and dogmas whose implications were out of touch with the African reality. Therefore, Ngũgĩ has refuted some of the claims made on Christianity in order to induce in his reader a contemptuous attitude towards them. One such aspect is the concept of a sinner. For instance, on the belief that everybody in Christianity is a sinner, the narrator says that he and another student, Omange, were sinners who did not know their sins. The narrator also expresses his doubt of being spoken to by God as claimed by some Christian converts in his school. His doubt is expressed through his declaration that he was not sure if God had directly spoken to him (Ngũgĩ 58). Through the narrator's denial that he was influenced or touched by its teachings or faith, Ngũgĩ is attempting to portray Christianity as being irrelevant and barren in the context of African cultural and religious practices. The reader, at this point, is persuaded to believe that Christianity was indeed an irrelevant religion to the colonized since its influence on them was devoid of any serious convictions. In this context, it is easy for the reader to perceive it also as part of the colonizer's attempt to impose his religious belief systems on the Africans with the aim of derailing them from their own cultural and religious practices.

Ngũgĩ has also used Christianity as a frame through which he has articulated his anti-racism ideas. In this case, his intention can be seen as an attempt to deconstruct the myths that portray Christ and God as whites. For example, on the question of the colour of God, the narrator claims that all the pictures they had seen in the books and magazines they read "were of a white, blue-eyed Jesus". He also says that, even one of the staunchest converts, E.K., had the same view of a colorless God and Jesus but could not explain why all pictures in Christian literature had its

deities as white. The narrator then articulates his stand by declaring if God had created man in his own image, then blackness was also God's (*In the House* 59). The narrator too expresses his skepticism about Christianity by dismissing the issue of being spoken to by God as claimed by others. His doubt is revealed in his claim that he was always troubled by his "inability to hear the voice of God or lead new followers to the cross…" (Ngũgĩ 59) as claimed by his fellow members of Christian Union at Alliance. By portraying the Christian God as being white, Ngũgĩ is suggesting that Christianity contributed to the perpetuation of white power and, therefore, enhancing the entrenchment of colonial hegemony in Africa.

The author has further criticized Christian religious beliefs by portraying some of the converts as hypocritical people whose proclamations about their Christian faith are contrary to their behavior. For instance, it is revealed that E.K., one of its staunch followers, impregnated another convert as demonstrated by the narrator's claim that he had "put a sister-in-Christ in the family way" (59). Such acts of hypocrisy are prevalent in many of Ngũgĩ's other writings. For instance, Lord Reverend Kahahu's son, Paul, impregnated Ngũgĩ's own cousin, Wambui (*Dreams*); and, John Muhuuni has an affair with Gathoni but when the latter conceives, he jilts her (*I Will Marry*).

The advent of Christianity in Africa had a divisive effect among the Africans. Just like colonialism that created antagonism amongst the Africans through the creation of home guards and Mau Mau guerrillas, Christianity resulted in religious classes of the saved/Christian and the unsaved/non-Christian as exemplified through the divisions that existed between Ngũgĩ's family and that of the Kahahu's. These kind of divisions have not only been demonstrated in Ngũgĩ's memoirs but also in his drama and prose fiction. According to Niyi Akingbe, *I Will Marry When I Want* is a demonstration of the elitist Christians and non-Christian peasants in postcolonial Kenyan society (**"**Sloganeering Christianity in Song"). Akingbe argues that, while the peasants are miserably confined in the poverty, the Christian elite are comfortably living in affluence and continues to exploit the poor. Therefore, the Christian class in postcolonial Kenya is preoccupied with sustaining the imperial relics of vanquishing as well as pauperizing the Africans through skillful utilization of Christianity which is cleverly used to manipulate and con the peasants of

their money and land. Consequently, however, the peasants become aware of the false claims by sly elitist Christians that their economic impoverishment is divinely sanctioned.

Similarly, Siundu and Wegesa in their examination of the crises created by Christianity in African societies, argue that this religion has led to the "hierarchization" of members of the African society into antagonistic classes ("Christianity in Early Kenyan Novels"). They further indicate that the role of Christianity was to influence the colonized people to imbibe the western religious and colonial ideologies. Their key argument echoes that by Akingbe in that their analysis of the novels has revealed that Christianity created classes amongst the Africans during colonialism. Therefore, Ngũgĩ portrays Christianity as a frame that was used to entrench colonialism in this memoir, bolsters the findings in other studies.

In *In the House of the Interpreter*, Ngũgĩ has described the complementary role that the church and the school system played in embedding colonialism in Kenya. This has been demonstrated by linking the church and Alliance High School to colonial hegemony in the country to appeal to the reader's mistrust of these institutions. This is evidenced through the narrator's claim that, though the chapel was meant to be a symbol of God's presence in the school, "it would also be a continuing reminder of the unity between Alliance and the colonial state" (Ngũgĩ 84). The narrator further reveals that attendance of the services at the school chapel were compulsory for all the students, teachers and other staff who were expected to demonstrate their commitment to spiritual ideal of producing faithful Christians. At this point, it is apparent that Ngũgĩ is trying to encourage the reader to interrogate the emphasis of Christian teachings to the colonized during the violent anti-colonial times. In *Writers in Politics*, Ngũgĩ has raised the several questions about the role of Christianity during the colonial period (Ngũgĩ 22).

In response to the questions raised by Ngũgĩ, we argue that through his writings, Ngũgĩ wants the reader to see the church as an accomplice in the white man's act of entrenching colonialism in Kenya by producing docile people who could not resist the oppressive system of the colonial state. This is clear in Ngũgĩ's claim that the main aim of the church was to pacify the colonized by employing the religious literature as a rhetorical strategy meant to psychologically influence them to attribute their suffering to their assumed sinful ways (22).

To counterbalance the aim of the church's role in the perpetuation of colonial hegemony, Ngũgĩ has invited the reader to his own interpretation of Biblical events. For instance, In *In the House of the Interpreter*, the narrator has cited his discussions with another character, Gaitho, and referred to a book titled *Out of My Life and Thought* in which the ideas on the politics of Jesus-the-eschatological and Jesus-the-historical have been discussed and applied to the colonial situation in Kenya. Through Gaitho's arguments about colonialism, Ngũgĩ has employed biblical allusions to clarify the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized and expressed the optimistic tone with which the narrator predicts the collapse of colonialism when he declares that he believes in the "eschatological Jesus" through whom the colonial world will fall (*In the House* 111).

Ngũgĩ's employment of biblical allusions and skewed interpretations of the Bible to express his anticolonial worldview can be seen as his attempt to underscore the role of Christianity in promoting colonial and racial hegemonies in most of his writings. In his early fiction, drama and nonfiction works, Christianity is a major theme through which the author has articulated the Agĩkũyũ cultural nationalism as well as his anticolonial ideas.

Again, through *In the House of the Interpreter*, Ngũgĩ discredits Christianity by portraying it as being imbued with weaknesses and linking it with colonialism by interrogating the morality of some of its beliefs. The author has done this through a character named Lady Teacher who raises some critically significant questions during a discussion involving the narrator and other characters on the nature of the Christian God's complacency in allowing the colonizers to oppress others as well as subject them to diseases and hunger. She further wonders: "You say that God speaks to us.... In what language does he speak to you?" (Ngũgĩ 139). These questions are meant to appeal to the reader's doubt on Christianity and persuade him/her to link it with the colonial establishment in Kenya. In this situation, Ngũgĩ intends to persuade the reader to detest the white oppressors by directly challenging them.

However, what Ngũgĩ has failed to acknowledge throughout *In the House of the Interpreter* is the fact that his encounter with and conversion into Christianity left some positive impact on his life as a writer. For instance, although he has successfully demonstrated to the reader the

negative impact of Christianity on colonialism, he has not appreciated that it had a long lasting impact on his thinking as exemplified in the recurrent Christian images and motifs in most of his writings.

## 3.4 Foregrounding Racism as a Frame for Colonialism

Racism is a major theme which Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o has explored to contest and debunk colonialism in his memoir, *In the House of the Interpreter*. In this text, he has generally presented three classes of races which are the whites, the Indians and the black Africans whose identities can be understood in terms of their hierarchal status during the colonial period in Kenya. From these racial classes, the whites assume the position of the colonisers while the African blacks that of the colonized. Racism is therefore one of the factors through which Ngũgĩ has contemplated colonial hegemonic practices in the memoir by exposing the basic power relationships amongst the different races represented in the text. This contestation of racial stereotypes has been presented through the colonial education system, with education being viewed as the plane on which racism during colonialism was neutralized.

In *In the House of the Interpreter*, Ngũgĩ has attempted to subvert racial and colonial stereotypes that portray Africans as being inferior or unequal to other races. By so doing, the author has tried to influence the reader's attitude towards both the colonizer and the colonized. In his attempt to subvert racial stereotypes among the characters in the memoir, the author has achieved this through providing evidence to support his claims as well as by referring to arguments by other characters in the text. Burke has emphasized the need for a writer or speaker to provide evidence in order to persuade the audience (*Permanence and Change* 108).

To begin with, Ngũgĩ has attempted to neutralize racial stereotypes against the Africans among the teachers of Alliance High School by depicting the black teachers as being better performers in teaching than their white counterparts. The narrator's claim that the presence of Africans among the Alliance High School staff who were more effective than their white colleagues in teaching attests to the author's intention to subvert the colonial and racial stereotypes that depicted Africans as being less intelligent or incompetent compared to other races. The narrator

similarly argues that the presence of the African teachers at Alliance High School as equals with the white ones subverts the "colonial apartheid" (*In the House* 7) which portray the blacks as being inferior. By claiming that some of the African teachers were more effective than their white counterparts, Ngũgĩ downplays the racial stereotypes that relegated the Africans to a lower level of intellectual ability during the colonial period in Kenya. By claiming that the students saw the African teachers as their role models, Ngũgĩ's intention in this context amounts to making the reader to identify himself/herself with the Alliance High School students' perception on the African teachers. Burke, in *A Rhetoric of Motives*, argues that identification is an important rhetorical strategy through which a writer can persuade the audience/reader effectively since one can convince another person if one can converse in their language (Burke 55). Therefore, the reader and the students of Alliance High School, in Burke's terms have established "consubstantiality" by virtue of their shared common perspective of the African and European teachers. However, Ngũgĩ's attempt to subvert white racist stereotypes creates another form of racism in which the African sees himself as being better or more effective than the whites. This, therefore, problematizes the author's ultimate goal of condemning racism in the memoir.

In addition, to advance black racial superiority and subvert that of the white colonialist's, Ngũgĩ has appealed to the ethos of the narrator and other students by claiming that Alliance High School produced graduates who were intellectually equivalent or even better than those from those schools that were strictly reserved for European or Asian students (*In the House* 8). By claiming that academically he was equal to the best of the Asians and Europeans, Ngũgĩ aims to debunk the belief that the other races in the colony were intellectually better than the blacks. Keith and Lundberg have pointed out that writers persuade their readers by creating ethos in several ways including invoking the history of their successful actions or deeds, adapting to their audience's point of view and claiming some kind of expertise (Keith and Lundberg 38). In Ngũgĩ's case, he has strived to justify his claim by citing the African students' success and good performance in their secondary school education as his appeal to their ethos.

Moreover, Ngũgĩ has contradicted the whites' stereotype that characterized Africans with uncivilized behavior by appealing to the ideas of other characters. This is a rhetorical strategy that involves a writer's appeal to authority with the intention of persuading the reader to trust the

claims or arguments put forward by the writer. By so doing, the author wants to convince the reader that his claims and arguments are also supported by other people whose status and reputation is well established. For instance, the narrator claims that Carey Francis, the Alliance Principal, had once written that the black boys at Maseno High School in the colonial Kenya exhibited friendliness and gentlemanliness, hence, could be developed into responsible people (*In the House* 7). Thus, at this point, the author demonstrates to the reader the Africans' intellectual potentiality and social responsiveness.

Furthermore, Ngũgĩ has portrayed some of the white teachers as dangerous and untrustworthy people in order to influence the reader to mistrust them as well as the ideas they impart on the African students. For instance, through Oades, who, apart from teaching, is also a colonial police reservist, the author presents the white teachers as people with covert intentions that are meant to entrench colonialism in Kenya. This is brought out through Oades' discomfiture and unwillingness to talk about the gun in his room during a tour of students in his house as part of his English lesson whose objective was to acquaint the learners with knowledge about the English lifestyle. Ngũgĩ has used this scenario to expose the sly character of the white colonial agents as expressed in the narrator's conclusion that it was evident that Oades was unwilling to discuss about guns and their uses in his lessons (*In the House* 13). Therefore, Ngũgĩ creates a racial stereotype that depicts the whites as untrustworthy people and heightens the racial animosity between the colonizer and the colonized in the society represented in the text.

Additionally, Ngũgĩ has used racism and the racially compartmentalized train and other physical structures as a frame for articulating his anti-racial and anti-colonial ideologies in *In the House of the Interpreter*. The narrator, for example, reveals that the toilets at Limuru railway station were marked using racially-imbued terms with that of Africans missing the defining term 'only' (Ngũgĩ 1). The labels on the toilets signal a mark of racial identity and grounds the fact that the colonial regime institutionalized racism in colonial Kenya. The marking of African toilets without the qualifying word 'only' like the others is indicative of the fact that the African identity and dignity were not important. This act also implies that the black race was considered inferior and insignificant when it comes to racial hierarchies since it is symbolically suggestive that anybody from any race could access the toilets reserved for the Africans. By inscribing the

toilets with race tags, Ngũgĩ arouses the hatred of the reader towards the colonial state that relegated the African to the lowest rank.

The racial tags indicated above raises the question of identity during the colonial period in Kenya. This is partly why Ngũgĩ has used racism as a basis on which the African students constructed their identity. This is demonstrated by the narrator's feelings when he first joined Alliance High School. The narrator claims that during his first time of attending the morning parades at Alliance High School, he was excited at seeing many white teachers and exclaims that he had not seen many white teachers, however, he only drew his identity from the black teachers (*In the House* 10). The narrator's act of identifying himself with the black teachers at Alliance High School reveals that the oppressive character of colonialism had negatively impacted on the psyche of the African child and created a sense of racial difference in them. Hence, during the colonial period in Kenya, even young African students harboured racial feelings and prejudices towards the non-native teachers. In this context, Ngũgĩ has adopted the Burkean idea of identification to persuade his African reader to identify with the feelings of the narrator and the black teachers.

In negotiating his identity, Ngũgĩ has employed juxtaposition of the image of white against that of the black in articulating the process of his coming of age. He argues that the contestation of the land between the British colonial state and the Africans involved identity struggles that was hinged on "White Highlands versus Black People's Land". The author also conceptualizes Kenya during colonialism as a land of white and black conflict. The narrator has posed some questions to the reader to emphasize the intensity of racial feelings among the whites and blacks during the colonial period (*In the House* 30).

The juxtaposition schema of black versus white is meant to depict to the reader the racial rift that existed between the two races, white supremacist colonialists and the colonized blacks. From this schema, however, the narrator clearly identifies himself with the oppressed blacks. This is vividly indicated by the narrator's identification with the few African teachers at Alliance High School whom, according to him, were the models of what they were to become (*In the House*

38). Blackness and whiteness, therefore, in the memoir takes a symbolic implication in the author's attempt to construct and contest racial relations in Kenya during the colonial period. Here again Ngũgĩ has invoked the Burkean concept of identification as a symbolic agency of persuasion. According to Burke, 'identification' creates division or difference in its rhetorical appeal to the reader (*A Rhetoric of Motives* 25). This is because 'identification' is linked with the perspective by and through the incongruity of the opposites, in our case the blackness and whiteness as a point of contrastive basis of differentiating human beings. In equating 'identification' with Aristotle's model of rhetoric, Burke writes, "Here is a major reason why rhetoric, according to Aristotle, 'proves opposites,'" (Burke 25).

The establishment of different schools on the basis of the racial classes that were in Kenya was similarly one of the ways through which colonialism was entrenched in the country. As such, there were schools for the Africans, whites and Asian groups; hence, compelling Ngũgĩ to utilize the existing racial reality to subvert the legacy of colonialism in Kenya. Thus, the author has pitted the blacks against whites through sports activities between Alliance High School and a European football club called the Caledonians and other schools that were only for white students. For example, the narrator's claim that the Alliance win over the club was a big boost to their self-esteem indicates that any win by blacks against whites amounts to a symbolic racial battle between the colonizer and the colonized. Therefore, the narrator's interpretation of the symbolic implications of sports activities between African and whites' schools is an effective strategy that is meant to convince the reader about the psychological war between the white colonizers and the colonized blacks during the colonial period in Kenya. The racial overtone in the narrator's claim that consciously "every sport event between white and black became a metaphor for the realized power struggle in the country"; hence, taking the form of a symbolic portrayal of the events between white and black. However, despite the frequent social and academic contact between the blacks' and whites' schools, the narrator claims that there was no natural mingling amongst the black and white students during such sporting events. This reveals that racial tensions between the blacks and whites were high and sensitive during the colonial period. Again, in this context, Ngũgĩ invokes the symbolic and metaphorical use of language as a persuasive strategy for his readers and conforms to Burke's argument that rhetoric enables one to employ symbol to influence one's audience (Burke 43).

In *In the House of the Interpreter*, the author has further condemned racism that was practiced during colonialism in Africa by arguing that it created misunderstanding among humans as demonstrated by the narrator's discussion with another character, Andrew Brocket. In their discussions, the two characters have used the example of South Africa's apartheid regime which they claim bred misunderstanding, mutual suspicion and animosity amongst different races that were affected by the vice of racism. In order to overcome such evils, Ngũgĩ suggests greater social contacts and interactions amongst people from different racial backgrounds. This has been exemplified through the scouts' camping excursions by schools such as Friends School Kamsinga in which the relationship between the black students and their white teachers has been described as being "much more relaxed and interactive" (*In the House* 92). Therefore, the reader is convinced that collective activities that involve multiracial groups can be an effective strategy for racial integration.

## 3.5 Use of Animal Imagery to Characterize Colonialism

According to Bal, one can tell a story in a text through images and that narrative texts serve different functions (*Narratology* 3). In *In the House of the Interpreter*, Ngũgĩ has employed animal imagery to characterize colonialism, appeal to the reader in different ways and leave a lasting impression of the narrative of colonialism in the mind of the reader. Meyer H. Abrams has underscored the importance of imagery in making ideas in literature concrete (Abrams 121 – 122). Therefore, taking this memoir as a narrative text in which Ngũgĩ takes the reader through the reality of colonialism and its impact on the colonised Kenyans, this section analyses how the author has utilized animal imagery as a rhetorical strategy in the memoir.

Evan Maina Mwangi, in *The Postcolonial Animal*, argues that African writers use animals in their works to symbolize "human-human relationship" as well as express the relationship between the oppressors and the oppressed. For instance, he argues that the mistreatment of animals has been used to represent the way the colonial masters treated the colonized who he describes as the "humans of the nonhuman others" and the "human minorities." Mwangi further observes that the use of animal imagery in postcolonial African literature implies that the anticolonial sentiments in such literature amounts to a reevaluation of what it means to be a

human being in African communities that are still grappling with the legacy of colonialism. He argues that represent the experiences of the marginalized people in the African colonies and postcolonial situations (*The Postcolonial Animal* 2). However, Mwangi's study has not applied his arguments to Ngũgĩ's nonfiction writings. Furthermore, he has not discussed the extended metaphor of animals in Ngũgĩ's memoirs and other forms of nonfiction writings. He has limited his study to the African oral literature and postcolonial African fiction. Again, his criticism has not related the use of animals in literature to advance a writers' rhetorical agenda. In Ngũgĩ's memoirs, the animal imagery plays a significant role in not only functioning as a metaphor of the human relationships, but also as an effective imagery the author uses to influence the readers' attitude towards and thinking about the reality of colonialism in Kenya.

In the memoir, Ngũgĩ has employed the extended metaphor of 'the hounds' throughout the text to characterize the British colonial regime and influence the reader's attitude towards it and its enforcement agents. By so doing, the author succeeds in describing the cruel activities of the colonial enforcement agents such as the police, the military, the home guards and other colonial administrators and persuades the reader that colonialism was indeed a disagreeable experience for the colonized. According to the *Microsoft Encarta Dictionary* (2009), the word 'hound' has multiple meanings. It refers to a dog that is bred for hunting while at the metaphorical level, it means an unpleasant person or somebody regarded as contemptible or despicable. From this definition, we see the use of the dog in Ngũgĩ's memoir as taking a two-prong interpretation: the dog can be seen to be assuming the human character or, conversely, the humans are also exemplifying the animal character. Thus, the definition is appropriate to Ngũgĩ's employment of the extended metaphor of 'hounds' in the memoir to describe either the cruel character of colonialism in Kenya or the cruelty of man to animals.

Additionally, Ngũgĩ has employed the extended metaphor of 'the hounds' to describe the behaviour and the inhuman activities of different colonial enforcement agents in the text. For instance, due to their cruelty and sadistic acts against the colonized Africans, the narrator claims that when he joined form one at Alliance High School on January 20th 1955, he felt as if he had evaded the "bloodhounds". The cruelty of the events of that period forced him to live in continual fear of becoming a casualty of the anti-colonial war. Therefore, he describes Alliance

High School as a sanctuary within which he was shielded from the hounds that were outside the gates of the school but waiting to attack. By claiming that the colonial military hunted down the Mau Mau, Ngũgĩ places the colonizer in the predatory point against the colonized whose disadvantaged and defensive position is meant to attract the reader's sympathy for him. Therefore, the image of the *hunter* pursuing the *hunted* will haunt the reader as the latter struggles to escape the cruel predatory nature of the colonizer.

Additionally, in his reference to the colonial military crackdown on the Africans, the narrator describes the terrifying activities as the "howl of the hounds" that he always heard as "a distant echo" when he was in the boarding at Alliance High School (*In the House* 5). He claims that he always felt secure while at school as exemplified by his declaration that being at Alliance was enough for him to know that the hounds could not attack him. The intense fear he had for the ruthless colonial police has further been expressed in the imagery of "bloodhounds panting at the gates, waiting to pounce" on him once he is out of school (*In the House* 22). The expressions "panting at the gate" and "waiting to pounce" have been employed by the author to appeal to the reader's fear since they are suggestive of the eagerness and brutality with which the colonial police and home guards attacked the Africans during colonialism in Kenya.

However, it should be pointed out that, though the metaphor of the hounds brings out the cruel character of the colonial agents, it should also be extended to the character of the Mau Mau fighters whose activities equally affected not only the white settlers, but also the Africans. For instance, in Ngũgĩ's first edition of *A Grain of Wheat*, the author has glorified the killing of dogs that belong to the white settlers by the Mau Mau fighters. In this context, he symbolically equates the dogs with their masters who were oppressing and exploiting the colonized Africans. Therefore, just like the white colonialist, his dog faces the serious consequences of the ruthless attack by the anti-colonial freedom fighters. This kind of depiction can be seen in other African postcolonial writings. Jwani Mwaikusa has succinctly depicted the symbolic role the dog character plays in expressing human relationships within the colonial and postcolonial contexts in his poem "Two Dogs at the Gate" (Mwaikusa 37). Unfortunately, in *In the House of the Interpreter*, the metaphor of the hounds describes only the cruel character of that of the colonial master while portraying the Mau Mau fighters positively.

To criticise the colonial police brutality in the memoir, the narrator has recounted about a military raid that he witnessed at Kikuyu town on a Saturday outing with other students. The raid involved African soldiers who were under the command of their white colonial officers. The narrator describes the heavily armed soldiers who were in their full camouflage military attire as "raiders" and "hounds". The narrator's description of their actions which included jumping out of military vehicles and chasing the Africans in different directions creates an impression of the terror that reigned during the colonial period. Ngũgĩ describes their behaviour using emotionally loaded words such as their act of menacingly ordering everyone to surrender by lying down and raising up their hands (*In the House* 20) to create an atmosphere of apprehension and desperation for the reader.

Ngũgĩ has further employed the metaphor of hounds to bring out the psychological trauma that the colonized experienced during the state of emergency in Kenya. The narrator claims that he always lived in perpetual fear of the "hounds waiting outside the gate" of Alliance High School. He says that it was only preparations for the end of the term examinations that drifted his mind from his perpetual fear of the British soldiers who were harassing the colonized blacks everywhere as they hunted down the Mau Mau suspects and their collaborators (*In the House* 32). At this point, the author wants to draw the attention of the reader to the reality that colonialism left a lasting psychological impression on those who experienced it including its impact on the narrator's memory. Through this memoir, therefore, Ngũgĩ has shared with the reader his memory of his fear of the British soldiers during the colonial period. According to Fass, a memoir is a serious expression of the need for a writer to "share a memory" and "leave a memento" for the reader (Fass 109). Fass contends that, by writing memoirs, memoirists choose to invoke the facts of the past a reality to themselves as well as to their readers. Therefore, the act of foregrounding memorable events in a memoir serves a rhetorical function in an autobiographical writing since this will attract the reader's trust in what has been narrated in the text.

It should be noted that the sense of security that the narrator enjoyed while being a student of Alliance High School comes to an end when he completes his secondary school and parts from school. This reality downed on him when he was immediately confronted by the reality of the

cruelty of colonialism outside the precincts of the school where the “hounds” were waiting to attack him. The narrator, in his first encounter with the harsh reality of colonialism after leaving Alliance High School, links his bad experiences with the Month of April. It is a month that signals his suffering as revealed in his assertion that the “saga of the hounds begins in April 1959, four months after I left Alliance” (*In the House* 118). Therefore, the month of April in the memoir has psychological ramifications in the narrator's retrospect to the painful past experiences of colonialism. Hence, it can be seen as a trope that Ngũgĩ has employed to signal the reader to those incidences that resulted in his suffering during the colonial period.

The metaphor of the hounds has further been repeated when the narrator becomes a victim of colonial police harassment and is arrested for allegedly failing to produce tax papers. The policemen who arrested him and other passengers at a road block acted ruthlessly as the narrator reveals when he describes the way they stormed into the bus wielding guns and shouting threateningly at the passengers. The police officers behaved as if they had confronted dangerous criminals yet they were arresting harmless passengers. The gun and the rifle in this context can be seen as symbols of oppression that the author has employed to express the terrific implications of the extended metaphor of the hounds in the text. The deliberate repetition of the metaphor of the hounds in *In the House of the Interpreter* can be seen as an important rhetorical strategy that Ngũgĩ has employed extensively in the text to characterise the colonial state and its operations that had diverse impacts on the colonized.

Despite portraying the colonial military and police in using the imagery of dangerous hounds, Ngũgĩ has conversely employed the metaphor of the dog to characterize the underprivileged position that the colonized Africans occupied during colonialism in Kenya. The author has, therefore, employed the metaphor of the dog in representing the colonized blacks and also appeal to the reader’s compassion for the landless Africans. For instance, in *In the House of the Interpreter,* the colonial state orders for the killing of all stray dogs, an act that the narrator perceives as being cruel. The narrator claims that among the Agĩkũyũ people, a stray dog (*nguicianjangiri*, in the Agĩkũyũ language) would also mean a homeless person (79). Mwangi, in *The Postcolonial Animal*, argues that the plight of animals can be employed in a texts to symbolically represent the socioeconomic status of those individuals and communities that are

powerless within an African nation (Mwangi 53). Similarly, the stray dogs being killed can be seen to represent the homeless or landless Africans who had lost their land to the British colonial state and were being subjected to different forms of oppression. Correspondingly, Ngũgĩ has used the dog metaphorically to represent the homeless Africans who lost their land to the white settlers as well as to their African collaborators.

The metaphors of the 'master at home' and 'his dog at the gate' have been used in the memoir to express the relationship between the white and black police during the colonial period. By comparing the two using the relationship of the master and the dog, Ngũgĩ subverts the notion held by some imprisoned Africans that the white police were better than the black ones who have been described as the white man's "ferocious dogs" which often have "their fangs open at innocents". The narrator reveals that if a black suspect were taken to a white police officer's office by a black policeman, the officer listened only to the policeman who is considered "his sole informant, translator, and interpreter" (*In the House* 126). Since both the white and black policemen exhibited similar behaviour during the colonial period, the narrator concludes that there is "no difference between the master at home and his dog at the gate. They are the same colonial shit" (*In the House* 126). By describing them as the same 'colonial shit' the author metaphorically expresses his contemptuous attitude towards the colonial police while at the same time attempting to influence the reader to perceive them with the same intensity of contempt.

By portraying both the white and black colonial policemen as having similar behaviour, Ngũgĩ suggests that they both exhibit characteristics that can be described using the term 'dog' offensively. This has been reinforced by another incident in the memoir where Ngũgĩ describes the colonial police derogatorily by using the metaphor of a dog owing to their indiscreet behaviour when enforcing the oppressive colonial policies. In this context, the colonial police are involved in acts of harassment of the colonized by arbitrarily arresting and detaining them when they fail to produce tax papers or the identification documents. Their imprudent behaviour has been brought out clearly by one old man who was imprisoned along with the narrator and others for not having tax and identity documents. The old man's frustrations and his contempt for the colonial police is expressed by his reference to them as "these dogs" (*In the House* 132) who refused to listen to his explanation about the papers.

The metaphor of the ogre and its defeat takes the structure of the African ogre narratives in which the evil ogre unleashes terror to a community but it is always defeated at the end. Ngũgĩ reminds the reader about the cruelty of the colonialist by using the metaphor of the ogre in *In the House of the Interpreter* when the narrator claims that the "pre–Mau Mau nationalist lineup had loomed larger than life" as they struggled against "the giant white ogre" in their battles fought. The narrator conceptualizes the African anti-colonialist heroes in terms of powerful men who were involved in battling it out with "wild rhinos and the roar of lions" (*In the House* 66). In this context, Ngũgĩ has likened the colonialists to dangerous beasts such as the rhino and the lion in order to appeal to the reader's fear of all colonial enforcement agents.

Therefore, it is apparent that Ngũgĩ has not merely used animals such as the dog/hounds to symbolically describe human behaviour and relationships as well as the relationship between colonizer and the colonized. It demonstrates that Ngũgĩ has a rhetorical agenda which is to persuade his implied audience to detest colonialism, the colonial agents (the police, military, home guards and administrators) and the colonial structures. This is because, through the employment of the animal imagery, the author succeeds to concretize in the readers' mind the cruel character of the colonial agents, its system and its entrenchment. On the other hand, Ngũgĩ has utilized the animal imagery to reveal and express the mental and emotional anguish that the child narrator in particular and the colonized in general, experienced due to their immense fear and dejection of the colonial master and the agents of colonialism.

## 3.6 Use of the Colonial Iconography to Interpret the Empire

The iconography of colonialism and its oppressive characteristics dominates Ngũgĩ's *In the House of the Interpreter*. This is revealed through Ngũgĩ's extensive use of different iconic symbols to represent different aspects of the oppressive colonial practices in the memoir. According to Abrams, a symbol is "anything which signifies something else" and often does so through a systematic analogy between two different things (Abrams 311).

In the memoir, the Union Jack is one of the iconic symbols that Ngũgĩ has employed to represent colonial hegemony. This iconography of colonialism is a dominant object through which he has contemplated the hegemonic character of the colonial regime in Kenya and other colonies in Africa. In *Moving the Centre*, Ngũgĩ associates the flag with sovereignty of a country; hence, when the African countries gained independence, they raised their own flags and sung their own national anthems instead of those of their former colonial conquerors to demonstrate their break from colonialism (Ngũgĩ 2).

In *In the House of the Interpreter*, Ngũgĩ portrays the Union Jack as a symbol of conquest and subjugation. It is a concrete presence of colonialism and a constant reminder to the colonized that they were under the British Empire. The Union Jack is a symbol that was used in different institutions that were under colonial control such as schools, home guard posts, police stations and other colonial administrative offices. The first place where the Union Jack was strategically placed was on the watchtower which was built in all concentration camps. The narrator claims that the Union Jack signified colonial hegemony as it "fluttered its symbol of conquest and control" (Ngũgĩ 24). By being associated with conquest and oppression, frequent references to it invites the reader's resentment for the colonial regime in Kenya.

The raising of the Union Jack is usually accompanied by the singing of the British national anthem. The national anthem not only signifies conquest, it also forced the colonial subjects to pledge their loyalty to the Empire and the queen. Ngũgĩ expresses the irony apparent in singing the British national anthem by the colonized through the narrator's claim that he participated in the practice while at Alliance High School yet his own brother was in the forest fighting together with the Mau Mau guerrillas to end the queen's reign in Kenya (*In the House* 10). By pointing at this contradiction, Ngũgĩ undermines and criticizes the symbolic significance of the Union Jack and the British national anthem. By undermining the symbolic implications of these instruments of colonial hegemony, Ngũgĩ aims at influencing the reader to condemn acts that promote colonialism in Kenya and undermine the freedom of the Africans.

Ngũgĩ has further used the Union Jack as a symbol of oppression of the colonized Kenyans and also to persuade the reader to view colonialism with a tinge of disdain. For instance, while in detention, the narrator's meditative mind is interrupted by the raising of the Union Jack (*In the*

*House* 125). Therefore, in this context, it is a reminder to the narrator and other inmates that they were under the colonial administration. Even the exaggerated respect expressed by the African police who were "tall, big, older and armed" to their white 'boyish boss' attests to the fact that the European police officers were regarded as being superior to their black counterparts. The narrator describes their relationship by claiming that it amounted to 'visual absurdity' to express his satirical attitude towards the two categories of police (*In the House* 126).

In this memoir, both the concentration camps and concentration villages have been used symbolically as instruments of colonial oppression. As instruments of colonial subjugation, the concentration villages (composed of mostly women and children) are equated to concentration camps. By claiming that they are similar, Ngũgĩ aims at convincing the reader to detest the two forms of incarceration with equal magnitude of contempt. The narrator's claim that both sets of concentration systems are similar is suggestive of the fact that the occupants of both are subjected to humiliating acts of colonialism. His remark that the line between the prison, concentration camp and village had been obliterated (24) attests to this similarity. This is further reinforced by metaphorically referring to the concentration village as the "community prison" (*In the House* 25).

Ngũgĩ has used the colonial police, military, home guards and other colonial administrators as symbolic characters whose behaviour and actions portray the underlying inhuman nature of colonialism. The characters played a great role in entrenching colonial policies and directives through their different actions and ways which were mainly oppressive to the colonized. One such act involved the habit of screening members of the Agĩkũyũ, Embu and Meru origins which was mounted frequently to net the adherents of the Mau Mau. This caused fear among the local population who perceived the colonial enforcement agents as instruments of terror. The narrator's fear of the colonial security operatives which is revealed when he says "I felt my stomach tighten" (*In the House* 35) expresses the fear of the colonized for those who were enforcing the policies of the colonial state. This is meant to influence the reader to hold colonial security agents in contempt for subjecting the colonized to excruciating fear and physical torture.

Apart from the different forms of harassment that the police meted out on the colonized, they were involved in killing the Africans who were against colonialism. The author has documented the extrajudicial executions of Mau Mau insurgents, their sympathizers and political detainees by the state as revealed by the narrator's reference to the massacre of eleven political inmates who were dubbed hardcore guerrillas for continually resisting colonialism at Hola Camp (*In the House* 123). The author's graphic description of the massacre of those detained by claiming that they were "bludgeoned to death" is meant to appeal to the reader's emotions of anger and hatred for the colonial state as well as instill fear in the reader. The narrator himself claims that whenever he was arrested by the police, an intense fear of being killed preoccupied his mind. He says that he had heard about cases where Africans were arrested, released in a forest and deceived that they were free to go home, and then they were shot in the back as terrorists in a running battle (*In the House* 128). The author has, therefore, characterized the colonial police with sadism by claiming that they were wicked as evidenced in the narrator's claim that it is "the evil character of the colonial police" that drove them to kill their victims (*In the House* 129).

Associated with the cruelties of the colonial police is the prison which has been employed as a symbol of colonial oppression. In employing the prison symbolically, Ngũgĩ has criticized colonialism and its agents by exposing the various atrocities and implications associated with it. Firstly, *In the House of the Interpreter*, prison has been associated with the suffering and breakdown of most African families as the colonial administration imprisoned many men leaving behind women and children to fend for themselves. The narrator claims that, with most Mau Mau suspects and sympathizers being imprisoned during the colonial period, women willed themselves into new and old roles that included providing their children with basic needs, working for meagre wages and building new houses in the newly established concentration camps. Ngũgĩ's own family suffered a lot owing to the arrest and imprisonment of his elder brother, sister-in-law, mother and even himself.

Ngũgĩ began to be haunted by the fear of being arrested or imprisoned during his childhood when he was in primary school as revealed in *Dreams in a Time of War*. This fear continued haunting him even when he joined secondary school. For instance, in *In the House of the Interpreter*, the narrator says that he was always apprehensive of becoming a writer when he was

at Alliance High School due to his fear of being arrested or imprisoned by the colonial government. He claims that he thought that, without having a licence to write, one would be arrested or imprisoned (Ngũgĩ 15). Ironically, the use of Kamĩtĩ Maximum Prison as the state symbol of oppression during the colonial period was adapted by the postcolonial Kenyan government to suppress political dissent in the country. In *Detained*, Ngũgĩ has exposed the terrible prison conditioned which Kenyan political detainees faced at Kamĩtĩ Maximum Prison during Jomo Kenyatta's regime.

To express his contempt for prison, Ngũgĩ has compared the concentration villages to prison. Owing to the difficult conditions at the concentration villages and the constant presence of the home guards who oppressed the villagers by spying on them and enforcing the colonial policies and directives, the narrator has described it as "a community prison" (*In the House* 25). The narrator claims that even when he was in school, he was perpetually haunted by the terrible state and life in the concentration village where his family and the other villagers were forced to move into. The narrator has described the Kamĩtĩ Maximum Prison, where his sister-in-law was imprisoned as "notorious" to express his contempt for it and suggest to the reader that it was associated with acts of debasement of those who were detained there (*In the House* 34). Therefore, most Africans feared prison because of the atrocities that were associated with it. In fact, in the memoir, prison assumes a wider symbolic meaning as demonstrated by Muchiri's claim that during colonialism the whole of the Agĩkũyũ community was imprisoned (Muchiri 88).

During the colonial period, prison was also used by the colonial government to subdue the freedom fighters and portray them as convicts and lawbreakers who deserved imprisonment. Ngũgĩ has made reference to the declaration of amnesty for Mau Mau guerrillas to surrender voluntarily in 1955 to demonstrate that the freedom fighters were loathed by the colonial regime. Ironically, instead of being pardoned completely, the colonial government pledged to imprison them as a better substitute for death sentences (*In the House* 24). The author has described prisons as being "heavily fortified" to give the impression that those who were imprisoned were dangerous criminals rather than to be seen as freedom heroes. Ngũgĩ has used the narrator's emotional experience when he visits his brother in prison to appeal to the reader's anger at the

colonial government as well as sympathy for both the narrator and the imprisoned brother. The narrator's claim that he "fought back tears of joy, tinged with sorrow at the sight of him caged", is meant to evoke strong emotions of sorrow in the reader (*In the House* 78). Ngũgĩ's choice of the term "caged" in reference to the imprisonment of his brother suggests that he was under captivity and therefore his rights to freedom had been violated.

The author has further used some documents associated with the colonial administration symbolically to criminalize the colonial regime and appeal to the reader's feelings of dejection. Since the colonial government curtailed the rights of the colonized blacks through forceful introduction of travel documents such as the written permit, the identity card and the passbook, the author makes colonialism a detestable experience to the reader. These colonial documents can be seen as symbols of oppression as they were used to curtail the freedom of movement of the Africans in their own land as they were compelled to carry them wherever they were. However, Ngũgĩ's portrayal of payment of tax to the colonial government as an act of exploitation of the colonized Africans may be seen as a propagandist strategy he has used to discredit the colonial state. This is because, though it was an unjust act then, it did not end with Kenya's gaining of independence. In fact, Kenyans have been heavily taxed since the country gained independence in 1963.

Nevertheless, Ngũgĩ can attract the reader's empathy by criticizing the brutal way the colonial state handled the Africans who failed to produce tax and other colonial identity documents. For instance, the narrator says that passengers without passbooks, tax receipts or identity papers were "hounded out of the bus" by the colonial police officers who he describes as "Messrs. Rifleman and Machine Gun". The narrator recounts how the policemen mistreated him and the other arrested African passengers by making them squat for a long time. The narrator's description of how he was roughed up by the colonial police also depicts them as ruthless sadists as indicated by his claim that Mr. Machine Gun had pushed him to the ground. Ngũgĩ's description of those arrested with him as "captives" and "victims" can be seen as the author's attempt to appeal to the reader's sympathy for them as well as contempt for the colonial police (*In the House* 121). By claiming that the arrested were crowded into a cell described as a "room with hardly any light" (*In the House* 122), Ngũgĩ exposes the harsh conditions they were subjected to by the colonial

state. Therefore, the author succeeds to portray both the police and their guns as instruments of colonial sate coercion.

The passbook, apart from being employed as a symbol of colonial oppression, has also been used as a symbol of divide-and-rule tactics by the British colonial state. The narrator indicates that the passbook, apart from tightening the control of the Gĩkũyũ, Embu and Meru (GEM), it was used by the colonial administration to put a wedge between their members and non-GEM Africans. It is a reminder for the reader of the loss that the Africans faced during colonialism such as land, identity and security. Therefore, the fact that during the police raids, the non-GEM members were set free while the GEM ones were detained demonstrates to the reader that the passbook served the roles of identifying the GEM individuals on the basis of their tribes. Therefore, the narrator, a member of the Agĩkũyũ community that was being harassed by the colonial state, identifies himself with the larger GEM group in order to get sympathy from the reader. For instance, the narrator recounts how he was once arrested with his friend, Mwalala, who was from a different tribe, but the latter was set free while he was held beck for screening because he was a Gĩkũyũ. Thus, since the military raids were targeting and harassing members of the GEM, the author aims at manipulating the readers to sympathize with the narrator and the members of his Agĩkũyũ community.

Ngũgĩ has portrayed the scouts' movement as a symbol through which the colonial state advocated for Africans' subservience to the leadership of the British Empire. He has criticized the scouts' movement to persuade the reader to mistrust its goals as well as condemn it. For example, though the movement offered adventurous experiences to the narrator, there were some negative things which were associated with it. To support this claim, the author points out that it was born during the defense of British colonialism in Africa. The link with the British Colonial Empire that colonized Kenya and other parts of Africa is in fact the author's attempt to discredit the movement and make the reader perceive it as part of the mechanisms used to pacify the colonized by the colonial administration. For instance, the narrator says that when he joined the movement in 1956, he ironically vowed to do his best to fulfill his "duty to God and the Queen". The narrator further expresses his reservations about the scouts' vows by articulating his discomfiture at fulfilling his duty to the Queen, who in his view, was a symbol of colonialism in

Africa and, therefore, part of the brutal British leadership in the colonized world. This is revealed by the narrator's assertion that, though the promises in the scouts' loyalty pledge were in line with Alliance's mission and his upbringing, "the bit about the queen was difficult to swallow" (*In the House* 68). Therefore, the scouts' movement has some colonial implications owing to its allegiance to the queen. Thus, just as one was supposed to pledge allegiance to the queen who is a symbol of colonialism, by extension, the movement was also meant to produce obedient followers of the British Empire.

Therefore, Ngũgĩ's extensive employment of different iconographic elements in *In the House of the Interpreter* which include the Union Jack, the British national anthem, the police, the prison and the colonial documents such as the passbook among others clearly enables the author's implied audience interpret and comprehend the cruel disposition of the colonial empire. The author's exposure of the negative repercussions of these oppressive iconographic elements enables him to successfully mount his anticolonial sentiments and appeal to his implied readers to equally condemn the colonial empire and its hegemonic practices.

### 3.7 Carey Francis as a Frame for Colonial Patriarchy: A Narrator's Ambivalence

Carey Francis is one of the most complex characters in the memoir *In the House of the Interpreter* because of the various conflicting ideologies that he stands for. Owing to the divergent ideological inclinations of this character, Ngũgĩ's ambivalence towards colonialism comes out clearly. In fact, through Carey Francis, it is as if Ngũgĩ partly condemns colonialism and its negative manifestations while also acknowledging, albeit unwillingly, that some agents of colonialism had a positive impact on the colonized. I would like to emphasize that Ngũgĩ's unwilling acknowledgement of some positive impacts of the colonial structures like Christianity and Western formal education are driven by his personal ideology on eurocentrism and political agenda in the memoir.

In his autobiography *Descent from Cherang'any Hills*, Kipkorir who was with Ngũgĩ at Alliance High School at the same period emphasizes that all his alumni including Ngũgĩ himself reaped various benefits from the school education, sporting and extra-curricular activities. However, he

points out that though Ngũgĩ might not acknowledge it, the writer "gained something from this aspect Alliance life!" (*Descent*). This statement can be seen as Kipkorir's veiled attack on Ngũgĩ's frequent criticism of Western culture including formal education and Christianity in most of his fiction and nonfiction writings. Therefore, as we go through this section, we should bear in mind that some of Ngũgĩ's arguments reveal his overt criticism against some colonial structures while covertly acknowledging their positive impact on himself and other students at Alliance and the Kenyan society at large.

To begin with, Ngũgĩ has disagreed with Carey Francis' claims on the main objective of the Second World War, the British role in the war and the personality of Winston Churchill. He disputes Francis' claim that Winston Churchill was one of the greatest statesmen in the world and that his pact with President Franklin D. Roosevelt to sign the Atlantic Charter in 1941 affected the colonized in one way or another. Ngũgĩ has subverted Francis' claims by portraying Churchill as a major proponent and defender of the British Empire in the colonies, including Kenya. For instance, the author has criticized Churchill's act of allowing Governor Baring to oppress the Kenyans despite the latter's support in his fight against Hitler during the Second World War. Ngũgĩ's argument that Churchill's Conservative Party in England reproduced in Kenya camps similar to Hitler's concentration camps (*In the House* 30) shows the reader that the British leader was indeed a bad person who supported the oppression of the colonized Africans. Thus, Ngũgĩ's description of Carey Francis as "a defender of the British Empire" and the "image of the empire loyalist" (*In the House* 50) portrays him as a colonial ideologue and arouses the reader's contempt for Francis.

Ngũgĩ further contradicts Carey Francis' arguments on the politics of the Suez Canal to express his anti-colonial sentiments. In this context, he presents Carey Francis as a representative of the colonial mentality. This is because Carey Francis condemned the nationalization of the Suez Canal by Colonel Gamel Abdel Nasser on July 26th 1956. Nasser had done so in order to benefit the Egyptian citizens. Though the British offered capital for the construction of the dam and the French the expertise required to build it, the land belonged to the Egyptians. The narrator's question "but what about the Egyptian land and labor?" emphasizes the author's criticism of Francis' colonial mentality. Ngũgĩ has, therefore, likened the ownership of the canal by the

British Suez Canal Company to the British settlers in Kenya in order to persuade the reader that Carey Francis was indeed a colonial ideologue (*In the House* 53-54).

Ngũgĩ's arguments against Carey Francis are further reinforced by his claim that the latter may be seen to be an embodiment of the colonial thinking since, whereas he condemned the violent activities of both the colonial forces as well as those of the Mau Mau, he nevertheless supported the colonial entrenchment in Kenya by his claim that the colonial administration had some degree of integrity and was fundamentally well-meaning. Thus, the narrator's argument that Carey Francis had faith in the British Empire and the great traditions for which it stands can be seen as his attempt to sway the reader to his political convictions on colonialism. Similar arguments have been advanced by Amos Kareithi who points out that, despite his efforts to produce highly disciplined students at Alliance, Carey Francis had a high temper and poor opinion for the Africans. According to Kareithi, because of Francis' attitude towards Africans, his main intention was to produce young Kenyans who would serve the British Empire. Kareith has further castigated him by arguing that Francis believed the British colonialists were justified to colonize other races and that he discredited anybody who questioned Britain's authority to rule Kenya ("Edward Carey Francis").

According to Leopold Alexander Pars, Carey Francis was not happy with Kenya's gaining of independence which he believed "had come much too early" (368). Therefore, Francis' belief that Kenya was not ready for self-government reveals his support for the perpetuation of colonialism in Kenya, and therefore, portrays him as a colonial ideologue. This argument can be corroborated by those advanced by the *Business Daily* which portray Carey Francis as a person who supported the perpetuation of colonialism in Africa through education. For instance, the *Business Daily* reveals that when he was at Alliance, Carey Francis displayed "a paternalistic attitude" towards African students who he described, in one of his speeches, as people who did well academically but seemed to "become insufferably conceited" (*Business Daily*, November 22, 2018). These terms reveal his inherent racist attitude towards the Africans and, therefore, portraying him as one of the colonial agents of that time. Because of his attitude towards Africans, just like his colonial peers, he understood that it was not his work to build an elitist

class of Africans. His work was to produce submissive workers for the colonial government. He believed that the role of training future leaders of the colony was a prerogative of European schools like the Prince of Wales and Duke of York (*Business Daily*). From these arguments, it can be deduced that, Carey Francis did not intend to produce students who could become leaders of their own independent country. This accounts for his intolerance to any criticism from African teachers as revealed by Amos Kareithi who points out that during Francis' time at Alliance High School, just like students, African teachers who questioned his authority were dismissed from their jobs. These teachers included Mbiyu Koinange, Eliud Mathu and James Gichuru who resigned after being frustrated by Carey Francis ("Edward Carey Francis").

Nevertheless, Alliance High School can be credited for producing leaders who have dominated the Kenyan politics and the civil service since the colonial period. According to Pugliese Cristiana, this school was an important institution which produced the political class which provided leadership to the country at its independence (Christina1992, 48). Thus, on the reputation of Alliance High School and its legacy in Kenya, Cristiana points out that its importance is demonstrated in the perpetual dominance of political as well as the administrative roles by former Alliance alumni and that, to date, there has been no any school which has had more influence in the country's political arena and leadership than Alliance High School (50).

In *Descent from Cherang'any Hills*, Kipkorir informs us that, though Carey Francis did not like politics, he appreciated the fact that the Alliance High School alumni dominated the African representation in the government during the colonial and postcolonial Kenya. Kipkorir reveals that the only time Francis expressed his interest in politics is when six of the eight of those who were the first Africans to be elected to the LegCo were old boys of Alliance High School. He expresses Francis' attitude then, "This gave Francis a sense of pride which threw his political stance into disarray. We were not surprised, therefore, to see the fiery nationalist politician Oginga Odinga, for whom we knew Francis had a soft spot, attending Speech day in 1958, the year during which he had declared in LegCo that Kenyatta (then in detention in Lodwar, following his imprisonment in 1953) was '*our'*, i.e. Kenya Africans' leader" (Kipkorir 145). This portrayal of Francis undermines Ngũgĩ's claim that Francis was anti-African leadership during

the colonial period in Kenya, hence, diminishes the author's rhetorical agenda in his claims and arguments against the Alliance High School Principal.

Furthermore, despite the portrayal of Carey Francis as an embodiment of the colonialist's mentality in *In the House of the Interpreter*, some of the latter's convictions, character and actions can be seen to contradict the Ngũgĩ's claims; hence, creating some doubts in the reader on the author's arguments. One such incident involves Carey Francis' attitude to racism. For example, the narrator refers to a letter which Carey Francis wrote to Reverend H.M. Grace in April 1944 in which he blamed both the whites and blacks for orchestrating extreme racism in Kenya (Ngũgĩ 6). By blaming both races, Carey Francis stands out as one of the few Europeans who could condemn his own race for perpetrating racial animosity in Kenya during colonialism. In reference to another letter, the narrator claims that Carey Francis did not abide by a racist's caution for him to restrain from doing any work that could lead to "losing all prestige with the natives" (Ngũgĩ 7). In this context, Ngũgĩ has brought out Carey Francis' beliefs and actions that undermine racial and colonial stereotypes that portray Africans as being inferior or unequal to the whites.

Carey Francis' humble character has also been amplified by other people who were his former students at Alliance High School. In *Descent from Cherang'any Hills*, Kipkorir portrays Carey Francis as a person who loved, cared and protected his students at Alliance High School. For instance, the narrator's first encounter of Carey Francis is when he first arrived at Kikuyu railway station on his way to report for the first time at Alliance High School. He informs us that, Francis who was the Principal of Alliance then, came to Kikuyu town to receive the newly admitted form one students. Francis' humane character comes out through the narrator's claim that he helped carry their boxes to school in his Ford van (*Descent* 121). Kipkorir further describes him as a person who had a great presence and commanded authority but was "extremely gentle… kind and generous" (*Descent* 122). This kind of revelation does not collocate with some of Ngũgĩ's claim that he was a symbol of colonial patriarchy.

In *In the House of the Interpreter*, Carey Francis has subverted the colonial intentions of establishing Alliance High School by striving to offer the best education to the African students.

The narrator, for example, says that the school contributed to the anti-colonialism struggle since it "birthed a radical anticolonial nationalist fever" (7) and indeed undermined the oppressive colonial system it had been designed to serve. He also claims that Carey Francis, contrary to the British colonial expectations, became one of the opposing persons in to the colonial agenda and system. At this point, the author invites the reader's admiration for Carey Francis instead of perceiving him as an agent of colonialism. Philip Ochieng, has underscored Francis' efforts to offer a good education to his Alliance students by claiming that what differentiated him from his white colonial colleagues was his consistent "sense of justice" with which he delivered knowledge to African students ("Why We Have Fond Memories"). This reveals that Carey Francis, unlike other whites, was dedicated to ensuring that the African students received quality education despite his commitment and loyalty to advancing the wishes of the British Empire.

Ochieng's claims are similar to Kipkorir's portrayal of Carey Francis in his autobiography. Kipkorir informs us that, despite being a white man in the colonial Kenya, Francis was dedicated to providing the best quality education to the African boys at Alliance High School. That is why Kipkorir acknowledges the positive impact of Alliance on his character and academic success when he nostalgically and proudly claims that, at AHS, he received excellent teaching, character development, and political awareness. He describes Alliance as the best school with the highest standards in the country during colonialism in Kenya compared exclusive European schools like Prince of Wales (now Nairobi School), the Duke of York (Lenana) and the Kenya High School, based on O-level results of CSCE. He even declares that the Alliance boys outshone the white students in the English Language papers (*Descent* 128). The high academic standard, Kipkorir claims, was set up by Carey Francis who selected the best teachers for Alliance by personally assessing their teaching abilities when they were newly employed. Francis, Kipkorir claims, considered not only the teachers "qualifications in respective disciplines but also, and more particularly, for their Christian and vocational commitment" (*Descent* 129). It is because of these facts that the reader is easily made to admire Carey Francis.

Although he was a white living in a colonized country, Carey Francis sometimes displayed a sense of friendliness and respect for the Africans. The narrator in *In the House of the Interpreter* recounts an incident when Carey Francis once stopped to chat with a crowd of African children

and even entertained them by performing magic-like actions (28). This presents him as one who was humble and could easily intermingle even with the children of the colonized without any feelings of colonial or racial superiority. The narrator further claims that, at Alliance High School, Carey Francis usually accompanied and compassionately cheered for his school's team during competitions with their rival European schools or clubs. During such occasions, he would wholeheartedly support his boys and celebrate with them their victories against the teams of white students. However, during such occasions, Carey Francis advocated for humility when the Alliance boys defeated their opponents but when defeated, they should "learn lessons that would lead to future success" (*In the House* 88). This can be seen as Ngũgĩ's attempt to endear some Europeans or colonial agents to the reader despite being part of the colonial system.

Unlike other Europeans in the Colony, Carey Francis was not hostile to Africans or students at Alliance who had some links with the Mau Mau movement. That is why he did not expel any student who was associated in any way with Mau Mau. For instance, when Ngũgĩ was once summoned to his office to explain why he had contravened school rules by arriving at school late after an outing with other students, he did not punish him despite his family's connection with the Mau Mau. Therefore, even after telling Carey Francis the truth about his brother being a member of the Mau Mau guerrillas and his sister-in-law's detention at Kamĩtĩ Maximum Prison, the white principal did not administer any form of punishment on him. Unlike the other colonial agents, he did not even ask the narrator whether he had taken the Mau Mau oath. Instead, Carey Francis did the unexpected by advising him to be careful in the future when out of school and condemned the British police officers who molested him by calling them "scoundrels" since he was a student (*In the House* 51). This act subverts Ngũgĩ's belief that Carey Francis was an embodiment of colonialism. Therefore, instead of loathing him because of his position as a colonial agent, the reader is likely to admire Carey Francis' humane character.

Similar revelations of Carey Francis' tolerant character is revealed by Kipkorir in *Descent from Cherang'any Hills*. Kipkorir reports that Carey Francis knew "the extent to which Mau Mau had permeated Kikuyu society using information from his pupils" (Kipkorir 138). For instance, in 1956, Francis had recorded that "29 out of 97 the KEM boys" (138) had taken the Mau Mau oaths. However, he still loved and cared for the boys by striving to provide the best education as

well as protecting them from the colonial government's brutalities. Kipkorir further informs us about an official complaint which Francis had written to the colonial government about the mistreatment of Alliance High School boys by the colonial police on the basis of their black colour. He describes his students as "boys with dignity and education" who did not deserve such mistreatment by the colonial police and poses the question, "What would have happened if a police officer had treated Prince of Wales boys similarly?" (*Descent* 138). From these revelations, it is clear that Francis was not a racist nor was he cruel towards the Africans.

Furthermore, Kipkorir reveals that, although Carey Francis was a committed white Christian man in the Kenya Colony, he was not an advocate of Western cultural imperialism. This is because, unlike other whites, he encouraged Africans students at Alliance High School to uphold their culture and identity. Kipkorir informs us that, though most of the boys who joined Alliance High School had names based on "Christian nomenclature," Francis saw such names as being "unacceptable" since they "were surreal" and compared them to those names given to the African American slaves by their white slave masters. Francis further believed that such names abstracted the boys from their families and communities (*Descent* 123 – 124). In highlighting Francis' recognition and reverence of African culture, Kipkorir claims that Francis appreciated the importance which Africans attached to their names and that Francis believed that European or Christian names for Africans "represented a discontinuation from one's family and community and had exactly the opposite effect of what traditional African naming was meant to achieve" (*Descent* 124). Therefore, Francis wanted the students to uphold their African traditional identity despite their acquisition of formal education and Christian beliefs. It is because of his strong belief in one's community's cultural identity that made him to ask each one of his students to choose one African name by which one would be known for the rest of one's life (*Descent* 122).

An incident that further attracts the reader to Carey Francis' soft part of his character in *In the House of the Interpreter* comes out through his ideas against violations of animals' rights. His act of condemning the Russians for launching a satellite, the Sputnik II, into space with a street dog called Laika brings out his compassionate attitude towards animals. This is in contrast with the colonial government's order for the killing of all street dogs in the narrator's village. According

to Ngũgĩ, in his Agĩkũyũ community, the Gĩkũyũ word for street dogs, *nguicianjangiri*, or *njangiri*, refers to a homeless or irresponsible person. Therefore, the street dogs would have been seen to symbolically represent the landless or homeless Africans who lost their lands to the white colonial settlers. Ngũgĩ's claim that the Russians had sent a street dog "to die in space" is meant to attract the reader's fury at Russians for violating animal rights and the colonialists for taking the Africans' land thereby rendering them homeless and landless. The narrator's claim that, despite having been bitten by dogs when he was a child, he could never stand "their screams" since they aroused "the cries of humans in pain" is meant to endear him to the reader who will be triggered to hate the colonial state for ordering the home guards to kill the stray dogs (*In the House* 79). Therefore, Carey Francis' condemnation of the Russians' act of violating the animal rights can be seen to be symbolically revealing his respect for human dignity and rights.

Another trait of Carey Francis that contradicts Ngũgĩ's portrayal of this character as an embodiment of colonialism is his contribution to the unity of the colonized ethnic communities which is symbolically implied in Alliance High School community. It is also revealed that, during his tenure as the head of the school, Carey Francis recruited his staff from the different parts of the colony (*In the House* 96). Carey Francis further ensured that the African staff at the school came from the different communities in Kenya. This culture at Alliance High School is likely to earn Carey Francis some credibility and admiration from the readers. It is because of this culture and his caring spirit that makes Ngũgĩ to be nostalgic about Alliance when he describes his parting from the school as a "formal divorce from the House of the Interpreter" (*In the House* 114). Moreover, Carey Francis' concern about the narrator's plans after Alliance, his advice for him that he should not become a politician since all politicians are "unmitigated scoundrels" and his positive remarks on his character in his school leaving certificate further cements nostalgia in the narrator about the life at Alliance High School.

Therefore, Ngũgĩ's characterization of Carey Francis in *In the House of the Interpreter* reveals his ambivalence with respect to his perception of this character. Whereas he attempts to portray him as an embodiment of colonialism, he also reveals to the reader some of Carey Francis' character that may attract the reader's admiration of him. This demonstrates that, though Europeans were interested in entrenching and enhancing the colonial structures in the colonies,

there were few of them whose activities and efforts were geared towards promoting the welfare of Africans through education and other forms.

### 3.8 Conclusion

*In the House of the Interpreter* brings out Ngũgĩ's ambivalence in his perception and criticism of colonialism and its structures. Specifically, Ngũgĩ's foregrounding of formal education and Christianity as frames for debunking colonialism brings out the author's contradictions towards these aspects of modernity in colonial Kenya. It further shows the author's wholesome condemnation of Western formal education and culture and his deliberate concealment of any benefits which might have been accrued from Africa's encounter with colonialism. Therefore, his intended audience for his claims and arguments is the reader with anticolonial and anti-cultural imperialist feelings. Ngũgĩ's portrayal of racism as a frame for colonialism brings out clearly his effort to subvert colonial stereotypes against the Africans during the colonial period. Although this strategy succeeds in elevating the ethos of the African teachers and students by demonstrating their intellectual ability and performance in both sports and academic works, the author's claims have created a reverse form of racism by claiming that the Africans outperformed the other races in different spheres of life. By so doing, Ngũgĩ creates a racial stereotype in which the African is seen as being better than the white in different spheres of life. Therefore, the racial stereotype he strives to neutralize, criticize or undermine is instead enhanced in the reverse form in this memoir.

Despite the author's ambivalences noticeable in his employment of education, racism and Christianity as frames for colonialism in this memoir, he effectively demonstrates that the British colonial regime used different techniques to subdue the colonized Africans in Africa and Kenya in particular. Ngũgĩ has demonstrated this concisely by foregrounding the colonial iconographies in the text to achieve his rhetorical intention of vilifying colonialism and its structures. Conspicuous among these include the author's foregrounding of the Union Jack and the British national anthem as symbols of conquest and subjugation. Ngũgĩ has further demonstrated how the British colonial state used the prison, the police, the home guards and home guard posts, the passbook and taxation system to entrench her colonial hegemony in Kenya as well as expose the cruel character inherent in colonialism.

## CHAPTER FOUR

## *BIRTH OF A DREAM WEAVER: A WRITER'S AWAKENING* AS AN ARTIST'S RHETORIC OF SELF-DEFINITION

### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss Ngũgĩ's rhetoric of self-definition as a writer in *Birth of a Dream Weaver: A Writer's Awakening*. The chapter focuses on the rhetorical strategies employed by Ngũgĩ in conferring on himself an identity as a writer of both fiction and nonfiction works. In the memoir, Ngũgĩ seems to address three crucial questions which his readers are likely to pose: How did he become a writer? What were the major influences on his process of becoming a writer? What vision does he present in his writings? The central thesis in this chapter, therefore, is that, in his attempt to reconstruct himself as a writer through the practice of memoir-composition, Ngũgĩ prefers a strategy of invoking personal, ideological, historical and sociopolitical experiences to express his rhetorical intentions to his reader.

In employing the strategy of self-definition and identity-construction, Ngũgĩ attempts to chart his beginning and trajectory as a creative writer, establish his ethos and enable his readers understand his style and thematic concerns in his writings. According to Johnnie M. Stover, autobiographical writing relies significantly on the setting of the texts for life writers to interpret their selves to their perceived audience (*Rhetoric and Resistance* 4). Stover emphasizes that, as readers, there is a need to discern the sociopolitical and economic settings from which the self that is narrated has emerged (Stover 4). Similarly, Mustapha Bala Ruma informs us that self-writing is motivated by a writer's desire to create and preserve one's identity (Ruma 14). Ruma further emphasizes that a memoirist's identity is determined by one's socio-physical contexts (Ruma 15).

As Ngũgĩ takes the reader through the narrative of his undergraduate education at Makerere, he strives to persuade the reader that different interwoven factors have played a significant role in the birth and growth of his creative prowess over the years. Henceforth, a close reading of *Birth of a Dream Weaver* reveals the metaphorical ramifications of the terms 'birth' and 'dream

weaver' which are encapsulated in the title of the text. The term 'birth' metaphorically signals the beginning of a new life; in this context, Ngũgĩ's beginnings as a writer; whereas 'dream weaver' portrays him as a creator of stories about his hopes, aspirations and struggles as well as those of his collective society.

The memoir is a sequel to Ngũgĩ's other two memoirs, *Dreams in a Time of War* and *In the House of the Interpreter*. Therefore, just like in his earlier memoirs, Ngũgĩ is still haunted by his childhood experience of colonialism and the grim period of the state of emergency during which his community and other Kenyans suffered due to the violent confrontation between the British colonial state and the Mau Mau fighters. As an important phase in Ngũgĩ's life, the memoir documents the penultimate years of the decolonization process when African countries including Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya gained independence. The author nostalgically expresses this in the prologue by declaring that he joined Makerere when he was still a subject of the colonial state in 1959 but left it in 1964 as a free citizen. It was during those years that his literary creativity was horned as metaphorically articulated in his claim that he "became a weaver of dreams" while being an undergraduate student at Makerere.

## 4.2 Foregrounding Personal Achievements

The theme of heroism permeates *Birth of a Dream Weaver* as Ngũgĩ attempts to demonstrate to his reader about his early creative achievements while being an undergraduate student at Makerere University College. In the memoir, Ngũgĩ has accomplished one of the roles of autobiographical writing since, according to Were, in an autobiography a character's testimony may be employed by the speaker to "glorify the individual" (Were 239). Therefore, in foregrounding his personal achievements as a writer, Ngũgĩ talks about his early creative output right from the onset of the text. He begins by informing the reader that, in 1961, his play, *The Rebels*, entered into the Makerere inter-hall competition and became second, after the winning play, *Brave New Cosmos*, by Peter Nazareth. His second play, *The Wound in the Heart,* which he wrote in 1962, won the inter-hall competition among the students of Makerere. This is closely followed by his claim that his short story, "The Village Priest" won a prize in the category of short fiction during the competition at the university.

In his early achievements as a writer, however, young Ngũgĩ faced the problem of racism and colonialism which saw his one-act play, *The Wound in the Heart*, get banned from being performed at the Kampala National Theatre because of its attack on racism and oppression of the blacks. This reveals that Ngũgĩ's encounter with racism and colonialism was significant in determining the choice of his major thematic concerns for his early writings. Though in his essay *Secure the Base* Ngũgĩ seems to downplay the role of the problem of tribalism in Kenya's political crises, Ojukwu notes that tribalism and cultural alienation dominated the author's "thinking and writing" in the 1960s as exemplified in his early works (Ojukwu 30).

In *Birth of a Dream Weaver*, it is apparent that the media played a great role in Ngũgĩ's growth and publicity as a writer. Different newspapers and magazines offered him opportunities for his early publications. He has acknowledged this by informing the reader that his short story, "The Fig Tree", which was published in *Penpoint* in December 1960, was his first work of fiction to be published while being a student at Makerere. His other short stories "The Village Priest," "And the Rain Came Down" and "The Black Bird" were later published in different issues of *Penpoint* and *Nilotica*. During that time, his one-act drama, *The Rebels*, was also broadcast by the Uganda Radio (*Birth of a Dream* 111). The revelation that a total of six short stories appeared in *Penpoint* magazine during the early 1960s, which Ngũgĩ claims would have been adequate to be published into a whole book (*Birth of a Dream* 82), confirms his creative energy as a student at Makerere.

Apart from his short stories in *Penpoint*, Ngũgĩ's creative writing was boosted by his journalistic write-ups that were published in the *Sunday Nation* in 1962. Most of those articles were published under the title "As I See It". The author argues that, though his contribution was majorly opinion journalism, he relied heavily on his literary heritage and his studies as an English honors student. He informs us that "the names of writers and books" he had read found "their way into some of the write-ups" he published in the *Sunday Nation* (*Birth of a Dream* 117-118). Some of the articles that featured in this newspaper included "What about Our Neighbors" whose main theme was the plight of beggars which was published on September 9, 1962 and "Swahili Must Have Its Rightful Place", published on the paper on 3rd September 1962, through which he expressed his critical attitude towards the use of European languages in African

literature. In the latter article, Ngũgĩ was concerned with the place of African languages in education though he appreciated the centrality of English language in the curriculum (*Birth of a Dream* 119). This claim, however, problematizes his stance vis-à-vis his perpetual criticism of Western literature in most of his other writings such as *In the House of the Interpreter*, *Decolonising the Mind*, *Remembering Africa* and *Writers in Politics*. This can be seen by the reader as the author's ambivalent position vis-à-vis the role of Western education and its attendant literary tradition in influencing the educated Africans, including himself.

The revelation that Ngũgĩ wrote more than eighty essays, mostly under the column "As I See It" in the *Sunday Nation* and in other newspapers and magazines attests to his appreciation of the media in sharpening his literary creativity. This is clearly articulated in his acknowledgement that the various journalistic works that were published in newspapers were his first major venture into creative writing. Lindfors conducted a research on the impact of Ngũgĩ's involvement in journalism on his writings and informs us that the author's articles which were published in newspapers and magazines popularized him in the East African literary scene. He notes that Ngũgĩ's articles were published mainly by the Nairobi press which included *Sunday Nation*, *Sunday Post* and the *Daily Nation* (Lindfors 69).

Some individuals contributed to motivating young Ngũgĩ in pursuing his creative writing. For instance, though Ngũgĩ's initial desire was to become a journalist, this ambition was deflated by his encounter with the editor of the *Sunday Post*, Jack Ensoll, who liked his articles and encouraged him to concentrate on his creative writing activities by emphasizing that his "future lies between hard covers" (*Birth of a Dream* 116). The author has acknowledged Ensoll's recognition of his creative talent as one of those people whose encouragement gave him the impetus to become a writer of fiction. At this point, Ngũgĩ can be seen to be attempting to attract the reader's trust on his claims by appealing to authority to enhance his ethos.

Apart from Jack Enroll's encouragement, Ngũgĩ informs the reader about other important people whose recognition of his talent motivated him to venture into creative writing of his early fiction. He acknowledges that Mr. B.S. Hyole (his personal tutor) recognized his creative ability by stating that his essays were interesting to read. He expresses his motivation by saying that he was

happy that someone had referred to a novel he was going to write and that in 1960 he embarked on his journey as a writer. Ngũgĩ's interaction with Barbara Kimenye, a Ugandan writer whom he first met at a party organized by Rajat Neogy, the founder of *Transition* magazine, further boosted his ego to venture into creative writing. He recalls that she told him that she had read his short-story, "The Return", in the magazine. In a tone laced with understatement, the author recalls that encounter nostalgically, by claiming that he was surprised when she came to where he sat and informed him that she had read his story in *Transition*, and "talked to me as if I were an established writer" (*Birth of a Dream* 124). Ngũgĩ further acknowledges the active support he received from David Cook, one of his lecturers at Makerere, who, he claims, read the script of his play *The Black Hermit* and made suggestions for its improvement (*Birth of a Dream* 165).

In *Birth of a Dream Weaver*, the reader is further informed that Ngũgĩ's fellow students as well as their creative output helped shape his creative potential. The narrator acknowledges that Jonathan Kariara, who later became a writer himself, helped him shape his short story "The Fig Tree" by advising him to improve on style by employing "irony" which he considered an effective aspect of style in art (*Birth of a Dream* 80). In this context, therefore, the reader is invited to appreciate Kariara's input in Ngũgĩ's creative growth. On the other hand, the creative output by fellow students at Makerere which were published by the university magazines or bulletins also attracted Ngũgĩ to love artistic works and energized him to venture into creative writing as implied when he describes the ones published in *Penpoint* as "beautiful stories, poems, essays, and plays" which rekindled his desire to write literary works.

In his self-praise as a writer, Ngũgĩ has expressed excitement at being the first writer from East Africa to write a novel, "The Black Messiah" which was published later as *The River Between*. This is exemplified by his claim that he had dared to do something which had not been done in Kenya or East Africa by writing a novel (*Birth of a Dream* 99). He informs the reader that he delivered its manuscript in person to the East African Literature Bureau on December 28, 1961 for publication (*Birth of a Dream* 101). He, however, acknowledges that there had been other writers in East Africa but decries that they were all whites such as Elspeth Huxley and Robert Ruark who claimed to be Kenyans. He criticizes their works by arguing that they were racially skewed as they were "about adventures of white heroes in Africa" in which the blacks were

depicted as being part of the animals and forests (*Birth of a Dream* 99). Therefore, his success in writing a novel can be seen as a symbolic act of the optimism that had engulfed his country in its journey towards independence.

In *Birth of a Dream Weaver*, Ngũgĩ's growth as a writer can further be linked with his personal determination to write fiction works which jolted him to the international literary scene and fame during his undergraduate university life. His claim that he was invited to the First International Conference of Writers of English Expression which was held at Makerere University College in June 1962 because of the publications of his first creative works (Ngũgĩ 123) is meant to show the reader that his creative talent was recognized while he was still a youth. He recounts his feelings at the invitation to the conference with a tinge of nostalgia by claiming that he could not believe it since he was merely a second-year university student, but who had been invited to a gathering of literary giants in which one of his short stories, "The Return" would be discussed in the short story sessions" (*Birth of a Dream* 123).

By claiming that he was invited to "a gathering of literary giants" and that his short story was discussed during the conference, Ngũgĩ appeals to his ethos to show the reader that he had the creative ability that could enable him to produce quality literary writings. To attract the reader's admiration, he explains what the story, "The Return", is all about. The story was first published in *Penpoint* in October, 1961 and in *Transition* in January 1962 (*Birth of a Dream* 123). To elevate his credibility further as a literary writer and attract the reader's admiration, Ngũgĩ claims that, unlike other newspapers or magazines, *Transition* was dedicated to publishing literary works. He claims that, though it was "a magazine around which budding writers grouped", it also attracted some of the leading African writers from within and outside East Africa and acknowledges its role in molding his creative writing endeavors and publicizing his name: "I concluded that it was my appearance in *Transition* that made readers outside the walls of Makerere take note of me" (*Birth of a Dream* 125).

The 1962 conference was crucial to Ngũgĩ's ideological and creative transformation since it exposed him to different scholars from different parts of the world whose worldviews varied from one another. One of the key speakers at the conference was Langston Hughes who had been

a crucial figure in the Harlem Renaissance. Ngũgĩ's nostalgia at the experience he encountered in attending the 1962 Conference of African Writers of English Expression is captured in his description of the experience as "thrilling" since it enabled him to be "among the big names of the time" (*Birth of a Dream* 126). Through this claim, Ngũgĩ signals to the reader his creative potentiality which placed him in the same category as well-accomplished world writers of that time.

In foregrounding his creative writing achievements in *Birth of a Dream Weaver*, Ngũgĩ has provided newspaper clips and photographs as evidence of his creative outputs when he was a student at Makerere University College. Cheney observes that, in nonfiction writings, captions of photographic reproductions enables the writer to reinforce one's narrative (104). The newspaper clips from the *Uganda Urgus* are proof of his claims on the performance of his play, *The Black Hermit*; the award of a prize for his first novel (*Birth of a Dream* 158-159) and the acceptance of his second novel, *Weep Not, Child*, for publication by the Heinemann African Writers series. At this point, Ngũgĩ attempts to elevate his credibility by signaling to the reader that his name had already been included in the list of great world writers like Joseph Conrad, Graham Greene and D. H. Lawrence whom he had only encountered in his English literature courses at Makerere (*Birth of a Dream* 160).

Ngũgĩ recalls and describes the success of his play with a tinge of nostalgia. To express the success of his first production at the Kampala National Theatre, Ngũgĩ informs us that the performance of *The Black Hermit* attracted a large multi-racial audience of blacks, Asians, whites, his fellow students as well as the "social heavyweights". In terms of media coverage of the performance, the author claims that the Uganda national radio, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and the *Uganda Urgus* covered the event and that even the BBC wanted to interview him after the show (*Birth of a Dream* 166). He describes the success of the performance of the play emotionally to evoke the reader's excitement and appeal to his credibility when he says, "I felt that the deafening applause would split the theatre asunder" (*Birth of a Dream* 167). At this point, the narrator enhances the reader's admiration by cleverly using an understatement by claiming that, though he was reluctant to appear on stage, he was forced to do so by the demand of the audience. To endear himself to the reader, he attributes the

achievement to all those who participated in the successful production of the play that earned him a standing ovation from the audience.

Ngũgĩ's argument that the successful performance of his play, *The Black Hermit*, was "a blow to the conception that the East African theatre in English couldn't stand on its own on a national stage or that the different races, communities and regions couldn't come together for a common purpose" can be seen as his attack on the racist whites who undermined the intellectual ability of the Africans. It is also a declaration of his success as a writer at that moment. It is Ngũgĩ's act of writing back to the Empire by asserting that Africans were equally capable of producing quality literary works.

However, Ngũgĩ digresses from the narrative of the success of the events of that year and jumps ahead into his later imprisonment in 1977-78 by the Jomo Kenyatta regime because of his participation in the production of *Ngaahika Ndeenda* which advocated for class warfare between peasants and the wealthy Kenyans. For instance, in reflecting on the events of the night of the successful performance of *The Black Hermit*, Ngũgĩ expresses the irony of the reality that confronts most successful writers in Africa and alludes to his later incarceration and eventual exile during Moi's regime when he claims that his involvement in theatre "would later earn me one year at a maximum security prison and thereafter many years of exile. The journey to the persecution began in Kampala and Makerere, all in the year 1963" (*Birth of a Dream* 169).

From this scenario, Ngũgĩ seems to be making a political statement concerning the treatment of literary writers in Africa. The author has deliberately alluded to his later tribulations at this point in order to evoke anger in the reader and condemn acts of oppression of literary writers in Africa. He narrates the tribulations he faced while in prison for one year from December 1977 to December 1978 in his memoirs, *Detained* and *Wrestling with the Devil*. This has been discussed in chapter five of this thesis.

Ngũgĩ has further referred to other people and media that lauded the success of his play *The Black Hermit* to influence his reader to perceive the play's thematic concerns as being relevant to the African context then. For instance, he has mentioned a review titled "Theatre in East and

West Africa" that he tells us appeared in the *Drum* magazine in 1963 and later in the *Makerere Journal* in which Peter Carpenter described the play as the "first full-length play known to have been written by an East African." According to Richard Kagolobya, Carpenter was appointed the Director of Uganda National Cultural Centre in August 1962 ("Symbolic Interaction"). Another review was featured in the *Makererean* of November 22, 1962 in which Professor Trevor Whittock of the English Department at Makerere University College lauded the play as speaking to African continent and that its successful production as "the best thing the Makerere Dramatic Society had yet done" (*Birth of a Dream* 163). By referring to these people, Ngũgĩ appeals to authority of other literary experts in advancing his argument and influences the reader to accept his claims on his growth as a writer.

Although Ngũgĩ has been persistent in his negative criticism of Western literature, it is apparent that established European writers impacted significantly on his creative writing and output. His reference to European writers such as Charles Dickens, Emily Bronte and George Eliot whose works he had read (*Birth of a Dream* 84) reveals to the reader Ngũgĩ's ambivalent attitude towards Western literature. This is because the reader is made to believe that European literature must have provided knowledge to Ngũgĩ on the form that creative fiction takes. In fact, in his earlier memoir, *Dreams in a Time of War*, the influence of Charles Dickens' novel *Oliver Twist* on his understanding of poverty and deprivation comes out clearly through the narrator's comparison of the starvation of the child character, Oliver Twist, with his own suffering because of hunger when he was in primary school. Also, Ngũgĩ's acknowledgement that Virginia Woolf's ideas and work ethics are crucial to writers, including African ones like him, reveals that his own thinking was also shaped by the Western literary canon. According to Lindfors, Ngũgĩ's early ideas were shaped by what he read at Makerere such as Lawrence, Conrad, Arnold, Dickens, Shelley and Shakespeare. In his essay on Ngũgĩ's early journalism, Lindfors refers to one of the articles that Ngũgĩ wrote in defense of the study of Shakespeare in African schools. In the article, "Why Shakespeare in Africa," which was published on 22 April 1964, Ngũgĩ argued that Shakespeare's writings were relevant to the political and moral issues in East Africa.

It should also be noted that *Birth of a Dream Weaver* shows that Ngũgĩ's early anti-European languages was influenced by other scholars. Ngũgĩ says that Obi Wali, at the 1962 Conference, criticized African literature written in English. Wali's argument in that article was that African

literature which was written in European's languages "was leading to a dead end" (*Birth of a Dream* 128). Therefore, Obi Wali's ideology on the question of the language of African literature must have influenced Ngũgĩ's anti-English crusade which has been well-documented in some of his works. However, Ngũgĩ embraced Wali's position in 1977 when he was detained after the production of *Ngaahika Ndeenda*. Ngũgĩ has claimed that his novel, *Devil on the Cross*, was the beginning of his rejection of a European language to write his creative works. He declares that, from then, he would write in Gĩkũyũ and other African languages (*Moving the Centre* 112). Furthermore, he assertively declares that his novel, *Petals of Blood*, which was published in 1977, was his last work to be written in English language. He declares that *Decolonising the Mind* was the last publication in English language and stresses that from the time of its publication he would be using either Gikuyu or Kiswahili languages (*Decolonising* xiv). He claims that the major reason for his decision to revert to Gĩkũyũ or Kiswahili languages in both his fiction and nonfiction writings was motivated by his desire to speak directly and intimately to his readers who were mainly his Kikuyu tribe and the Kenyan peasants. However, despite these declarations, Ngũgĩ still continues to write in English.

The success of pioneer writers from Africa and the Caribbean world also made an impact on Ngũgĩ's early ideological thinking and motivated him to venture into creative writing. For example, he acknowledges that the success of the early African writers such as Peter Abrahams, Chinua Achebe and Cyprian Ekwensi influenced him to embark on writing creative works. Peter Abrahams' writings which have explored the theme of racism in South Africa appealed to Ngũgĩ who claims that "his world of black and white in conflict" was closer to the racial situation in Kenya during the colonial period (*Birth of a Dream* 84). Specifically, Ngũgĩ has expressed his admiration for Peter Abrahams' works such as *Return to Goli*, *Paths of Thunder*, *A Wreath for Udomo* and *Tell Freedom*. He has argued that *Tell Freedom* 'mesmerized' him when he was an Alliance High School student and that he admired Peter Abrahams' dream of becoming a professional writer (*Birth of a Dream* 85). In this case again, Ngũgĩ is appealing to authority to persuade his reader on his credibility as a writer with similar ideology with other world renowned writers. For instance, Ngũgĩ's writing style in most of his fiction must have been greatly influenced by George Lamming's ideas and writings. This impact can be seen in his book, *In the Name of the Mother*, in which he has two chapters on Lamming's writings. Ngũgĩ,

in *Birth of a Dream Weaver*, has cited Lamming's *In the Castle of My Skin* whose strong impact on his writings he positively acknowledges by asserting that the latter's Caribbean world inspired him to write about the life experiences of his own village in Kenya (*Birth of a Dream* 85).

Furthermore, Ngũgĩ's ideological leanings and writings must have been shaped by some historical personalities and ideological movements. Two important influences on his thinking were Pan-Africanism and Negritude literature and ideas. This is revealed through the author's admiration of Peter Abrahams and other Pan-Africanist writers whose ideas inspired his writings (*Birth of a Dream* 85). Particularly important, is his encounter with Negritude poetry which seems to have profoundly influenced his thinking about the implications of the blackness of Africans and their sociocultural realities and identity. The narrator's awe at the way Negritude poetry elevates the beauty of blackness through its "lyrical rendering of blackness" (*Birth of a Dream* 113) is demonstrated when he declares that it reflects his own image just like a mirror (114).

Therefore, it is clear that his encounter with Negritude poetry enabled him to streamline his thinking about racial ideas in relation to blackness. However, Ngũgĩ is quick to point out that his concept of blackness in Negritude literature should not be blindly embraced as revealed by his criticism of the "overemphasis on an undifferentiated blackness" (114). His perception of blackness has been expressed in his article "Give Me My Black Dolls: The African Dilemma", which he claims was published in *The Undergraduate* in May 1962 and was motivated by Leon Damas poem "Borders". According to Matthias De Groof and Kathleen Gyssels, the metaphorical black doll transcends the different lines the he wanted to abolish that included generational, sex, racialism and socioeconomic classes (De Groof and Gyssels 121).

In his reaction to Negritude poetry, Ngũgĩ has critiqued the nostalgia ostensibly suggested by such poetry by denouncing the naïve desire for the past that cannot be reclaimed. He thus advocates for the fusion of the positive aspects from the Asians, Europeans and Africans who occupied the East African countries. Again, at this point, Ngũgĩ has appealed to authority to boost his ethos by claiming that his stand on racism has also been echoed by other scholars such

as Leopold Senghor, Edward Blyden, Kwame Nkrumah and Ali Mazrui's idea of "the triple heritage" (*Birth of a Dream* 115).

In *Birth of a Dream Weaver*, Ngũgĩ has invoked his mother's influence as one of the driving forces behind his success in his writing career. In reference to the publication of his first novel, *Weep Not, Child*, Ngũgĩ expresses his excitement over its publication and says that he had rushed home to show a copy of the novel to his immediate family members and neighbours. He claims that he had assured his mother that he had done the best in writing the book and also took the book to his extended family since he had wanted to show it particularly to his half-sister, Wabia, whose childhood songs and stories influenced him in developing an interest in storytelling in particular and literature, generally. On the part of his neighbours, the narrator says that they "received it well, and though they could not read it, they touched it reverently" (*Birth of a Dream* 204). The author's aim at this point is to attract the admiration of the reader for the recognition of his family and community in his success as a writer. To persuade the reader about his excitement at the publication of *Weep Not, Child*, Ngũgĩ has used a photograph showing him signing copies of the novel at a Nairobi bookshop which was run by Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye. Macgoye, who was a writer herself, arranged for him to sign copies of the novel as part of her strategies of promoting its sale. The narrator's sense of being highly motivated by that act is expressed in his claim he could not believe that people would line up to have him sign their copies of newly published novel. This further elevates his ethos and persuades the reader that he is a credible creative writer.

His desire to pursue his writing career influenced his choice of Leeds University for his Master studies in literature. This is illustrated by his claim that he felt that Leeds was the most suitable for him as most renowned literary writers he admired such as Grant Kamenju, Peter Nazareth, Pio and Elvania Zirimu and Wole Soyinka were alumni members of the university (*Birth of a Dream* 215). By associating himself with those who had already excelled in the literary world, Ngũgĩ appeals to the ethos of his reputation.

In *Birth of a Dream Weaver*, Ngũgĩ, therefore, has successfully proclaimed his early successes as a writer of fiction as shown in his definitive conclusion that with his success in writing several

fiction and drama, he is confident that he has redefined himself a creative writer (Ngũgĩ 194). In terms of his publications in local and international journalistic writings, Lindfors notes that from 1961 to 1964, Ngũgĩ had written about eighty creative works (69). The reader, at this point, will be convinced that Ngũgĩ's literary acumen started at his youthful years and that the circumstances surrounding him produced an enabling environment for his development as a creative writer.

From the foregoing, it comes out vividly that, as a student at Makerere University College, Ngũgĩ's trajectory as a literary write commenced as demonstrated by his creative acumen and productions of drama, prose fiction and journalism. Therefore, by taking his audience through his successful beginnings as a writer while pointing out and acknowledging the different sources of his motivation to write, the author attempts effectively to influence the reader to accept the narrator's self-definition as a creative writer.

## 4.3 The Paradox of Independence in Africa

In *Birth of a Dream Weaver*, Ngũgĩ seems to contemplate on the contradictions which the newly independent African countries faced in their efforts to attain nationhood. In this memoir, therefore, Ngũgĩ declares to the reader that the independence euphoria and great optimism which gripped the Africans during the 1950s and 1960s was short-lived. The reader is exposed to experiences which were contrary to the expectations of many citizens as well as creative writers. As one of those who experienced those complexities and contradictions that arose in the young post-independence African countries, Ngũgĩ draws from that experience and weaves it with his narrative of his beginnings as a writer. This is because, as Rosemary Girard has said, in creative nonfiction writings, life narratives are composed after the writer experiences certain events in their lives that are deemed significant (Girard 102). It is on this basis that we see Ngũgĩ's narrative in *Birth of a Dream Weaver* as a rhetorical appeal to the reader as the author interprets the situation at independence in most of the African states. According to Lloyd Bitzer, a rhetorical discourse takes place in response to an exigency and that the situation that prompts such a discourse constitutes a rhetorical activity (*Philosophy and Rhetoric* 5-6).

In this memoir, Ngũgĩ has referred to Tanganyika's independence on December 9, 1961 and Uganda's on October 9, 1962, to make the reader aware that the East Africans and the Makerere students were excited by the celebrations that engulfed these countries. A quotation from William Wordsworth's poetry illustrates the celebratory euphoria that gripped people (*Birth of a Dream* 72). However, owing to the contradictions of independence, Ngũgĩ was triggered to script a play, *The Black Hermit*, as part of the celebrations of Uganda's independence as well as expose the post-independence challenges in most of the newly established African states. In the play, Ngũgĩ raises the problems of ethnicity, racialism, religious and cultural conflict as the main causes of disunity among the Africans in the newly established African states; hence, an impediment to development and true nationalism in those countries. According to Amitayu Chakraborty, *The Black Hermit* explores the problems of ethnicity as an aspect of anti-nationalism and informs us that the first Kenya government after independence was Gĩkũyũ-dominated. This contributed to the rise of "hegemonic Gĩkũyũ nationalism" which envisaged a postcolonial politically ethnic community that could become a nation-state (Chakraborty 168). Correspondingly, Ogude has pointed out that Ngũgĩ's earlier works of the 1960s grapple with the problematic notion of nationalism, ethnicity and individualism. He notes that the writer's writings were characterised by the incongruence of ethnicity and nationalism in postcolonial African countries which he describes as "uneasy bedfellows" (Ogude 5). Ogude has observed that the author at that time clearly felt some annoyance with the manifestations of ethnocentrism. This explains why the author ruthlessly attacks tribalism in his early works such as *The Black Hermit*. At this point, therefore, the reader acknowledges that the problem of ethnocentrism in post-independence African nations influenced Ngũgĩ's thinking and contributed to the major thematic issues in most of his early writings.

The unfolding political realities in the newly independent African countries had a profound bearing on Ngũgĩ's early stages of development as a writer as indicated by his claim that the political situation in Uganda and Kenya gave him "the theme of a three-act play which I wrote under the title *The Black Hermit*" (*Birth of a Dream* 146). Ngũgĩ claims that, in Kenya, the political party KADU which comprised smaller communities such as the Maasai and Kalenjins was "white-settler-backed" whereas KANU was composed of large tribes such as the Luo and the Gĩkũyũ. However, though the parties were composed of different ethnic groups, the author's

claim that KADU was "white-settler-backed" and consisted of small communities reveals his insensitivity and subjectivity to Kenya's political history. David Anderson concurs with Ngũgĩ on the composition of KANU, but reveals that it was this party, not KADU, which was preferred by the departing colonial regime (Anderson 378).

From Anderson's observations, it is apparent that KANU, not KADU, appears to be the party that was backed by the white settlers who were departing from Kenya. Correspondingly, Sigrid Archer asserts that when Kenya gained independence in 1963, the British system of government and informs us that later on, in 1965, the political alliance of the Kikuyu and Luo communities failed (Archer 15). This was due to President Jomo Kenyatta's pro-Kikuyu elites in his government; hence, Oginga Odinga defected and formed the Kenya Peoples Union (KPU) as the socialist substitute for KANU's pro-capitalist leadership (Archer 15). Ngũgĩ's pro-KANU attitude at that time can be said to have been influenced by the ethnic affiliations that Kenyans had already developed even before independence.

In comparing the political situation in Uganda to that in Kenya, Ngũgĩ writes: "A similar situation was emerging in Uganda, as in other African countries, where a patchwork of different communities, each with a traditional ruler or political boss, was trying to form new nations" (*Birth of a Dream* 185). In his denunciation of the problem of tribalism in Kenya, Ngũgĩ notes that ethnic rivalries in the country began even prior to independence as exemplified through the formation of political parties that were based on select ethnic compositions. The politics in Kenya which was ethnic-based became so deeply rooted that it even created disunity among the Kenyan students at Makerere University College before Kenya's independence in 1963. Just like the political parties, the Kenyan students at Makerere were also divided along tribal lines because the "division gave rise to talk of large versus small communities". Its seriousness can be seen in the attempt by some Kenyan students who "tried to bridge the two by forming the Kenya Students Discussion Group" to neutralize the ethnic polarities amongst themselves (*Birth of a Dream* 142). This group "did not want to align itself with either KANU or KADU" (*Birth of a Dream* 146) because of their ethnic compositions. However, though he seemed to support KANU because of its Agĩkũyũ (his tribe) and Luo dominance, years later, Ngũgĩ reneges on his stance and ideology on the existence of tribalism in Kenya and Africa which he had in the 1960s.

In his essay *Secure the Base*, Ngũgĩ has deconstructed his earlier ideas on tribalism in Kenya by employing a Marxist interpretation of the ethnic polarizations in the country. For instance, he attributes the 2007/8 post-election ethnic violence to the class warfare between the rich and the poor in the country. Ngũgĩ's Marxist interpretation of tribalism in Kenya can be seen as his deliberate attempt to avoid implicating some key politicians, especially those from his ethnic community, who might have been involved in triggering the violence in Kenya. In his renunciation of his earlier ideas on tribalism, he has faulted the print media reformist thinkers for blaming negative ethnicity and ethnocentrism as the catalysts for the post-election violence in Kenya in the 2007-2008 political turmoil in the country. He refers to what he terms the "gruesome anti-Gĩkũyũ cleansing" (*Secure the Base* 7) by the Kalenjins of Eldoret and the Maasai of Narok to try to persuade the reader that there might have been no conflict between the Luo and Agĩkũyũ communities then. His argument that the two communities do not share a boundary to precipitate a skirmish and that the media's claims of ethnic enmity between the two communities "defeats reason and common sense" (*Secure the Base* 7) cannot persuade the reader on his stand about the political violence that has characterised Kenyan elections for about three decades.

What Ngũgĩ does not acknowledge in *Secure the Base*, however, is the fact that Kenya has had three out of four presidents coming from the Agĩkũyũ community (the other one, Daniel Arap Moi, was a Kalenjin) since independence in 1963. He does not also inform the reader that Raila Odinga politically attempted to wrestle power from Kibaki (in 2007) and Uhuru Kenyatta (2013 and 2015); that Raila was a Prime Minister in Kibaki's government, a position which was created to accommodate him in the coalition government which was a result of international intervention on the political chaos in 2007/2008; that Raila's father, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, was a Vice President in Jomo Kenyatta's government before the two fell out in the 1960s. In *Secure the Base*, Ngũgĩ's aim and position on tribalism is to mitigate the Agĩkũyũ political hegemony in the leadership of Kenya. His prejudiced arguments which seem to favour the Agĩkũyũ community comes out succinctly when he comments on the 2007/8 post-election violence in Kenya in relation to the ethnic background of those who held the presidency in the country during the colonial as well as the postcolonial periods (*Secure the Base* 7-8).

The reasons which Ngũgĩ gives concerning the occupants of the office of the presidency in his attempt to cushion his ethnic group against blame in its role in the post-election violence and political and economic dominance in Kenya look ridiculous, and implausible; thus, unpersuasive to the reader by any means. By shifting the focus from the Gĩkũyũ leadership and community to the Kalenjin and the British colonial regimes, Ngũgĩ employs a fallacy commonly referred to as the *red herring* which involves a speaker's deliberate attempt to veer the audience's attention from the issue at hand by introducing an irrelevant argument whose main goal is to distract the reader/audience from focusing on that issue (Heinrichs 149-150).

Ngũgĩ's ideas in *Secure the Base*, in which he has condemned class struggle as the main cause of political turmoil in post-independent Kenya, can also be interpreted from two perspectives or possible reasons for his about-turn on this reality in Kenya: firstly, he has been in America for so long that he has lost touch with the political reality in the country; and, secondly, he is being hypocritical with regard to the fact that the Gĩkũyũ community has dominated the Kenyan presidency and resulted in political animosity with other big tribes such as the Luo, Kalenjins, Luhya and Kamba communities among others.

According to James Ogude, Ngũgĩ attempts to blame the colonial masters for the problem of ethnicity in Africa and, Kenya in particular. He concurs with Ngũgĩ's argument that the colonialists and post-colonial leaders utilize ethnicity to manipulate their subjects to gain politically. He further concurs with Ngũgĩ when he argues that this aspect is an ideology which is normally employed by wily members of the petit-bourgeoisie class as a means of safeguarding their parochial political interests. It should, however, be noted that such perceptions can be utilized by writers to conceal their political intentions and shield members of their ethnic communities from condemnation, especially when they have been involved in politically or ethically unacceptable and contestable behaviour.

Pater Amuka has pointed out that tribalism has been a serious challenge in Kenya for a long time.  Amuka points out that tribalism, racism and other forms of disparities shall continue to exist in the African continent. In his criticism of sociopolitical challenges and malpractices in Africa, he raises the following questions: "…are Africans unable to control clannism, tribalism,

corruption and cultural arrogance in the interests of national unities? Will the desire for nationhood ever become bedfellows with the many fragmentary ethnic and economic desires?" (Amuka 8). These questions can be seen as Amuka's strong conviction that tribalism is part and parcel of the socio-economic and political problems that have characterized most of the African countries before and even after independence. He has castigated Ngũgĩ for failing to address the problem of tribalism in his writings and his habit of diagnosing political conflicts in Kenya on Marxist ideological perspectives. He observes, "Thus, instead of diagnosing the cancerous reality of tribalism in Kenya, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, for many years echoed Cold War propaganda" and dismissed the existence of 'tribes' in Kenya and insisted that rifts only existed between the 'haves' and 'have nots'. The scholar sarcastically comments that Ngũgĩ's kind of rhetoric fits well with what the "Soviet Union must have loved to hear" (14) to ridicule the author's obsession with communist ideology in his writings at the expense of addressing the ethnic reality in Kenya.

Amuka's arguments on tribalism resonate with those of Jairus Omuteche who has noted that ethnocentrism has been so much entrenched in Kenya that it defines the country's "politics and power dynamics", affects the access and distribution of the economic opportunities that affect and influences how Kenyans construct their national identities (Omuteche 110). On this basis, it is fair to argue that Ngũgĩ's most recent arguments on tribalism in Kenya can only be seen to serve an implied political agenda which he doesn't want to state overtly.

Though colonialism might have contributed to the enhancement of ethnic rivalries and conflicts in most African countries, it is not totally plausible to blame it solely for the political crises that exist in Kenya and other African countries which gained their independence over five decades ago. For instance, it could be intellectually naïve and fallacious to claim that the recent political crises in Sudan, Southern Sudan or the xenophobic violence in South Africa can be blamed on colonialism. Mwangi, argues that Ngũgĩ's ideas in *Secure the Base* may bolster African dictators, hence, perpetuate the undesired political dictatorship in many African countries. He further notes that some African writers have been engaged in railing abstract terms such as "colonialism and globalisation" ("Ngũgĩ's New Book") in their writings in order to avoid disapproving the corrupt tribemates who are in political positions of power. To downplay Ngũgĩ's continued castigation of

colonialism, he warns that Africans should not blame the colonialists for the problems they have created for themselves.

However, Ngũgĩ's argument that the colonial powers promoted ethnocentrism in Africa, especially in the post-independence African countries, so that they can continue exploiting the natural resources may be persuasive to the reader. His argument that the colonial state developed the road and railway networks "to make the mining of resources easier and more efficient" (*Birth of a Dream* 186) can be proven even from the history sources. The narrator informs us that, immediately after the independence of many African states, the exploitation of resources by the West was enhanced by ethnic divisions as "the colonial state thrived on divide-and-rule" tactics and socioeconomic stratification within each of the already subdivided ethnic groups (*Birth of a Dream* 186). At this point, Ngũgĩ's argument about the interests of the former colonial masters in African countries can convince the African reader to be contemptuous towards their acts of perpetuating imperialism in Africa.

Dictatorship, political strife and interference by the former colonial masters in the newly independent African countries also dampened the sense of optimism which the citizens and African writers had prior to the end of colonialism. In *Birth of a Dream Weaver*, Ngũgĩ exposes the reader to the chaos in the Congo after the assassination of Patrice Lumumba (first African prime minister in the country) and the rise of Mobutu to the presidency as some of the disappointing post-independence realities which loomed over the joy of the decolonization process in Africa. In this memoir, Ngũgĩ intimates that Mobutu's rise to the presidency was partly a result of the colonial influence since he was nurtured by the Belgian colonial state and army. As such, some months prior to independence, "the Belgian authorities he had served so well had promoted him to colonel, a kind of parting gift," which Ngũgĩ describes as "an insurance policy" for the departing Belgian colonial power (*Birth of a Dream* 143). Therefore, Mobutu's rise to the position of the presidency must have had the blessings of the former colonial master and the West, generally. Frank M. Matanga, has argued that the Congo crisis of the early 1960s provides a good example of the foreign factor in the militarization of politics in Africa (Matanga 141)

The narrative of the decolonization process and independence in Africa in *Birth of a Dream Weaver* reveals another paradox delineated by the replacement of the departing colonialists. The memoir demonstrates that the African leaders in the newly independent African countries adopted recommendations to fill different vacancies by other Europeans or Africans whose endorsements came from the departing colonial states. The narrator, for instance, claims that some of the former colonial officers were rewarded by their African successors as exemplified by the revelation that, though they were forced to quit, they left "with nice retirement packages paid for in foreign currency to their banks in England" since they had "already positioned their loyalists for succession". To express the paradox of the whole practice, the narrator wonders, "How do you keep the old intact yet make it a harbinger of the new?" (*Birth of a Dream* 144). This kind of symbiotic relationship between the new African leaders and their former European masters amounts to imperialism.

In *Birth of a Dream Weaver*, it is clear that most of the African leaders who took over from their colonial masters were "eager to show that they could maintain the standards set by their colonial predecessors" (143). This, they did it by ensuring that smooth transition from the colonizer to the new African leadership did not result in "disrupting the structures of the old" (*Birth of a Dream* 143). Ngũgĩ expresses this metaphorically by referring to the proverbial old wine in new bottles and sarcastically declares that "After all, old wine was best" (*Birth of a Dream* 143). At this point, the author succeeds in creating in the reader a scornful attitude towards the African leadership through his sarcastic tone and by portraying them as perpetrators of imperialism.

In this memoir, Jomo Kenyatta, the first president of independent Kenya, has been criticized for his support of the colonial structures that his government inherited from the British and his attack on the Mau Mau who he derogatorily described as gangsters just as the British colonialists had done (*Birth of a Dream* 182).

Additionally, *Birth of a Dream Weaver* reveals that each successive postcolonial government pledged to maintain the inherited colonial structures and standards. The narrator's claim that the negotiations for this political strategy were "written in closed sessions in London, Paris or Brussels," (187) informs the reader of the ill-intentions associated with such a strategy. These

standards have been “maintained by manipulation of differences of region, development, class, race, and even religion” in the affected countries. Owing to this reality, it is apparent that the Africans wanted freedom but did not put in place strategies to do away with the colonial legacies as revealed by the narrator’s claim that “We wanted to have our cake and eat it” (*Birth of a Dream* 187). In this context, Ngũgĩ’s attempt is to persuade the reader that imperialism has taken over from colonialism with the aim of the continuity of economic exploitation of the African countries.

To demonstrate the paradox of the decolonization process and the reality in postcolonial African states, it is revealed that, through the inherited colonial army, the police and the civil service, the colonial structures were perpetuated in the independent African states. The absurdity of the whole political and economic situation in the newly independent states has been expressed through the narrator’s claim that the “players on the field won the match, but the spectators took home the trophy” (*Birth of a Dream* 187). The irony of the situation in Kenya after gaining her independence in 1963 is demonstrated when the narrator claims that the colonial police and military generals who were “hunting down LFA soldiers in the mountains” were the ones who became privileged:

> They hoisted the flag and sang the new anthem, whose lyrics and melody had been entrusted to Graham Hyslop, one of the cultural pillars of the colonial era. (*Birth of a Dream* 187)

To further demonstrate to the reader the negative impacts of the inherited colonial structures, it is revealed that the inherited security systems attempted to sabotage the newly established independent East African countries through organized mutinies. Ironically, the presidents from the three countries, Nyerere, Obote and Kenyatta, sought help to quell the uprisings from their former colonizer, Britain. Ngũgĩ has raised several questions that implicate the former colonial masters in the political and military crises in the African countries: “Who were the prime movers of the military mutinies? How come they took place at the same time in the same month in multiple countries? What were the continued implications of a continued British military presence in Kenya? Why were there echoes of the Congo in the chaos, and what did they signify?” (*Birth of a Dream* 214). These questions have been raised to enable the reader to

contemplate critically on the negative outcomes of the continued dependence of African states on their former colonial masters.

Disunity amongst Africans along religious lines was a serious contradiction which characterised and afflicted many African countries following the decolonization process and ultimately gaining of independence. Political developments were influenced by religious affiliations that were antagonistic with each other. This dilemma has continued to influence the politics of Africa in many countries such as the Central Africa Republic where the Muslims and Christians have been involved in bloody wars and in Nigeria, during the wake of Boko Haramu invasion. In *Birth of a Dream Weaver*, Ngũgĩ has employed the Marxist ideology to describe the political conflict along religious lines in Uganda after independence as demonstrated in his act of foregrounding each of the leaders' religious affiliations (*Birth of a Dream* 144).

Therefore, the citizens of most of the postcolonial African countries grappled with the problem of divisive political affiliations which were based on different foreign religious groups right from the moments of independence. Instead of the Africans becoming united in their nation-building endeavours, they succumbed to Amuka's claim that "Europe, America and the Arab worlds have re-colonised Africa through Christianity and Islam" (*Birth of a Dream* 9).

The problem of landlessness that many Africans faced after independence brings out clearly the paradox of the post-colonial situation in Africa. This is because many families lost their land to the white settlers and the colonial state. Ngũgĩ's family suffered the same fate as the others whose lands were taken away. Ngũgĩ himself had to struggle to save money which he used to buy a piece of land and build his mother a house which he describes as "a place in which she could root herself" (*Birth of a Dream* 203). By asserting that his mother could establish her roots in the land he had bought her and the house he built her, Ngũgĩ underscores the importance of land and a home for an African family. Ngũgĩ also bought his own quarter of an acre plot at Kamĩrĩthu which he describes as a big success as indicated by his satisfaction exemplified in his claim that "it was a quarter an acre, but it felt like a range…" (*Birth of a Dream* 203). Through his acquisition of land, Ngũgĩ lauds his achievement by emotionally declaring, "…it felt good for us to settle in a place we could call our own" (203). To underscore the importance of a home for

African families, the narrator emphasizes that, unlike his life during his childhood and youth, his children were assured of a permanent home, hence, "will be able to point to a home, a place in which they grew up" (*Birth of a Dream* 203). Prior to owning their piece of land, Ngũgĩ's family can be said to have faced what Alfred M. Ong'ang'a, in "Kenya's Historical Retrospect through Introspection", describes as the "paradox of home and homelessness" (Ong'ang'a 121). By exalting his achievement for being able to establish his own home, own piece of land and ensure a place where his children's genealogy could start, Ngũgĩ attempts to elevate his ethos.

In *Birth of a Dream Weaver*, elitist leaders who alienated themselves from their underprivileged and poor people have been vilified. Such leaders, immediately after taking over leadership from the colonialist, started exploiting their own people, whom they had sworn to serve, through exploitative taxation system (*Birth of a Dream* 212). This is ironical since the Africans who took leadership from the colonialists focused on their selfish interests instead of serving and protecting their own people. This kind of disillusionment must have acted as an impetus in influencing Ngũgĩ's choice of themes in his early writings as well as his ideological development as a young writer. For instance, by pitting those in leadership against the "people in the streets" (*Birth of a Dream* 212), Ngũgĩ expresses his early affiliations to Marxist ideology. To demonstrate the problem of postcolonial disillusionment on not only the peasants but also on the educated like himself, Ngũgĩ refers to an article he published in the *Makererean* magazine of August 24, 1963 under the title, "The Writer and the Public" in which he raised critical questions:

> What effects have the changes had on the lives of ordinary people, the man who daily rides his bicycle to the factory, and the woman who daily trudges to her little *shamba* (garden) to coax it to yield the day's meal? Is there a new awareness, a new consciousness broadening the experiences and expectations of the peasant? Is there a conflict between the peasants' hopes and the plans of his government? (*Birth of a Dream* 213)

Ngũgĩ, referring to a later period, claims that when Idi Amin overthrew Obote's government in 1971, he destroyed the reputation of Makerere. This is because it was during Amin's regime when the Makerere intellectuals were exiled to various parts of the world. To express the terrible situation that befell the university, he concludes that Idi Amin created a hell in Uganda and

Makerere in particular when he rose to power. In order to give the reader a clear picture of the terrible conditions in Uganda, Ngũgĩ refers to Susan Kiguli's poem "Snapshots" as having captured that reality (*Birth of a Dream* 224). In blaming the colonial legacy for the woes in the postcolonial Uganda under Idi Amin, he claims that Amin was a creation of the West who was only abandoned when he failed to adhere fully to their wishes. The West condemned him for killing many people, but Ngũgĩ expresses the irony of doing so yet it was the colonial government that had created him because of his role in the killing of many Mau Mau fighters in Kenya. Though Ngũgĩ's narrative about Amin's dictatorial leadership is an illustration of postcolonial disillusionment, it is nevertheless a violation of the autobiographical genre. The narrator in this memoir is Ngũgĩ-the-Makerere student; hence, he has jumped ahead of his story as a student.

Ngũgĩ's claims and narrative in *Birth of a Dream Weaver* have successfully exposed the paradox of postcolonial realities in Africa. Nevertheless, it should be noted that he has also overstepped in certain claims he has made in the memoir. For instance, his claim that both Idi Amin of Uganda and Daniel Moi of Kenya were beneficiaries from the political problems that emerged immediately after independence may be contentious. Through what can be seen as an overstatement, he compares Idi Amin to Moi by asserting: "We didn't realize then that Idi Amin had his counterpart in Kenya, at least" (*Birth of a Dream* 190). Ngũgĩ further indicts Moi by accusing him of having been "inserted by the colonial state into the political process in 1954" during the colonial government's fierce anti-Mau Mau campaign and that he "the main beneficiary of every major political crisis" then (*Birth of a Dream* 190).

A reader who is well-versed with the history of Uganda and Kenya is likely to doubt Ngũgĩ's unsubstantiated claims about Moi. For instance, it is unconvincing to compare Moi and Idi Amin in terms of their political growth and journey, since their experiences were different. Moi came to power in 1978 after the demise of Jomo Kenyatta, and, unlike Idi Amin, he was not a military dictator. Furthermore, Moi did not come to power through a military takeover as it happened to Idi Amin who ascended to power through a military coup. In this case, the author is articulating his political differences with the Moi administration which forced him into self-exile in the 1980s and 90s. The reader, at this point may wonder how Ngũgĩ can be so vicious in his attack

on Moi yet he is the one who set him free from detention in December 1978 (*Detained*). In fact, it is ironical for Ngũgĩ to attack Moi at this point since, after all, *Birth of a Dream Weaver* is a memoir about his life as a student of Makerere from 1959 to 1964. In this memoir, therefore, the reader expects Ngũgĩ to narrate his experience and the events that happened during the years he was in Makerere University College. At this point, it is apparent that Ngũgĩ has used the autobiographical genre for propaganda purposes.

Ngũgĩ further oversteps the bounds in his condemnation of Moi on matters pertaining education in Kenya. For instance, his claim that Moi was anti-education and anti-intellectuals and that he "orchestrated marches all over the country with the slogan *Kalamu Chini*, down with the pen" (*Birth of a Dream* 225) is an exaggeration. As much as it is true that during Moi's regime some Kenyan intellectuals including Ngũgĩ himself fled the country into exile, the author shouldn't exaggerate some things or even lie to the reader. For instance, it should be noted that during the Moi regime, the education in Kenya expanded tremendously. By the time Moi came to power, there was only one university in the country – the University of Nairobi. However, by the time Moi left power in 2003, university education had expanded tremendously in Kenya through the establishments of universities such as Moi, Kenyatta, Egerton, and Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology. According to Magdallen N. Juma, expansion of university education in Kenya during the 1980s and 90s led to the increase of enrolment of university students from 2,786 in 1970 to around 40,000 in 1991-1992 academic year (Juma 1). Juma further points out that the "size of the university staff quadrupled from 434 in 1970 to 1,800 in 1989" (Juma 1). Moi, despite his dictatorship, also expanded the secondary school enrolment and the numbers of schools, especially those for girls during his reign. With such statistics, it is difficult for Ngũgĩ to persuade the reader that the Moi regime was generally anti-education in Kenya.

Therefore, Ngũgĩ's act of invoking various ironical events that were witnessed by many Africans shortly after independence in their countries demonstrates to the reader the fact that, as a young writer, he was psychologically disturbed by the complex contradictions and disillusionments that arose due to ethnocentrism, racism, imperialism, political strife and foreign interference in the national affairs of the newly independent nations. By raising and condemning those issues that

thwarted the countries from attaining genuine freedom and nationhood, the author effectively invites his audience to equally share with him the painful disillusionment which gripped the affected citizens and writers in postcolonial African countries.

### 4.4 Appealing to Global Imaginings

*Birth of a Dream Weaver* reveals that Ngũgĩ's early development as a writer was partly influenced by different global events and personalities. These were specifically important in influencing Ngũgĩ's ideological and political development as a writer. The politics that revolved around the Cold War between the West and the East particularly established the foundation upon which Ngũgĩ's political and ideological worldviews sprouted and were enhanced later. The events of the Second World War and the colonization of other countries outside East Africa equally provided Ngũgĩ the necessary raw materials for his fiction and nonfiction writings.

In *Birth of a Dream Weaver*, America's politics and her relationship with the newly established African independent states contributed to Ngũgĩ's intellectual as well as ideological development and therefore influenced his vision in his writings. Particularly important is the politics revolving around John F. Kennedy's ideas, contact with Africa and assassination. Ngũgĩ acknowledges that Kennedy's ideas had a significant impact on him and the other students at Makerere University College. He informs the reader that words in the quote "seemed to speak to us and offer hope that we would soon have countries to which we would make a similar pledge" (*Birth of a Dream* 53). Also, President Kennedy's facilitation of student airlifts from Kenya which started in 1959 with 81 batch of beneficiaries, made the American president popular among the Makerere students and East Africa generally. Additionally, the airlifts "made Kennedy a voice of the new against old colonial Europe" and that many young Kenyans identified themselves with Kennedy's electoral triumph and ambition of his 1961 inaugural (*Birth of a Dream* 54). Moreover, Kennedy's gesture inspired rivalry from Eastern Europe which also started to offer scholarships to Kenyan students. This was organized by Jaramogi Oginga Odinga whose identity with communist thinking endeared him to the East. The narrator's comment that "Cold War rivalries affected everything, including offers of school" (Ngũgĩ 54) is also suggestive that even

the writers of that time became influenced by the politics which triggered the Cold War between the Western capitalists and the Eastern communists.

In exposing the impact of global politics on his thinking as a writer, Ngũgĩ has compared Patrice Lumumba's to that of J. F. Kennedy's rise to power in June and November 1960 respectively whereby Nixon conceded defeat by Kennedy gracefully. The author has drawn this comparison in order to condemn the tradition in Africa where elections always lead to political animosities. For instance, he points out that Lumumba's opponent King Baudouin of Belgium "was extremely rude" in his rejection of the former's triumph in the independence elections in the Congo. The author has further criticized the false perception that the Congolese independence was the climax of Belgium civilization by the colonialists. Instead, he sees the Belgium colonialism as a disaster for the Congolese and points out that between 1885 – 1908 King Leopold II "presided over the deaths of 10 million Congolese" (*Birth of a Dream* 69). Because of that, he describes Leopold II as a "mass murderer" to justify his claim and condemnation of the Belgium's colonization of Congo (*Birth of a Dream* 69). At this point, we need to recognize the fact that his choice of words is meant to inflame the reader's emotions of anger as well as expose his angry tone at the atrocities meted on Africans during colonialism.

In reference to Lumumba's overthrow and assassination on January 17, 1961, Ngũgĩ wants to convince the reader that political crises in independent African nations are orchestrated by foreign interference and the global politics of Cold War. For instance, he claims that the assassination of Lumumba was organized by the CIA mercenaries. His claim that the Belgium government sanctioned Joseph Mobutu's military takeover of power from the assassinated Lumumba exposes political interference in African states by the former colonial masters. To describe the vicious character of military dictators in the post-independent Africa, Ngũgĩ comments on Mobutu's adoption of a new name 'Leopard' in a pessimistic tone (*Birth of a Dream* 70) by metaphorically equating Mobutu's character to that of a treacherous and leopard.
Through Congo's post-independence political problems, the reader is made aware that the post-colonial Africa was used by the capitalist West and Communist East as a battleground for the Cold War politics. It is indicated that after Mobutu's military takeover of Congo, the expressions 'the Congo Crisis' and 'the Congo chaos' "became a centerpiece in the vocabulary of Cold War"

and were "used as a cautionary metaphor against rapid decolonization by those who wanted to slow down the inevitable" (*Birth of a Dream* 70). The impact of the Cold War on African nations during the decolonization process can be seen through CIA's secrete funding of the 1962 Makerere Conference without the knowledge of the organizers (139). Ngũgĩ's awareness of the role of the Cold War in the assassinations of J.F. Kennedy, Patrice Lumumba of the Congo and Ngo Dinh Diem of Vietnam during the 1960s informs the reader of his affiliations with the communist ideology while he was still a young writer.

Using inclusive language through the employment of the personal pronouns "we" and "our", Ngũgĩ reveals that the Cold War politics did not only impact on his thinking, but also did influence the lives of many people during the 1950s and 60s. He acknowledges that the "shadow of the Cold War fell on events that had a direct impact on our lives" and that Kennedy's assassination impacted emotionally on the Makerere University College community as demonstrated in "We reacted to his death as we would to a friend or a neighbor" (*Birth of a Dream* 180). Ngũgĩ informs us further that the whole of the Makerere community moaned Kennedy's death which was also reported by the university's *Newsletter* 12. The fact that a "requiem mass was held for him by both the Catholic and Protestant chaplaincies at the college" (180) underscores the influence that Kennedy had on African nations that were emerging from colonialism. On the assassination of Lumumba, Ngũgĩ believes it was executed with the help of the CIA because he was perceived as being "unreliable in the Cold War." The CIA also facilitated the assassination of Diem because he was "an ally no longer useful in Cold War" (*Birth of a Dream* 180).

In his study on Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's writings, Gikandi has recognized the role of the Cold War on the author's writings. Gikandi reveals that Ngũgĩ's Marxist inclinations are associated with the rivalry between capitalism and communism. Therefore, Gikandi believes that with the collapse of Cold War and the triumph of capitalism over communism, Ngũgĩ shifted the problem of literature to the "conceptual category of the state" (Gikandi 278). Amuka, on his part, criticizes Ngũgĩ for his overconcentration on Marxist politics and that he has "for many years echoed Cold War propaganda" (Amuka 14) instead of diagnosing the sociopolitical challenges like ethnicity that Kenyans have continued to face since independence.

In *Birth of a Dream Weaver*, the narrative of a German couple, Friedrich and Susan Vogel, who travelled across Africa, including Uganda, in a Mercedes Benz can be seen as Ngũgĩ's way of advancing his ideology on the global politics. Through the two Germans, he is able to expose a bit of the history of the World War II and the British attitude towards the Germans. However, Ngũgĩ is keen in his comment on the role of the Germans in the Second World War since he does not directly condemn it but rather claims that they learnt about it from the English in their narrative of the negative history of "German colonialism in Tanganyika and South West Africa" such as "the Herero massacres and the Auschwitz gas chambers" (*Birth of a Dream* 56). Ngũgĩ only seems to condemn Germany for her role in the colonization of Africa as indicated in his remark that he "always thought of the couple whenever the politics of the Berlin Wall, begun on August 13, 1961, came up in the newspapers" (*Birth of a Dream* 56). He also condemns Germans in not only their role in the colonization of Africa, but also their involvement in disregarding humanity through their systematic extermination of the Jews during the Second World War.

Also, important from the narrative of the German couple and their Mercedes Benz is the revelation of the influence of Marxism on Ngũgĩ's early ideological development and his writings. The Mercedes is a symbol of the bourgeoisie class against which the author has written extensively. Ngũgĩ's comment on the obsession of the Mercedes Benz by the post-independent African elites demonstrates this when he asserts that the Mercedes Benz became the symbol of the newly "emergent elite" produced by Makerere and post-independence realities. He claims that he wrote short two stories, "The Mercedes Funeral" and "Mercedes Tribesmen," to satirize this obsession (*Birth of a Dream* 57).

In *Birth of a Dream Weaver*, the reader is made aware that it is not only the colonial situation in Kenya that affected Ngũgĩ's ideological development and early writings; racism and colonialism in other countries in Africa had a significant impact on his thinking. Specifically, his anti-racial worldview can be seen to have been sharpened by the knowledge of world historical happenings of the time. Ngũgĩ's depiction of South Africa as an example of countries in which the whites resisted the independence consciousness attests to the influence of the apartheid history on his anti-racial thinking. He has used terms with a strong condemnatory tone to describe the evils of

the South African apartheid system. For instance, he describes the South African whites as people whose "indifference to cries of shame" led to the entrenchment of the infamous apartheid regime which "perpetrated the Sharpeville Massacre," led to bloodshed when the African-based political parties were banned and their leaders including Nelson Mandela were incarcerated in 1962 (*Birth of a Dream* 62). Ngũgĩ has attacked the West and her allies in the role they played in subjecting Africans to suffering in South Africa in some of his essays. In *Writers in Politics*, Ngũgĩ has condemned the oppression and exploitations of Africans through what he terms the West's cultural imperialism that has adversely affected African countries but can only be overcome by the most liberal and revolutionary classes (Ngũgĩ 31). In *Homecoming*, Ngũgĩ sums up the impact of the West on the African by asserting that all aspects of the African's life have been significantly impacted by the capitalist European nations (Ngũgĩ xv):

In authenticating the impact of international politics and the Cold War on his thinking and writings, Ngũgĩ refers to an editorial he wrote for the *Daily Nation* of the 7th of August 1964 about a claim by the US that its ship had been attacked by Vietnamese boats. In the article, Ngũgĩ had wrongly sided with the American claim in his commentary. However, later he learnt that the American claim was a fabrication which was meant to be used by the US to start war against Vietnam. The author claims that when he learnt about the truth later, he was hurt by what he had published (*Birth of a Dream* 216). Ngũgĩ has used this scenario to persuade the reader that international politics during the Cold War shaped his anti-American views and politics. In most of his essays and fiction, Ngũgĩ has condemned the USA as a perpetrator of imperialism in post-colonial Africa. However, ironically, he continues to live and work in America to date and there is no sign of him coming back to settle in his motherland, Kenya.

## 4.5 Focalization of the Legacy of Colonialism as a Special Topoi

In *Birth of a Dream Weaver*, Ngũgĩ has focalized colonialism as special topoi upon which the themes and worldviews in his writings can be contemplated. In Greek rhetoric, the term *topoi*, which may also be called topics, loci, or places, was introduced by Aristotle to describe the areas where a speaker or writer may locate one's arguments that are appropriate to a given subject. The memoir covers a period of four years (1959 to 1964) during which he witnessed the end of

colonialism in East African countries. Therefore, having experienced the problem of colonialism and its diverse impacts on the Africans as a youth, it would be appropriate to acknowledge that the colonial circumstances affected Ngũgĩ's thinking and became a key stimulus for his early growth as a writer. Thus, throughout the memoir, it is ostensibly clear that the colonial experience haunts Ngũgĩ as he comes of age as a writer since specific incidences of colonialism affected his mind. The most prominent aspects of colonialism in this memoir which affected him are racism and the atrocities that were meted on the colonized Kenyans. In *Homecoming*, Ngũgĩ talks about the disruption of the socioeconomic and political structures of African communities by colonialism (Ngũgĩ 3). He has also argued that the first African literature that was written in European languages were "inspired by the great anti-colonial resistance" of the African peoples and that it was a reaction to the conception of the world in Eurocentric literature in which Africans are portrayed as a "negation of history" (*Moving the Centre*, 19).

Without colonialism, it seems as though it would be difficult for Ngũgĩ to take off as a writer of both fiction and nonfiction works. According to Gikandi, colonization, anti-colonialism and nationalist feelings in East Africa are significant factors in the reader's comprehension of Ngũgĩ's writings (x). This implies that, firstly, the reader should be aware that colonialism is the main theme that cuts across Ngũgĩ's writings; secondly, the discussion of nationalism in the author's writings can only be contemplated by taking colonialism and its diverse impacts on the colonised as an important factor. Therefore, Ngũgĩ being among the first batch of African writers, was also inspired by the urge to write anti-colonial literary works.

In *Birth of a Dream Weaver*, it is apparent that Ngũgĩ's community and the rest of the Kenyans were adversely affected by colonialism. The psychological disturbance caused on the Africans has been captured by Ngũgĩ's claim that images of "numerous atrocities committed by the white settlers in Kenya compete" in his mind. In retrospect, he appeals to the reader's emotions of outrage by describing colonialism as being characterised by "the wanton massacres, the mass incarcerations, and the violent mass relocations" (7). The author has further invoked images of the atrocities committed against the colonized including flogging of black workers by white settlers, described as "bizarre" and a form of sport for the whites. He also refers to another case in which a white man, Peter Poole, set his fierce dogs on his black houseboy, Kamawe Musunge,

in 1959 and shot him dead for picking a stone to throw at the dogs in self-defense. Poole's act implies that the whites valued their dogs more than they did their African workers. By describing the murder as a "kind of sport" (*Birth of a Dream* 71) for the whites, Ngũgĩ implies that the white colonial settlers considered Africans as animals or game that they could enjoy hunting and killing just like one can do to wild game. By describing the settlers as "gun-toting white settler cowboys", the author likens them to the white American cowboys or slave masters who molested, exploited or killed their slaves as part of their sport as indicated in Paul Lawrence Danbar's *The Sport of the Gods*.

It is because of such brutal acts that left lasting painful impressions in Ngũgĩ's mind which he has expressed in some powerful imagery in *Birth of a Dream Weaver*. For instance, to articulate the impact of both colonial and anticolonial resistance on the development of his ideological thinking and writings, Ngũgĩ has employed the metaphor of scars to suggest to the reader that the experience was permanently grounded in his memory. This is expressed in his claim that, since he was born and educated in a colony, colonialism inevitably left scars on him. He further demonstrates the impact of colonial and anticolonial values on him by claiming that his fiction, theatre and "more than eighty pieces of journalism" (216) he published when he was a student at Makerere University College reflected his worldviews on the character of imperialism and neocolonialism. His emphasis that his hope in creative writing "lies in learning enough from the scars to reach for the stars" (216) attests to the reader that the author's main source of raw materials for his creative output is his contact and experience with colonialism and the aftermath of the same. In *Penpoints,* the imagery of the scars of colonialism can better be understood in Ngũgĩ's claim that it amounted to "adding historical insult to the historical injury" of slavery (81) to emphasize that it was an extension of slavery or rather a different form of slavery. In *Decolonising the Mind*, Ngũgĩ has argued that the actual aim of colonial empire was to gain control over the colonized people's resources "through military conquests" and ensuing "political dictatorship" (16). These military conquests left a lot of destruction of the African person in terms of deaths, oppression and economic exploitation.

In terms of military conquests, the reader is exposed to more dehumanizing effects of colonialism in Kenya in *Birth of a Dream Weaver* through the Hola Massacre in which eleven

Mau Mau detainees were "bludgeoned to death and dozens more maimed" (11). In his intertextual reference to Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Ngũgĩ uses the emotionally-charged term "horror" repetitively to describe the killings in order to appeal to the reader's anger (11). By invoking the Hola Massacre, Ngũgĩ expresses his anticolonial politics and ideology by attacking the colonial discourse whose portrayal of the colonized is characterized by racial prejudices and falsehoods. In this context, he portrays the colonial governor, Baring and other colonial agents as liars for covering up of the Hola Massacre by claiming that the victims had drunk contaminated water. In a sarcastic tone, Ngũgĩ condemns the colonial agents and white writers for applying false theories to justify the killings of Africans as indicated by the narrator's claim that during the inquiry into the Hola Massacre, Walter Coutts, a white overseer of the torture, claimed that the murdered men "had willed themselves to death" and that Blixen, a Danish baroness had declared that this occurs to "creatures of the wild" (*Birth of a Dream* 12). Therefore, according to Ngũgĩ, the Hola Massacre exposed the "façade of law, order and civilization" (*Birth of a Dream* 13) which the colonial empire exposed to the world to witness. However, as much as the reader is likely to be moved by Ngũgĩ's condemnation of the colonial military in killing many of the Mau Mau detainees and members of the Agĩkũyũ community in this memoir, the author has not addressed the issue of the atrocities committed by the Mau Mau fighters against their own people who were Christians, chiefs and home guards among others as discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis.

In his condemnation of the colonial state's oppressive practices, Ngũgĩ supports the Mau Mau by justifying their ritual of taking the oaths. This is brought out when he argues: "Even the Queen of England, judges, the military brass, they all take oaths of office...but none had gone to prison or had his body parts severed on account of it" (*Birth of a Dream* 23). This is part of his efforts to counter what he terms "a colonial truth" which was propagated by the colonial state in its anti-Mau Mau crackdown. Thus, Ngũgĩ's claims in this context can be seen as part of his counter-colonial discourse meant to persuade the reader to vilify colonialism and sympathize with all forms of anti-colonialism. However, as much as the author wants the reader to have a sympathetic attitude towards the Mau Mau fighters, one question that has not been answered for the reader is: why has Ngũgĩ not brought out the atrocities committed by the Mau Mau against other Kenyans during the colonial period? The only credible response to the question is that

Ngũgĩ has simply decided to cover up the negative part of the Mau Mau movement so as to shield it from the reader's condemnation.

*Birth of a Dream Weaver* reveals further that some colonial discourses affected Ngũgĩ's early ideological thinking and therefore influenced the major thematic concerns in most of his early creative output. The author, for example, has cited Derek Corfield's *The Origins and Growth of Mau Mau: An Historical Survey*, which he claims was written to distort the reality and truth about LFA (Mau Mau) since it presented historical issues "entirely from a settler's point of view" (62). Corfield was the secretary of the War Council against Mau Mau, henceforth, would not be expected to be objective in his writing about Mau Mau. The author describes him as a partisan "historian" to dismiss his arguments and ideas on the history of Mau Mau. Ngũgĩ's claim that his teeth clenched and grated whenever he read Corfield's book reveals how it emotionally and psychologically affected him. That is why he describes the book as a "literary nightmare in its own right" and says that it evoked in him the "political nightmare" which he thought he had escaped by going to Uganda. Specifically, Corfield's claims that the Mau Mau guerrillas were a "social misfit" and the Agĩkũyũ community as "primitive" and "atavistic" tremendously irked Ngũgĩ and must have contributed to his early development of anticolonial feelings (63). Consequently, in his anti-colonial endeavors, Ngũgĩ likens Corfield's prejudicial ideas on the Agĩkũyũ and Mau Mau freedom fighters to those in other colonial discourses. For instance, he refers to J.C. Carothers' book, *The Psychology of Mau Mau* which Corfield has acknowledged as a source of his materials. He also refers to another book, *Hunt for Kimathi*, by a colonial policeman named Ian Henderson (1958) in which the white writer compares the Agĩkũyũ people to Germans and Kimathi to Hitler (*Birth of a Dream* 64). The author sums up his claims on what he terms "pseudoscience" by arguing that Carothers and Corfield were similar ideologically to those of Samuel Cartwright of the slave plantation. Through these white writers, Ngũgĩ has attacked European writers by portraying them as pseudo-experts on the African mind. In *Writers in Politics*, Ngũgĩ has argued that such literatures as Corfield's constituted cultural imperialism which has become the "major agency of control during neo-colonialism" phase (*Birth of a Dream* 5). Such literature is obviously offensive to the African reader.

Therefore, from the various references Ngũgĩ has made, it is obvious that the racially inclined books written by Europeans about Africans had a profound impact on his psyche and ideology while being a student at Makerere University College. That is why he claims that the ideas in those books left "scars" and "festering wounds" in him and other African students at the University College. Their impact on his mind can be discerned in a question that the narrator raises: "How did a colonial student ever survive the daily bombardment of this condescending view of my history and being?" (*Birth of a Dream* 64). The metaphors of "scars" and "wounds" in this context are meant to evoke the imagery of the intensity of the disgust and psychological pain which was left in the Africans by such literature. As pointed out by Wendy Burt-Thomas, metaphors can be used to paint clear mental pictures or images because they "indirectly compare two dissimilar things" and enable the reader to think about issues in different novel ways (Burt-Thomas 149).

In *Birth of a Dream Weaver*, Ngũgĩ's anti-colonial politics also comes out clearly in his interpretation of the reality and practices at Makerere University College. For instance, some of the things that happened at the university had symbolic implications which are triggered by the legacy of colonialism in Africa. For instance, though the university was situated in an African country, Uganda, all its halls of residence were given European names or titles such as Northcote, Mitchell, New Hall and Livingstone. Furthermore, the rivalries between the halls of residence at the university were expressed, symbolically, in terms of the colonizer and the colonized (*Birth of a Dream* 40). In his essays, Ngũgĩ has discussed extensively the role of using language to colonize different groups of people. In his book, *Re-membering Africa*, the act of giving European names to places in the African colonies and the colonized or enslaved Africans amounts to replacing the history of the Africans with "European memory" while deliberately burying that of the Africans (*Birth of a Dream* 5).

Even the relationship between students from the different halls of resident at Makerere University College is given an interpretation on the basis of colonial structures. This is demonstrated by the symbolic description of the 'colonization' of University Hall by Mitchell Hall residents who were distributed to other halls of residence when the university wanted to build a modern hall for the latter. The students from old Mitchell are said to have symbolically

planted the Mitchell flag in University Hall and forced the 'natives' into submission. Further, Ngũgĩ symbolically elaborates this parody of colonization by saying that the Mitchell residents imposed their civilization on the natives of University Hall and oppressive treaties between the two were signed. He further claims that even *The Makererean*, the student newspaper reported that University Hall was 'invaded, conquered and colonized by the ever expanding Mitchell Hall Empire' (*Birth of a Dream* 42). The whole parody is, in fact, a replica of the British colonial establishment in many colonies in Africa and other parts of the world. In this case, Ngũgĩ has employed analogy to persuade the reader that colonialism impacted immensely on the colonized by clarifying its symbolic ramifications through the students' behaviour. According to Wendy Burt-Thomas, an analogy is "an extended comparison between two different things" that is employed by a writer to help the reader to comprehend "a difficult or complicated idea" (Burt-Thomas 88).

In retrospect, Ngũgĩ has revealed how his childhood was affected by his own experience of colonialism and its impact on his family. Though he has already done this in his two earlier memoirs, *Dreams in a Time of War* and *In the House of the Interpreter*, he once again invokes his childhood experience of colonialism as an impetus for his development as a creative writer in *Birth of a Dream Weaver*. Therefore, when he writes "about the women who are arrested and taken to the Home Guard post, who, when they come back, are silent about what happened," Ngũgĩ is indirectly invoking the memory of his mother's detention at the home guard post when he was young (*Birth of a Dream* 85). In his childhood, Ngũgĩ's own mother was detained at the Home Guard post for some days and interrogated about her son, Wallace Mwangi who had joined the Mau Mau guerillas. The author further invokes some songs about colonialism which they used to sing at primary school as an inspiration for his early creative writing. The colonial state had banned the songs because they "talked about the struggle for land, freedom and education" (*Birth of a Dream* 87).

Despite the ban on the songs during his childhood, their psychological impact could not be erased from Ngũgĩ's memory. That psychological and emotional impact is discernible when he writes, "The lyrics come back to me, subversive music from the underground – or is it from history? (*Birth of a Dream* 87). The passion with which he recounts that impact makes the reader

to empathize with Ngũgĩ as he introspects into his melancholic past. It demonstrates further the impact of memory in the narrative of Ngũgĩ's experience with his painful past. Cheney, in *Writing Creative Nonfiction*, has argued that a nonfiction narrative delivers facts in ways that affect the audience toward a deeper comprehension of a topic or idea (1). Cheney further contends that the writers of creative nonfiction normally strive to enlighten the implied reader by making their reading experience "vivid, emotionally compelling" (2) while presenting the facts about their past or events.

In *Birth of a Dream Weaver*, the development of Ngũgĩ's attitude towards racism and racial relationships between the Europeans and Africans was greatly influenced by his personal encounter with colonialism. His experience of the extreme racial prejudices against the colonised Africans had a profound impact on his psychological dispositions and was grounded in his memory. This accounts for the way he starts his narrative in this memoir with a racially-imbued quotation of a remark against what a white character in his one-act play, *The Wound in the Heart*, has done: "A British officer cannot do a thing like that" (1). The play is about a Mau Mau soldier who returns home from a concentration camp only to find that a British officer had raped his wife. Because of this, the play was barred from being performed at Kampala National Theatre in the annual drama festival despite having won in the inter-hall competitions at Makerere University College. This attracts the attention of the reader to the strained racial relations and discriminations which were experienced in the British colonies from Ngũgĩ's childhood to his early adulthood. In his book, *Moving the Centre*, Ngũgĩ conceptualizes racism as a "weapon of mental and spiritual subjugation" which is realised in different forms including "religion, the arts, the media and culture" among others. Because of its dehumanizing impact, Ngũgĩ declares it "the most devastating of all the ideological weapons" (34) of imperialism" which is meant to enhance and safeguard exploitation of the masses in many countries.

As a weapon of subjugation, the colonialist used racism to molest and even abuse the Africans. In *Birth of a Dream Weaver*, Ngũgĩ informs the reader how he suffered silently in the face of a cruel racial act which made him realise the underprivileged position of the African in a racist environment. He recounts three incidences which he claims enabled him discover that the blackness of the colonised African was the basis on which the whites oppressed and exploited

the Africans. Ngũgĩ's first discovery of his blackness was when he was first beaten by an armed white colonial officer when he was young. His lack of retaliation demonstrates the racial power relations between Africans and whites during the colonial period which places the African in an underprivileged position. During that time, the whites used the gun and their position to subdue the blacks.

Ngũgĩ's second discovery of his blackness has been expressed in a flashback to the time when he was incarcerated unfairly on the orders of a white officer who was "hardly older or more schooled" (*Birth of a Dream* 104) than him for failing to produce tax papers after leaving Alliance High School. The author claims that even grown black men cowed at the young white officer's orders and metaphorically says that "even a dog is obeyed in office" (104). To persuade the reader that the Africans were oppressed on the basis of perceived racial grounds, Ngũgĩ emphasizes that "White was the colour of power" (104) that stagnates the black until the blacks also exercise their own power. He adds that the whites will only dialogue with the blacks as equals once the latter exercises "black power". By claiming that blacks needed black power to counter that of the whites, Ngũgĩ wants to convince the reader that armed struggle against all forms of oppression by the whites is the ultimate means of neutralizing white power.

Ngũgĩ claims that his third discovery of blackness involved his experience at East Africa Agriculture and Forestry Research Organization (EAAFRO) where he worked temporarily as a library attendant during the short Makerere vacations. He asserts that the kind of whiteness he encountered there was "different from the missionary type at Alliance, the bureaucratic and settler kind in the Kenyan streets and farmlands, or the cap-and-gown crowd at Makerere. It was a type that looked as if it lived out of time and out of place" (*Birth of a Dream* 105). Ngũgĩ's claim that this kind of racism was out place implies that it had defied the political and the decolonization process that was rapidly taking place in Africa as many countries gained independence. He has demonstrated this through recounting the relationship between a black employee called Moses and his white supervisors which has been humorously described: "Moses was obsequiousness made flesh when it came to any of the white officers" (*Birth of a Dream* 106). The narrator satirically adds that, in the presence his white employers, Moses "would stand attention, become visibly invisible, until they had passed" or completed giving him instructions

and that once the Whites had left he became “visibly visible slowly and surely in proportion to the distance between him and them” (*Birth of a Dream* 106).

Ngũgĩ has satirized Moses’ behavior for expecting fellow Africans working under him to respect him, avoid endearing themselves to or contact with the whites and to behave with “correct decorum when in front of white people” (*Birth of a Dream* 107). Moses’ act of warning Ngũgĩ against using the toilet that was used by whites brings out not only the extreme racial prejudices against blacks, but also the inferiority complex of the colonised. The whites also feel superior to the Africans as shown through Lady Viviana’s act of ordering Ngũgĩ to stop using the white’s bathroom which was implied by “officers” and to use the ones for “others” (*Birth of a Dream* 109). In this context, the term “officers” was reserved for whites only and therefore, blacks did not qualify for such a title despite their academic and social standing. The reader may also find it ridiculous that whites and blacks could not share even toilet facilities. By relegating black workers at EAAFRO to the category of “others”, the white lady clearly insinuates to the irreconcilable racial differences between the whites and blacks within the context of colonialism.

Ngũgĩ further recounts his experience of extreme racial prejudices against blacks when he was once sent to a workshop by Lady Viviana. He says that she had asked him to “run” to the workshop and bring her two nails. By asking Ngũgĩ to “run” to the workshop for the nails, Lady V’s racial superiority and biased attitude towards the blacks is implied. Even after running to the workshop, he was not given the nails as the Indian in charge demanded a written note from the white lady. The Indian carpenter’s behavior points to the implied mistrust that both the Indians and whites had for the blacks.

In *Birth of a Dream Weaver*, Ngũgĩ declares that racism was a predominant phenomenon in the larger Kenyan society during the colonial period. He claims that he grew up in a racially-structured society where white was conceptualized as “wealth, power and privilege” whereas black symbolized “poverty, impotence and burden” (118). Therefore, the racial dichotomy of whites versus blacks is a frame through which he saw the world and that through “the contradictions, incoherence, and half-informed opinions,” he developed themes that would later find their way into his fiction and nonfiction writings. That is why, in the first live performance

of *The Black Hermit*, Ngũgĩ faced the dilemma of people of one race playing another race in blind casting. The author informs us that, although it had happened in casting blacks in acting Shakespearean plays at Alliance and Makerere, "having a white or brown-skinned person to play the role of a black mother" was a real challenge to him (*Birth of a Dream* 151). This is because it could interfere with the realism of the racial relationships of the time. That is why he also found it difficult in casting a white lady to act the role of a black mother in his play, *The Wound in the Heart*. Therefore, the act of painting a white actress black in order to make her conform to the expectations of the audience demonstrates to the reader the magnitude of racism during the colonial period. This reality was worsened by Ngũgĩ's encounter with European writers such as Joseph Conrad whose works such as *Victory*, *Nostromo* and *Heart of Darkness*, he claims, are dominated by "the struggle for coal, rubber, silver, gold and other buried treasures" in Africa by Europeans and "underlies the racist structures of the imperial powers" (*Birth of a Dream* 184).

In *Birth of a Dream Weaver*, therefore, Ngũgĩ effectively demonstrates that colonialism, its structures and character form the locus or special topoi upon which he has successfully articulated his political and ideological agenda in his writings. The author's strategy of satirically foregrounding racial relations, attacking the oppressive colonial practices, the dehumanizing effects of colonialism, the biased colonial discourse and their impact on his mind as a young man are meant to inform and persuade his implied reader that he drew inspiration from the precarious colonial situation to write against oppressive and exploitative systems.

## 4.6 Immortalizing the Gĩkũyũ Nationalism

In *Birth of a Dream Weaver*, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o has deliberately attempted to immortalize the Gĩkũyũ nationalism to give prominence to the Mau Mau and other Gĩkũyũ freedom fighters in the anticolonial struggle over the other communities in Kenya. This attempt can be seen as a rhetorically political strategy which the author has employed to persuade the reader to accede to the implied entitlement of the independence struggle to the Agĩkũyũ community. By foregrounding the Agĩkũyũ key figures and the Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya's historiography, the author strives to enhance the Agĩkũyũ political hegemony and entitlement to leadership in Kenya.

Makau Kitata, in "The Problematics of Naming in Kenyan Creative Fiction" has argued that a writer's choice of the names of characters and places in their narrative in a text performs a special purpose since the names "serve to represent history" and accomplish a writer's rhetorical intentions (Kitata 4). Therefore, based on this observation, it is clear that Ngũgĩ's style of naming the characters in his fiction and nonfiction writings does not only serve the purpose of advancing the plot of a text, but also serves to perform political and ideological roles as the author attempts to rhetorically influence his reader's perception of the reality in the texts. In reference to Ngũgĩ's *A Grain of Wheat*, Kitata informs us that the names of Ngũgĩ's characters in the novel assume symbolic implications, hence, are employed to achieve the author's rhetorical intentions as demonstrated when the narrative voice in the novel recounts about a political meeting in Kenya's struggle for independence which Kenyatta and other nationalists were expected to attend. Though the name of Kenyatta has been explicitly mentioned, that of the "Luo speaker from Nyanza" has not been stated (*A Grain* 15). Kitata argues that by evading the actual name of the "Luo speaker and the particular place in Nyanza" the novel negates the "representational integrity" to the character whose name has not been stated (Kitata 4). However, Kitata has narrowed his study to the author's fiction in which the writer has the privilege of utilizing the advantage of poetic licence to manipulate his narrative and plot of a text as he wishes. In a memoir, the writer is expected to provide historical facts about the people and events one is writing in advancing the plot of a text.

Ngũgĩ, by virtue of being the narrator in *Birth of a Dream Weaver*, has utilized this as a privilege to foreground some versions of Kenya's history and people in his memoir while deliberately silencing that of the others. As observed by Robyn Fivush, an autobiographer may decide to voice some truths in one's work while keeping silent on other forms; thus, a writer may decide to privilege some versions of the truth about people or events over others and present them as the accepted "canonical version of events" (Fivush 2). Fivush further points out that those who are "given voice" in an autobiography occupy a privileged position as they are granted the opportunity to provide the narrative of events from their own perspective. Since "voice is power", the authors of an autobiography can manipulate the narrative of events and history to suite their interests because, as the ones who have voice, they can decide include or exclude certain events, individuals or people from their narratives (2).

In *Birth of a Dream Weaver*, Ngũgĩ foregrounds the Mau Mau war as a nationalistic movement which solely fought for the independence of Kenya. This can be interpreted as his cryptic intention to expand the scope of the Mau Mau operations from the circumscribed central Kenya region where it operated to the national scene. By so doing, he attempts to influence the reader to believe that only the Mau Mau played a significant role in the struggle for Kenya's independence. His claim that the origin of Mau Mau was triggered by the oppressive colonial system which had been imposed on Kenyans, rather than on the Agĩkũyũ community, is meant to give it a national appeal. Therefore, his nationalization of the Mau Mau in the memoir may create doubt or raise questions from the reader. For instance, since Mau Mau is conceptualized in the Agĩkũyũ language, would it be appropriate to assume that it fought for all the interests of all the Kenyan communities? Rather, it would be appropriate to see it as a movement whose main and immediate goal was to kick out the White man from the Agĩkũyũ people's land as demonstrated when Ngũgĩ writes:

> The colonial state tried to obscure the clarity in the name with the meaningless mambo-jumbo "Mau Mau". The alliterative Mau Mau was based on a deliberate, or inadvertent, rendering of the equally alliterative *muma*, as in *muma wa (gwĩtia) ithaka na wĩyathi*, "Oath of unity for (demanding) Land and Freedom. The proper name of the political arm of the movement was *Kiama kĩa Muma*, the *Muma* Movement, and of its fighting wing, *Mbũthũ ya Kũrũira Ithaka* na *Wiyathi*, the Land and Freedom Army. Their motto was *Maundu no merĩ: ithaka na wĩyathi*, Two absolute demands: land and freedom. (*Birth of a Dream* 67)

According to Ali A. Mazrui and Michael Tidy, the Mau Mau rebellion "was an ethnic affair, effectively confined to a section of the Kikuyu" (Mazrui and Tidy105). They further point out that, because the Mau Mau was predominantly a movement confined to the Agĩkũyũ community, tribal tensions were aroused by the government's policy of incarcerating only the Kikuyu and removing most of them from the civil service by substituting them with people from other communities (105). Similarly, Robert Buijtenbuijs, in "Mau Mau Twenty Years Later" acknowledges that Mau Mau was a rebellion that was 'tribal' in its composition but which was not hostile to other ethnic groups in Kenya. For Buijtenbuijs, the freedom movement was based on tribalism but which by extension served the Kenyan nation. Similarly, Robert H. Bates concurs with Buijtenbuijs that the rebellion was solely composed of members of the Kikuyu

community who had worked in the settler's commercial farms as well as those who were unfairly relegated to the reserves by the colonial state (Bates 2). From these scholars, it would be fair to argue that Ngũgĩ's representation of the uprising as a nationalistic movement in the memoir and most of his writings can be construed as a political strategy that is meant to foreground its role in Kenya's history while putting the role played by other communities in the freedom struggle in the background.

In immortalizing the Mau Mau fighters in *Birth of a Dream Weaver*, Ngũgĩ submerges the role played by other similar resistance movements in Kenya. For instance, his claim that the Nandi resistance against the construction of the railway line was the forerunner for the Mau Mau resistance against colonialism in Kenya, can be seen as his attempt to persuade the reader that Kenya's independence was solely determined by the Mau Mau War. Similarly, by claiming that the clash between the Koitalel-led Nandi resistance and the British army were "harbingers" of the LAF, the author undermines the Nandi resistance against colonialism which lasted for eleven years. Ngũgĩ's act of foregrounding the railway as the main cause of the Nandi resistance, further undermines their fight for land and freedom from the British colonial establishment.
A reader who is well versed with Kenya's anti-colonial struggle would expect that Ngũgĩ also acknowledges the rebellions in other parts of the country that contributed to forcing the British colonial regime to rethink their future in the colony. For instance, in Nyanza, there was the Young Kavirondo Association while in Western Kenya there was Dini ya Msambi which also resisted colonialism. Mazrui and Tidy have acknowledged that Elijah Masinde's Dini ya Musambwa developed a bit earlier than the Mau Mau rebellion. They inform us that the movement, which had a political as well as a religious basis, was motivated by the "general discontent at the slow rate of African political, economic and social advance" (Mazrui and Tidy 104). The legend has also been presented in Ezekiel Alembi's *Elijah Masinde*: *A Rebel with a Cause*, which portrays Dini ya Msambwa as a movement which waged war against the British colonial administration in Western Kenya during colonialism. Similarly, Henry Indangasi has argued that Elijah Masinde was the Abaluya community's equivalence of the Agĩkũyũ Dedan Kimathi. Indangasi informs us that, just like Kimathi, Masinde also organized his followers to burn down schools and attack the British teachers in his school (*Rethinking Literature* 18). However, Ngũgĩ's silence on the contributions of such anticolonial movements in his writings as

he reconstructs Kenya's history results in submerging their roles while elevating only that of the Mau Mau rebellion.

In acknowledging the role of Mau Mau and other freedom fighters in Kenya during the colonial time, Okoth has referred to the formation of Young Kavirondo Association (YKA) which he says was inspired by Harry Thuku's Young Kikuyu Association in 1921. Okoth informs the reader that the Young Kavirondo Association was dominated by the Luo and Abaluyia communities from Western Kenya, especially the ex-Maseno students. According to Okoth, the Kavirondo Association was "very radical" and demanded the establishment of a paramount chief, and that due to its "meetings and resolutions of protest," the colonial administration "made certain concessions, including the lowering of poll tax, easing of labour recruitment and establishment of meetings with Luo chiefs" (Okoth 71). Therefore, the reader of *Birth of a Dream Weaver* and Ngũgĩ's other writings would expect that the author at least recognizes these other resistant movements in his construction of the Kenya's anticolonial resistance history.

In his attempt to eternalize the Mau Mau fighters in *Birth of a Dream Weaver*, Ngũgĩ has subjectively justified its activities and operations. One such activity is the act of taking of oaths of allegiance to the Mau Mau movement by members of the Agĩkũyũ community. For instance, his claim that "thousands had taken the oath for land and freedom" is aimed to attract the reader's approval for the ritual. To attract the reader's anger for the British colonial state, Ngũgĩ has claimed that Mau Mau suspects "languished in concentration camps" for fighting for their rightful land and freedom (23). Though the reader is likely to be emotionally moved by these revelations, it is important to point out that Ngũgĩ has not revealed the dark side of the Mau Mau guerrillas which involved the murder of thousands of the Agĩkũyũ people who refused to take the oaths which were, after all, administered by force as demonstrated in Chapter Three of this study. Despite having also committed various atrocities against their own people, Ngũgĩ employs a misleading analogy to mitigate for their cruel activities. For instance, to justify that the Mau Mau were right in taking the oath of allegiance, Ngũgĩ has asserted that people with different positions in different governments such as the Queen of England, judges and the military brass take oaths of office. By arguing that none of these people who take oaths of office has been imprisoned or killed, Ngũgĩ criminalizes the British colonial state for its acts of imprisonments of the Mau Mau

fighters. However, the author does not tell the reader that other forms of oathing involved scary rituals and mystic activities which bordered on cultism.

In *Birth of a Dream Weaver*, Ngũgĩ's defense of the Mau Mau from being associated with religious fanaticism and his claim that it was a political movement is meant to cleanse it of the mystery associated with it as a result of its oath-taking engagements. He likens the oath-taking practice with the act of swearing of European politicians using the Bible despite the killing of many Gĩkũyũ Christians by the guerrillas. Therefore, he discredits a group of students at Makerere which was organized by Reverend Fred Welbourne, one of the chaplains at the university, to discuss the Corfield Report on Mau Mau. Their findings which he claims were published as *Comment on Corfield* implicated the Mau Mau of serious atrocities against humanity. Ngũgĩ's dismissive commentary on the group's findings attests to his attempt to dissociate Mau Mau from acts of ritualism: "The group's well-considered responses and observations were marred only by their talking of "Mau Mau" as if it was also a form of religion. But the LFA was not a religious movement, any more than the Conservative or Labour parties in Britain were Christian for saying prayers and swearing on the Bible" (67). At this point, the author employs the fallacy of false equivalence or what Heinrichs refers to as "false analogy" which is commonly used when one tries to compare completely different things (e.g. oranges and mangoes) and claiming that they are the same (153).

To further immortalize the Agĩkũyũ chauvinism in the struggle for Kenya's independency in *Birth of a Dream Weaver*, Ngũgĩ has explained why he chose the name Waiyaki for his fictional character in *The River Between*. He assigns symbolic attributes to Waiyaki by asserting that "Waiyaki is not just any name; it resonates among the Agĩkũyũ. It is the name of a legend. It is the name of history" (*Birth of a Dream* 89). His claim that the name resonates with history is symbolically suggestive that Waiyaki's anticolonial resistance represents all the Kenyan freedom fighters who lost their lives during the struggle for Kenya's independence. This is suggested in Ngũgĩ's argument on Waiyaki's significance to the Gĩkũyũ tribe; that his "death taught us what it meant to desire land, freedom and education" (*Birth of a Dream* 89). The personal pronoun 'us' signals the reader to the Gĩkũyũ readers whom Ngũgĩ establishes a sense of belonging through its implied inclusivity. Though the fictional Waiyaki in Ngũgĩ's fiction is not the same as the

historical one, Ngũgĩ argues that he has used the name for his fictional character as a form of his acknowledgement of the significance of the historical Waiyaki because the name enables him to retrospect into Kenya's past historical reality (*Birth of a Dream* 89). From this account, the reader is exposed to Ngũgĩ's indirect implication that the Gĩkũyũ legendary leaders fought colonialism, not for the Gĩkũyũ people only, but for the entire Kenya. Such a claim may sound naïve to the reader who is aware of the history of the actual Mau Mau war against the British colonial establishment among the Gĩkũyũ people.

By trying to justify his choice of the name Waiyaki for the protagonist in *The River Between*, Ngũgĩ by extension validates his choice of the character's names in his other writings. However, this has drawn contentious reactions from some of his readers. For instance, Kitata has criticized Ngũgĩ's choices of the names of his characters in his fiction and its political and symbolic implications to the historicity of the Kenyan nation (Kitata 5). According to Kitata, Ngũgĩ uses the characters' names in mapping the struggle for independence in Kenya. However, in Ngũgĩ's attempt to embrace the idea of ethnopolitanism, he deliberately foregrounds the Gĩkũyũ names for places and characters while he obliterates those of the other Kenyans who equally participated in the anti-colonial movements in Kenya. Kitata argues that, by doing so, the author "centres" the Gĩkũyũ land and persons in "Kenya's liberation struggle" (5). Consequently, by foregrounding the names of the Agĩkũyũ characters and places in his fiction, Ngũgĩ succeeds in "universalizing their identity" while alienating the rest of the Kenyans through his deliberate process of "reductionism" since this indexes the places of active quest for freedom and accords the named characters "representational integrity" while the other placed and persons are merely implicated and dissolved (5).

Similarly, Ngũgĩ has mythologized some Agĩkũyũ figures and intertwined them with Kenyan history in *Birth of a Dream Weaver*. For instance, he has assigned mythical signification to Nyambura and Waiyaki, key characters in his novel *The River Between*, by trying to persuade the reader that "Nyambura is mythic and historical, whereas Waiyaki is historical and mythic" (*Birth of a Dream* 93). In expounding the meaning of these names, he tells us that, among the Agĩkũyũ community, the name Nyambura is mythic because of its symbolic association with rain. However, Waiyaki's name becomes mythic through his legendary fight against colonialism

which made the Agĩkũyũ community to immortalize him in the Agĩkũyũ folklore. It is this legendary leader that Ngũgĩ wants to impose on the whole history of Kenya's struggle for independence. This can be seen as Ngũgĩ's rhetorical strategy that is meant to elevate the Agĩkũyũ legendary leaders in the anticolonial history of Kenya while deliberately silencing other multiethnic voices of the Kenyan reality. In the context, therefore, the author seems to be largely talking to his Gĩkũyũ readership whom he wants to persuade to assent to his Gĩkũyũ nationalist ideas in the memoir.

In one of his essays, Indangasi has cautioned readers on the dangers of taking the meaning of ethnic myths at their face value. He argues that myths or mythical figures can be used to entrench interethnic rivalries because of their power to evoke a sense of ethnic hegemony and nationalism among a community's members as shown in the following:

> Because myths claim ethnic exceptionalism, we need to treat them with the irony and scepticism they deserve. Creation myths can be used as an excuse to hurt other people. Communities and countries that go to war believe their particular God is on their side. Writers and other intellectuals need to see these stories for what they are: compositions that are put together to justify a community's false sense of superiority. (*Rethinking Literature* 23)

Unfortunately, some scholars of Ngũgĩ's other major writings have been convinced by the author's depiction of Mau Mau war as a nationalistic movement in Kenya's anticolonial history. For instance, James Ogude and Evan Maina Mwangi see the role of the Mau Mau as being entwined with the construction of Kenya's history. According to Ogude, Ngũgĩ successfully employs the Mau Mau war to provide a prototype upon which the different sections of "Kenyan history are brought to order" and that it was the commencement of "a moral and material struggle for self-definition" (Ogude 156) by all the peoples of Africa who were plagued by colonial empires. He further asserts that Ngũgĩ has used Mau Mau as a significant symbol around which the narrative of Kenyan history is constructed and shaped (Ogude 156). However, Ogude's arguments do not inform the reader about the possible political and ideological implications behind Ngũgĩ's act of privileging of the Mau Mau war in the interpretation of Kenya's anticolonial history and submerging that of the other persons and communities that resisted the establishment of colonialism in different parts of the country.

Mwangi, argues that Ngũgĩ's writings rely on pre-existing conceptions of identity to reinforce the reader's desire to identify with the nation (135). Contrary to Mwangi's claim that Ngũgĩ deploys the mythology of the Agĩkũyũ community of central Kenya to discuss themes that touch on the spirit of the Kenyan nation, this study takes this as a rhetorical strategy which the author has employed in his writings to conceal the truth about the multi-ethnic anticolonial struggle in Kenya from the reader as exemplified in his narratives that draw extensively on the key Agĩkũyũ figures and the Mau Mau guerrilla war. Just the way the Agĩkũyũ figures dominate his fiction, Ngũgĩ has also employed the same strategy in *Birth of a Dream Weaver* and other nonfiction writings to project the Agĩkũyũ anticolonial resistance as a symbol of all Kenyans' struggle for independence.

According to Omuteche, Ngũgĩ's historical re-representation in his novels has privileged the Agĩkũyũ ethnocentric perspective by obliterating Kenya's cosmopolitan character (107). Just like Omuteche's observations in Ngũgĩ's fiction, we argue that, in *Birth of a Dream Weaver*, Ngũgĩ has privileged the Mau Mau war in the decolonization process in Kenya while deliberately suppressing the role played by different anticolonial forces in other communities during the colonial period in the country. By privileging the Mau Mau and the Agĩkũyũ community in the struggle for independence, the author promotes the Agĩkũyũ political hegemony and their feelings of entitlement to the leadership of the country. Rather than depict the Mau Mau war as a collective Agĩkũyũ response to the white settlers who had usurped their ancestral lands, the author nationalizes the movement in order to attain some concealed and ideological political agenda which surreptitiously supports the Agĩkũyũ entitlement to the postcolonial leadership in Kenya. Thus, this strategy can be seen as the author's political strategy meant to undermine the diversity of Kenyan's anticolonial struggles by foregrounding only that of one community.

## 4.7 Conclusion

From my discussion in this chapter, it stands out that Ngũgĩ's attempt to redefine and re-interpret himself as a creative writer through his memoir, *Birth of a Dream Weaver*, reveals a complex writer who may be difficult to comprehend by his reader. Whereas he has successfully identified and deliberated on the sociopolitical, historical and ideological influences on his beginning and

development as a writer, he seems to be deliberately silent on certain realities while voicing others. My contention on the effectiveness of some of his rhetorical strategies is informed by the fact that Ngũgĩ wrote this memoir, fifty-four years after he completed his undergraduate studies at Makerere University College in Uganda. Therefore, his vast experience as a writer, critic and ideologue have played a significant role in shaping some of his arguments or narrative of events in the memoir.

# CHAPTER FIVE

# *WRESTLING WITH THE DEVIL*: A WRITER'S RHETORIC OF CONTESTING AUTOCRACY IN POSTCOLONIAL KENYA

## 5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I examine the rhetorical strategies Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o has employed to contest political autocracy in postcolonial Kenya in his memoir, *Wrestling with the Devil*. The chapter's main focus is on the evaluation of the strategies which Ngũgĩ has not only employed to vilify dictatorship during President Jomo Kenyatta's regime in independent Kenya, but also to express his advocacy for resistance against different forms of oppression. This advocacy ranges from individual heroes' courageous acts of defying different forms of tyranny as well as the collective resistance to dictatorship and imperialism in postcolonial Kenya by the peasants, workers and creative writers. Since *Wrestling with the Devil* is Ngũgĩ's recasting of his earlier memoir, *Detained: A Writer's Prison Diary*, I have also examined the author's rebranded autobiographical truth to determine its rhetorical impact on the reader. In this case, it is important to note that our evaluation of the truth in the recasting of *Detained* in the new memoir has been done against what Mazzeo calls "honoring the nonfiction contract" (17) which requires that the author makes a commitment to recounting the truth in his narrative. Mazzeo, has further emphasized that, in nonfiction writings such as the memoir, there is normally an implied contract between the reader and the narrator that the writer does not "invent any facts" (21) in their narration of events.

Guided by theories related to prison literature and Foucault's ideas on incarceration as understood through his idea of Panopticism, we see this idea employed by the state in Kenya through the constant surveillance of the political inmates at Kamĩtĩ Maximum Security Prison and guarding them when they are being taken to hospital for treatment or receiving visiting family members in this prison memoir. In the Kenyan prison and the larger society, Foucault's concept of Panopticism as a punitive and corrective process which results in "a carceral society" (King 97) has been adopted in different forms to achieve what Roy D. King calls the

"disciplinary gaze" (97) which the state actually extends beyond the prison system to all Kenyan citizens.

Like the restricted and regulated spaces of the panopticon, the structure of Kamĩtĩ Maximum Security Prison exhibits Foucault's concept of Panopticism since the detained characters live in detention cells/cages, the prison guards control the prison gates and doors, grant or withdraw privileges, and mete out punishment to the detainees. All the activities and penal measures at Kamĩtĩ Maximum Security Prison occur within an environment hidden from the public using high perimeter walls that have fenced the prison terrains. According to Richard Sparks, punishment through imprisonment is one of the distinguishing activities of the nation-state through which the state's sovereign power stands precisely to the centre of its entitlement to the exercise of its lawful authority (Sparks 81). This implies that imprisonment can be interpreted as a political act through which the state can exercise its power over her citizens. It is this kind of power that is inherent in Foucault's concept of Panopticism and that has been deliberately exercised by the autocratic Kenyan government in *Detained* and *Wrestling with the Devil*.

## 5.2 Manipulation of Narrative Paradigm

In recasting *Detained*, Ngũgĩ has manipulated the narrative paradigm in *Wrestling with the Devil*, to advance his ideological and political agenda as well as attempt to influence the reader to trust the claims he makes in his prison narrative. Walter fish asserts that narratives have a persuasive power and can inspire a writer's audience to alter their values, beliefs and attitudes toward the author's arguments or claims (Fisher, 57).

In recasting *Detained*, Ngũgĩ has not only altered the details of his prison narrative, but has also changed the title and expunged some crucial information which he has not accounted for in the revised version. In a brief section titled "Note to This Edition," Ngũgĩ merely informs the reader that, in the new edition, he has trimmed most of the historical details and other paratextual documents in order to enable him to focus on the narrative of what he terms the drama of the writing *Devil on the Cross* within his prison cell. Curiously, Ngũgĩ has asserts, in the 2018 revised edition, that Kenya is no longer "under the reign of terror of a one-person, one-party

state" (*Wrestling*) as opposed to when he published *Detained* in 1981. What does this imply to the reader? Ngũgĩ has mellowed his vindictive attitude towards Jomo Kenyatta's government because of his political and ideological reasons. By contrasting the Moi's dictatorial regime of 1981 with what he presumes to be a democratic Kenya in 2017, Ngũgĩ foregrounds his disdainful attitude towards the ex-president while taking a relatively soft perspective on the regimes under the Kenyatta family. Nevertheless, it should be noted that, whereas he describes the government under President Uhuru Kenyatta as a democratic one, it should be noted that it was during the 2017 General Elections when Kenya's Supreme Court annulled the presidential results after the opposition contested the results due to gross violations of the electoral regulations. The *Daily Nation* of Friday September 1 2017, reported that the Supreme Court of Kenya annulled the presidential election results due to the fact that the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) had conducted the election without following the legal requirements of the constitution of Kenya. Similarly, *The New York Times* reported that the election result was declared "invalid, null and void" after the Supreme Court jury affirmed that the votes were electronically influenced to accord President Uhuru Kenyatta an undeserving presidential victory.

Again, Ngũgĩ's claim that he has omitted several historical details in the recast edition may not convince the reader since there are still various references to Kenya's colonial experiences in the text. Therefore, this can only be seen as his attempt to conceal other motives for recasting his old version of the prison narrative in *Detained* to come up with the new version which he claims is "shorter and leaner". In fact, in *Wrestling with the Devil*, there are three chapters titled "Colonial Lazarus Rises from the Dead" (67), "The Culture of Silence and Fear" (77) and "Wrestling with Colonial Demons" (105) where Ngũgĩ has delved into details on some events in the colonial history of Kenya that include the Mau Mau rebellion, detention of anti-colonial nationalists and freedom fighters in home guard posts, concentration camps and prisons to create a culture of fear and silence in restive Kenyan population.

The author's decision to change the title of his memoir may have serious implications on the reader. This alteration raises serious questions which, perhaps, the author should have taken into consideration when recasting his prison memoir. Some of the questions that arise are: Does he

intend that the newly revised edition replaces the original one or the two should be read synchronously? Should the reader who has read the original text ignore the claims he made in it and embrace the ones in the new version? Should a new reader start with the old version before embarking on the new one? Supposing Ngũgĩ was to be interviewed on his prison experience, would he prefer to use *Detained* or *Wrestling with the Devil* as a point of his reference? These questions and many more unstated ones have not been addressed by the author in the "Note to This Edition" section on the recast edition. Significantly, the last question demonstrates the dilemma that not only the writer himself is likely to face, but also the confusion that will confront the reader because of the alterations made to the title and memoir's content.

According to Suzette Conway, a book title is the author's reference tool which is used as a key reference term which can be used in different contexts such as "in interviews, blog postings" and marketing of the text among others (Conway 2019). Conway further asserts that a book's title is its critical marketing tool; hence, its significance in promoting or dwarfing the sales of a given book. To underscore the immense function of a book title, Conway reveals that it attracts the reader's attentions and the book buyers at bookshops and libraries, editors, publishers and the media in general. Furthermore, it also helps the author's audience to easily trace a book from among many books in a bookshop, library and other internet sources. Conway's arguments imply that the title of any book is the author's first rhetorical act which will appeal to a writer's intended audience by attracting the attention of the reader's eye as well as arousing interest in one to read the text.

A crucial question that should also be addressed is: In terms of its copyright, should the two versions of his prison narrative be treated as different books? The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) notes that the copyright law provides moral rights to a writer such as that of "paternity" and "integrity" which will entitle the writer to claims of authorship as well as possession of the rights to disapproval to any form of alterations or "mutilation" of the contents of one's works (15). On this basis, it would be fairly plausible to argue that Ngũgĩ's act of changing the title of his prison memoir as well as expunging whole chapters and rephrasing or omitting certain sentences from the recast version raises questions in the readers about the author's intention of doing so.

In *Wrestling with the Devil*, Ngũgĩ has revised the "Dedication" section by eliminating different categories of people to whom he had dedicated his prison narrative in *Detained*. In the recast version, Ngũgĩ dedicates the revised edition to only one category of readers, "all other writers in prison", implying that the intended readers for the text specifically are the writers in detentions or the ones facing different political and ideological challenges in general. However, he has not accounted for this change; hence, this leaves the reader with the question: Has Ngũgĩ changed his perception on some people he had so much faith in when he was detained? The answer to this question is in the affirmative owing to the fact that Ngũgĩ might have possibly realized that some of those people he had had so much faith in did not actually deserve it. Among the categories of people expunged from the dedication section include "people in Kenya, Africa and the world" who he claims had agitated for his release such as university students, writers' unions, Amnesty International, teachers' organizations, workers, the residents of Kamĩrĩĩthu and his family. By eliminating these people, Ngũgĩ is informing us that they no longer matter to him.

Despite the crucial role of photographs in supporting the narration in nonfiction writings, Ngũgĩ has expunged the photographs of Kenyans in London who he claims had mounted a demonstration in demand for his release. Among the excluded photos is a conspicuous one that occupies a whole page showing a black demonstrator holding a poster that reads "WAINGEREZA WALIFUNGA KIMATHI (the British colonialists imprisoned Kimathi), "MZEE ANAFUNGA NGUGI" (Elder Kenyatta imprisons Ngũgĩ). Another poster that reads "RELEASE NGUGI, END POLITICAL REPRESSION" is ironically held by a white man instead of Ngũgĩ's fellow black Kenyan or Africans. Ngũgĩ's act of removing these pictures may be based on his realization that the class of demonstrators who agitated for his release were different from those who he claims to represent his prison narrative in the two texts. Nevertheless, by removing the only photographs that support his claim about people's agitation for his release, Ngũgĩ weakens the rhetorical impact of some of the claims and arguments he mounts in the text on the reader. According to Were and Muchiri, photographs are a significant part of the proof which a writer of a memoir uses to authenticate and support one's narration, arguments and claims (Were 8; Muchiri 43).

In the recast version, Ngũgĩ has expunged three sections with key information on his detention from *Detained*: the "Preface" (xiii-xxiii), "Section Two: Letters from Prison" (169-199) and "Section Three: Prison Aftermaths" (201-232). The "Preface" section of *Detained* articulates the author's attack of Jomo Kenyatta's and his dictatorial government. It sets the pace and tone of the text right from its onset. By eliminating it in the revised edition, such important information is lost and this invites the reader's doubts about his motive. For instance, in this section, Ngũgĩ's claim that his differences with those who instigated his detention were actually "ideological" and represented "certain social forces" informs the reader about the real reason for his detention. Moreover, his declaration that he has discussed detention not as "a personal affair" between him and those in power, "but as a social, political and historical phenomenon" (*Detained*, xi) implies that he was detained due to his political and Marxist ideological engagements in most of his writings.

Ngũgĩ's act of expunging the whole "Preface" from his detention narrative without valid reasons is likely to raise the readers' suspicions about his possible political and ideological intentions. Among the obvious possible reason is to obliterate his claim that his incarceration was ordered by President Jomo Kenyatta which is evident when he claims that two "very highly placed" anonymous people had approached President Jomo Kenyatta in Decembers 1977 and recommended that he should be detained or assassinated because of what was presumed to be seditious in his novel *Petals of Blood* and play *Ngaahika Ndeenda* (*Detained* xvi). This is exemplified when the narrator recounts his claim about their advice to Kenyatta:

> The only way to thwart those intentions – whatever they were – was to detain him who harboured such dangerous intentions, they pleaded. Some others had sought outright and permanent silencing, in the manner of J.M. Kariuki… And so to detention I was sent. (*Detained* xvi)

This claim exposes Ngũgĩ's serious accusations against Jomo Kenyatta for not only his detention, but also the assassinations of politicians who were critical of his government such as J.M. Kariuki who was brutally murdered and his body dumped in the Ngong Forest in 1975. The preface further reveals that among the reasons for Ngũgĩ's incarceration were his political and anti-imperialist ideologies in his writings. Bernth Lindfors, in his essay "Ngũgĩ's Detention" also

attributes the author's detention to the publication of *Petals of Blood* and production of *Ngaahika Ndeenda* and accuses the media for having scared the Kenyatta administration by depicting the novel as being severely critical of the government by describing it as an "explosive" book that was "a bombshell" to the Kenyan government (95). Ironically, *Petals of Blood* was launched by Mwai Kibaki who was then the Minister for Finance in Jomo Kenyatta's government. Despite these important insights on his imprisonment, Ngũgĩ has excluded this information from his revised prison narrative, *Wrestling with the Devil*.

Ngũgĩ might have also been motivated by the desire to obliterate from the prison memoir some of his personal weaknesses which seem to be damaging his ethos. For instance, his response to and antagonism with the media reports about the possible causes of his detention impact negatively on his character. Specifically, his response to reports in *The Weekly Review* magazine which claimed that Ngũgĩ was detained because of embracing the communist ideology and that he got financial support for the publication of his books that were critical to Kenya's politics and economic issues from the Soviet Union are not convincing. Instead of denying or clarifying his stance on these reports, Ngũgĩ merely dismisses them as being mere "speculative journalism," "ideological offensive," "invention" or acts of press hostility towards him (*Detained* vii – xviii). One question that arises from Ngũgĩ's response to the media reports is: why should the media be hostile to him? However, the author does not provide any hint that may help the reader to comprehend that conflict.

Ngũgĩ's response to Ali Mazrui's article in which he was accused of advancing "Kikuyu centrism" (*Detained* xxii) in the Department of Literature at the University of Nairobi during his tenure as the head of the department is wanting. Mazrui had reported that the author's employment policy included a preference for the recruitment of Kikuyu applicants and that half of the academic staff in the Literature Department at the University of Nairobi comprised the members from the Kikuyu community. Mazrui's accusations even indicated that there were greater prospects for the increased percentage of the staff who were from the Agĩkũyũ community (*Detained* xxii). By any standards, these were serious allegations leveled against Ngũgĩ and, therefore, the reader expects that he rationally and persuasively defends himself or even offers an explanation for that situation. However, instead of addressing the issue of

ethnocentrism raised, he resorts to personal attacks by describing the claims as "unprincipled attacks" that should be ignored since they came from "bourgeois academics" who are described by Karl Marx as "geniuses in the ways of bourgeois stupidity!" (*Detained* xxiii).

From these terms, it is clear that Ngũgĩ's response is in form of an unprecedented attack of his colleagues in the Department of Literature as well as Ali Mazrui rather than mounting an argument against their claims. In this context, therefore, Ngũgĩ attempts to influence his reader's attitude towards his opponents by employing a fallacy commonly referred to as *argumentum ad hominem*. Tom N. Namwamba, in *Think Critically and Creatively*, explains that this kind of fallacy "is committed when, instead of trying to disprove the truth of what is asserted, one attacks the man who made the assertion." Namwamba further notes that this kind of "irrelevant argument" is employed "to persuade through the psychological process of transference" in which "an attitude of disapproval towards a person can be evoked" (Namwamba 247). Therefore, would Ngũgĩ has omitted the preface to obliterate the kind of arrogance exemplified in his response to Ali's accusations? The reader's answer to this is likely to be in the affirmative.

Some of the claims Ngũgĩ makes in the "Preface" section may easily fail to persuade the reader. For instance, he claims that when he was detained there was a tremendous support for the Kenyan political prisoners who represented all the "fourteen million Kenyan" population from different classes including "the ordinary people, peasants and workers and students" (*Detained* xxiii). Moreover, the narrator claims that there was equally a worldwide agitation for the release of the detainees in Kenya from different categories of people including workers, writers, human rights activists and organizations, liberal intellectuals, and advocates of democracy from different parts of the world including "Africa, Asia, Europe, Canada, Australia, the U.S.A and Latin America" (*Detained* xxiii). However, Ngũgĩ does not provide relevant evidence to support these claims of global mass support. He does not also inform us whether this "worldwide struggle" for the release of political prisoners in Kenya had been experienced prior to his imprisonment to press for the release of those who had languished in prison for many years. It is fair, therefore, to argue that Ngũgĩ might have been compelled to destroy these weaknesses which are apparent in *Detained* by omitting the "Preface" section in his recast prison narrative for political and ideological purposes.

My submission is that, if Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o were fully at peace with all the claims and arguments he wrote in *Detained*, there would have been no compelling reason for him to painstakingly recast his prison narrative to produce a different version of the claims he makes about his detention. Thus, Ngũgĩ has deliberately rewritten the prison memoir to cushion himself against the failures he might have made in his past or to distort some historical records which are contentious to his readers and the public in general.

In *Wrestling with the Devil*, Ngũgĩ has also expunged the whole of Section Two of *Detained* which is titled "Letters from Prison". This section contains four important letters which Ngũgĩ claims he wrote to different people while he was detained at Kamĩtĩ Maximum Security Prison in 1978. He had also included another letter which he claims was written by Adam Mathenge Wang'ombe who was one of his prison inmates at Kamĩtĩ Prison (*Detained*, 197). However, Ngũgĩ has not provided a justification for expunging these letters from the recast memoir apart from merely claiming that his aim was to focus on the process of writing his novel *Caitaani Mutharaba-ini* in the Agĩkũyũ language while he was in prison. This kind of reason provided by Ngũgĩ may not persuade the reader in terms of its sincerity or prudence. The letters that have been eliminated from the revised edition contain important information about Ngũgĩ's painful experiences in prison, which, after all, should be the main focus of the memoir since they reveal his experiences and support his claims. This results in the reader of the new version missing important insights about the detention of Ngũgĩ and other political prisoners.

According to Were, autobiographical truth is enhanced in a text through the use of "paratextual evidence" that include quoting exact dates when events occurred, providing photographs illustrating the claims and events narrated, citation of letters written by different characters/persons, referring to individuals' speeches, dedications and prefaces (Were 8). Corresponding with Were, Muchiri informs us that letters are a form of "self-revelation" which are used in autobiographical writings to validate a writer's claims (Muchiri 43). Therefore, Ngũgĩ's omission of these letters makes the reader to contest some of his claims, information and arguments in the recast memoir. In view of Were's and Muchiri's ideas, I argue that Ngũgĩ's act of expunging these letters from the recast version of his prison narrative, *Wrestling with the Devil*, waters down the rhetorical impact of the memoir on the reader and casts doubt on the motive for his act. Thus, the reader interrogates the

validity of his recast prison narrative because autobiographical truth, according to Were, should be determined by the autobiographer's "consistency" and "cohesion" in one's presentation of the narrativised events, persons and places and also being brave enough to talk about oneself without reservations (Were 8). On this basis, thus, the truth of Ngũgĩ's claims in *Wrestling with the Devil* becomes wanting. To comprehend what the reader of the revised edition will miss, I have analysed each letter seperately.

Ngũgĩ's letter to his wife Nyambura which is dated 13th November 1978 (*Detained*, 171-172) reveals that he had a toothache and bleeding gums which made him experience a lot of pain. He informs his wife that the prison authorities refused to take him to hospital or allow him to see his visiting family because of his refusal to be chained as a prerequisite for that. Since this letter served as a means through which he communicated with his family, the reader cannot be convinced that it was less important than the writing of his novel, *Devil on the Cross* as claimed in the preface in the recast version. Therefore, the reader of *Detained* may be compelled to believe that the author's act of expunging this crucial letter is a deliberate attempt to obliterate his communication with his former wife from the narrative of his imprisonment in the recast version, *Wrestling with the Devil*.

In a letter Ngũgĩ wrote to Mr. Muhindi Munene, the prisons security officer in charge of the detained and restricted, which is dated 15th June 1978 (*Detained*, 173-176), he complains about not being taken to hospital and reveals that he had not been tried in any court of law for any criminal or civil offence despite having been in prison for many months. Through this letter, Ngũgĩ reveals that the government did not furnish him with any detailed reasons for his arrest except its vague claim that he had been involved in subversive activities and made some utterances that were deemed "dangerous to the "good government" of Kenya and its different governance institutions (174). This letter is crucial as it articulates and validates Ngũgĩ's claims of frustrations by the prison officials and government authorities. Cheney has underscored the importance of using letters in life writing by pointing out that writers of nonfiction may cite full or some parts of letters in order to enable them to make a point and invite readers to "get more involved" in their stories (106). By expunging this letter, therefore, Ngũgĩ creates room for the reader to mistrust the claims he makes in the letter as well as the rest of the text; hence, weakens

the author's rhetorical appeal to the reader to assent to his political and ideological advocacy in the recast version of his incarceration narrative.

In *Wrestling with the Devil*, Ngũgĩ has further excluded two other letters which he wrote to Justice Hancox who was the Chairperson of the Detainees' Review Tribunal, dated 23rd July 1978 (*Detained*, 177-183). In these letters, he complains about lack of feedback on his appearance before the Detainees' Review Tribunal, and the prison authorities' refusal to take him to hospital or allow him to see his visiting family members. He also protests against his "arbitrary arrest and detention", the "atrocious conditions" of prison and the "nauseating diet" which the inmates were subjected to. However, in these letters, Ngũgĩ overindulges in expressing his Marxist ideas instead of focusing on the experiences he encountered in prison.

Adam Mathenge's letter, dated 21st August 1978, through which the detainee has appealed for "proper medical treatment" (*Detained* 197) also does not appear in *Wrestling with the Devil*. This letter exposes the deplorable conditions of sick political detainees who were denied appropriate treatment or were given wrong prescriptions by the doctors who assumed that they were suffering from psychosomatic problems. This letter is important since it supports the Ngũgĩ's claim that the government used disease as an instrument of torture. The reader's pathos to which it appeals, therefore, dissipates in the recast version.

In *Wrestling with the Devil*, Ngũgĩ has further excluded the whole of Section Three which is titled "Prison Aftermaths" (*Detained*, 202-228). This section is important as it reveals the tribulations Ngũgĩ faced after his release from detention when trying to get back to his job as associate professor at the University of Nairobi. Through the letters he wrote to the university authorities, the reader empathizes with Ngũgĩ's predicament and frustrations since these correspondences serve as the evidence that authenticate his accusations against the university administration. For instance, in a letter addressed to the Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Karanja, dated 30 January 1979, Ngũgĩ reveals to the reader his concern about his job at the University of Nairobi. However, Karanja's failure to reply to Ngũgĩ's letter is likely to infuriate the reader as we get a glimpse into the arrogance and fear of the university authorities in handling Ngũgĩ's problem. In another letter addressed to Willy Mutunga, the Chairman of the University Academic Staff

Association, Ngũgĩ expresses his frustrations and anger at the University of Nairobi's administrators' failure to communicate with him or respond to his letters after his release from detention. The fact that both the Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Karanja, and the University Council Chairman, B.M. Gecaga, ignored his letters, invites the reader's outrage at the whole university administration for its mistreatment of Ngũgĩ. Therefore, we get convinced by Ngũgĩ's claim that the government used the university authorities as an instrument to torture him (*Detained*, 205).

Furthermore, in a letter to Ngũgĩ by the Registrar of the University of Nairobi, Mr. E.N. Gicui, dated 3rd August 1979, the author has exposed the university authorities' fear of the Kenya government's decree on his dismissal from his job. Ngũgĩ's response to the university authorities in his letter to Gicui, dated 18th August 1979, underscores this fear by referring to the Vice-Chancellor's fear to communicate to him in writing.  The letter further exposes how the university exploited him by depositing his terminal dues and salary into his bank account for only six months without any written document to indicate the reason or the person involved in the transactions at the bank. From these revelations, it is ostensibly without doubt that the University of Nairobi administration was successfully used by the Kenya government to suppress, frustrate and exploit Ngũgĩ.

The "Prison Aftermaths" section provides a caption of parliamentary proceedings of the Kenya government's ministerial statement to parliament on 31st July 1979. The author has provided this as evidence for his claims of the government's malicious involvement in his dismissal from the University of Nairobi (*Detained*, 207-209). For instance, the Minister for Education, Mr. Maina Wanjigi's claim that Ngũgĩ's contract with the university had expired and that a misunderstanding between him and the university had hampered its renewal contradicts what the reader already knows. Therefore, in this context, Ngũgĩ's "Press Release" on 20th August 1979 which contradicts the minister's statement to parliament by claiming that it "grossly misrepresented" and "falsified" his case (*Detained* 214), criminalizes the state's way of treating the author. This information is likely to attract the readers' approval of Ngũgĩ's counter-claims and arguments while persuading the reader to develop a contemptuous attitude towards the minister and the government of Kenya, in general.

Ngũgĩ's exclusion of Willy Mutunga's (the then Secretary-General of University Staff Association) report on the efforts of the university's staff association to have the author be reinstated in his job by the University of Nairobi (*Detained*, 219-226) can also be seen as his strategy of manipulating the narrative paradigm of his prison discourse. Mutunga's report is crucial as it augments and strengthens Ngũgĩ's claims about his arrest, detention and the subsequent mistreatment he faced during and after his detention. The report confirms Ngũgĩ's claims that the government did not give proper reasons for his detention; that there were demonstrations mounted by the University of Nairobi students against Ngũgĩ's detention and demand for his release and; that the University of Nairobi did not make any "official comment on the fate of its member" (*Detained*, 219). It further reveals that there were correspondences between Ngũgĩ and the university administration which confirms that his detention and indictment were "beyond the university" and that he "needed clearance from somewhere" else (*Detained*, 222). However, his claim that the university students rioted while the academic staff kept silent may be considered inaccurate since Willy Mutunga was a lecturer and the Secretary General of the University Staff Association; hence, his report on the association's fight for the resumption of his duties at the university articulates the staff's protest at his dismissal. Ngũgĩ's exclusion of this crucial textual paratextual document can be interpreted as an expression of the author's deliberate effort to obliterate the University Staff Association's efforts in supporting his fight against oppression by the Kenya government for his covert political and ideological reasons.

Also excluded in the revised edition are the extracts from the newspapers, the *Hansard* and magazines which provide critical information on Ngũgĩ's detention. An excerpt from the *Hansard*, dated Wednesday, 11$^{th}$ June 1980, reveals that the Kenya Parliament had thanked President Moi for releasing the detainees and asked the government and the private sector to assist them secure jobs to enable them cater for their families. Another extract from the *Daily Nation* of 17$^{th}$ July 1980 reveals that the University Staff Union, among other things, had given the university an ultimatum to reconsider Ngũgĩ's employment by August 1$^{st}$ 1980. However, an extract from the *Sunday Nation* of 21$^{st}$ July 1980 reveals that President Moi had threatened to ban two workers' unions, the University Staff Association and the Union of the Civil Servants, for involving themselves in political issues (*Detained*, 227). Finally, the *Weekly Review* of 11$^{th}$

July 1980 reported that President Moi astonished many Kenyans when he declared that formerly imprisoned detainees who had been incarcerated after Kenya gained her independence would not be given priority in employment opportunities (*Detained* 228). This information supports Ngũgĩ's claim that the state perpetuated his woes even after his release from Kamĩtĩ Prison; thereby attracting sympathy from his readers and admirers and arousing resentful attitude for the government of Kenya.

Apart from excluding some sections or chapters from *Detained* in the recast edition, Ngũgĩ has expunged some information, rephrased some sentences and paragraphs to create new meanings and reconstruct a new form of autobiographical truth in *Wrestling with the Devil*. For example, in *Detained*, Ngũgĩ describes Kamĩtĩ prison cells as "Kenyatta's tiger cages" (3); hence, implicating President Jomo Kenyatta as the person who was responsible for the arrests and detention of Kenya's political prisoners. However, in *Wrestling with the Devil*, Ngũgĩ has deliberately excluded this accusatory information from his prison narrative. By excluding this expression from the recast version, Ngũgĩ cleverly veers from directly attacking Jomo Kenyatta and tones down his bitterness towards the former president. The question that, therefore, comes into the reader's mind is: Could Ngũgĩ's decision have been influenced by the political dispensation in Kenya during President Uhuru Kenyatta's regime? This is a plausible factor because, when he revised his prison memoir, his relationship with Jomo Kenyatta's son, Uhuru Kenyatta (then the president in Kenya), was friendly, thus contributing to his change of heart towards the Kenyatta family in general.

Some sentences in *Detained* have been rephrased to acquire new meanings and alter Ngũgĩ's position on some people, things or the government in the recast version, *Wrestling with the Devil*. One such a case is the sentence which reads, "The government could not have been ignorant about the possible results of those experiments in mental torment: Valium was the most frequently prescribed drug in Kamĩtĩ Prison" (*Detained*, 7). This is because, as Ngũgĩ claims, the prison doctors had anticipated that a detainee would likely become psychologically deranged or depressed as a result of the appalling prison conditions at Kamĩtĩ. In this context, the term "government" implies the top leadership of the Kenya government that include the office of the president and other organs of the state. Therefore, the author, in this case, would like to persuade

the reader that President Jomo Kenyatta and his entire system of the government should be condemned for the sadistic treatment of the political prisoners. However, in *Wrestling with the Devil*, Ngũgĩ has rephrased the statement by narrowing the accusation to the prison officials when he says, "The officials could not have been ignorant about the possible results of these experiments in mental torment" (*Wrestling*, 10). We cannot assume that Ngũgĩ's replacement of the terms "government" with "officials" is just a matter of syntactic or lexical choice. Ngũgĩ's intention in making such subtle changes can only be political or ideological rather than aesthetic. The author redirects his anger at the prison officials rather than at the entire Kenyatta administration. However, such a strategy may seem naive to the reader since, substituting prison "officials" for "government" does not persuade the reader that Kenyatta cannot directly take blame. It problematizes Ngũgĩ's autobiographical truth value in the two memoirs as the reader is left wondering which version of truth one should trust.

In *Wrestling with the Devil*, Ngũgĩ has further mellowed his earlier hostile attack on Jomo Kenyatta's pro-imperialist and capitalist mindset. This can be seen in the different ways he manipulates the narrative on Kenyatta in the two versions of his prison memoirs. For instance, in *Detained*, the author categorically attacks President Jomo Kenyatta and the British government for promoting cultural imperialism and suppressing African languages in Kenya to persuade the reader on his radical decision to write his works in Agĩkũyũ language when he argues:

> "I had resolved to use a language which did not have a modern novel, a challenge to myself, and a way of affirming my faith in the possibilities of the languages of all the different Kenyan nationalities, languages whose development as vehicles for Kenyan people's anti-imperialist struggles had been actively suppressed by the British colonial regime (1895-1963) and by the neocolonial regime of Kenyatta and his comprador KANU cahoots." (*Detained*, 8)

However, in *Wrestling with the Devil*, Ngũgĩ has rephrased the above as follows:

> "I would write in Gĩkũyũ, a language that did not yet have a modern novel, as a challenge to myself, a way of affirming my faith in the possibilities of the languages of all the different Kenyan nationalities, languages whose growth as vehicles for people's struggles and development had been actively suppressed by the British colonial regime (1895-1963) and now its postcolonial successor." (*Wrestling*, 11)

The quotations above reveal two things in Ngũgĩ's attempt to manipulate the reader erroneously. Firstly, the quotations clearly demonstrate that, in *Wrestling with the Devil*, Ngũgĩ has deliberately avoided directly accusing "Kenyatta and his comprador KANU cahoots" (*Detained 8*) of promoting imperialism in Kenya. He has done this for political and ideological reasons which can be discerned in his attempt to tone down his criticism of Jomo Kenyatta's political weaknesses and excesses which aggravated Kenya's postcolonial problems. In *Detained*, he talks of "people's anti-imperialist struggles" while in *Wrestling with the Devil* he only refers to "people's struggles". This may be a pointer to the possibility of change in Ngũgĩ's hardline stance against imperialism and Kenyatta's act of perpetuating the same vice in the country. This change could be triggered by a number of things. Firstly, it could be because Ngũgĩ lives and works in America which is one of the biggest capitalistic states in the world; hence, posing a contradiction with his anti-imperialism stance.

Secondly, the paraphrase in *Wrestling with the Devil* reveals his flawed portrayal of both the colonial and postcolonial governments in suppressing the use of indigenous Kenyan languages in literary productions and education. There is adequate evidence that indicate that both the colonial and postcolonial governments promoted the teaching of mother tongue languages in Kenyan schools. Wendo Nabea informs us that, as early as 1909, the United Missionary Conference in Kenya adopted the use of African vernacular languages in the lower primary school classes (standard one to three) while Kiswahili was to be used in the rest of the classes but English was used right from the lower primary schools up to the university levels (Nabea 123). He further notes that different commissions such as "Beecher's 1949, Binn's 1952 and the Drogheda Commission of 1952" all recommended the teaching of mother tongue in lower primary schools. Additionally, Nabea informs us that in 1967, the K.I.E (Kenya Institute of Education) begun to publish and disseminate books in Kenya's local ethnic African languages and in Kiswahili to primary schools all over the country (126).

In a veiled attack on President Kenyatta and other former freedom fighters, Ngũgĩ claims that the political prisoners at Kamĩtĩ taught him about "nationalist anti-imperialist struggles before 1963," the commencement of land grabbing and the foreign powers' acts of bribing former nationalist leaders with "token shares in companies" (*Detained*, 9). In this case, Ngũgĩ implicates

President Kenyatta and other postcolonial leaders for grabbing their people's land, amassing wealth at the expense of Kenyans and collaborating with the imperialists in exploiting Kenya's resources. However, in *Wrestling with the Devil*, Ngũgĩ excludes this information and only talks about the political prisoners having discussed with him on trivial topics about "barmaids, secretaries, teachers, and engineers as well as different aspects of social life and bourgeois rivalry in Nairobi" (*Wrestling* 13). In the revised version, Ngũgĩ, therefore, seems to veer away from directly attacking Jomo Kenyatta and his administration for collaborating with foreigners to promote capitalism and imperialism in postcolonial Kenya.

In his endeavor to tone down his attack on Jomo Kenyatta, Ngũgĩ has further expunged his claim that Kenyatta's book, *Suffering without Bitterness*, was not really authored by Kenyatta himself but by two British journalists (*Detained*, 89). By leaving out this serious claim on Kenyatta in his recast version *Wrestling with the Devil*, Ngũgĩ invites the reader's doubts about his claims in the new memoir. This is because it leaves the reader to contemplate that, Ngũgĩ had either falsely attacked Kenyatta about the authorship of the book or he is deliberately attempting to cover-up Kenyatta's weaknesses for having portrayed himself as the author of the book.

From the foregoing discussion on Ngũgĩ's manipulation of the narrative paradigm in his recast version of prison narrative, it is apparent that this strategy erodes the credibility of the author's claims in *Wrestling with the Devil*.  In this context, to a great extent, Ngũgĩ contravenes Aristotle's intention of the use of rhetoric to advance's one's truth. Aristotle informs us that what is ascertained to be the truth about claims, events, people, places or even objects will normally stand the test of time and, thus will always prevail over the false claims. Aristotle further argues that speakers or writers ought to employ persuasion justifiably with strict reasoning and by providing facts as truthful as possible.  He equally cautions against proclaiming falsehoods or telling lies since it is imprudent to make people believe what is unacceptable, illogical or even utterly wrong (7). For Aristotle, a person who misuses the power of rhetoric in one's speech/writing to manipulate his/her audience unjustly through false information may adversely harm them just like one's use of strength and wealth to mete out fatal harm to others (8).

### 5.3 Exalting the Artist to subvert the State

In *Wrestling with the Devil*, Ngũgĩ has extolled the artist while undermining the state in his attempt to persuade the reader that the artist, through creative writing, transcends and overpowers an authoritarian regime. That's why he informs the reader at the beginning that the main focus in the recast edition of *Detained* is on "the drama of writing a novel, *Devil on the Cross* in prison" (*Wrestling* "Note to this Edition"). His main thesis in the text, therefore, is to offer his "testimony to the power of imagination" which he claims is invoked "to help humans break free of confinement" (*Wrestling* "Note to this Edition"). The author's assertion that this memoir is "truly the story of all art" underscores his endeavor to foreground a writer's importance in threatening the status quo of dictatorial leadership not only in Kenya but also elsewhere in the world.

Ngũgĩ's prison memoir, therefore, addresses some of the questions which many readers of this genre of literature have been asking: What really motivates prison writing? Under what conditions do prison writers compose their writings? How persuasive are their claims on incarceration? Thomas S. Freeman asserts that prison writers not only write what they know and have experienced while being incarcerated but also what addresses the interests of "their patrons and their audiences" (Freeman 133). This implies that prison writers have the interest of their readers in mind; hence, there is a propensity to choose and employ rhetorical strategies that will persuade them about the prison experiences as well as the kind of vision or ideology that the authors want to communicate. As such, since Ngũgĩ wrote his prison narrative as a political detainee, when reading *Wrestling with the Devil*, we should bear in mind that the author has a political, ideological and rhetorical agenda for his intended readers. Bearing this in mind will enable the reader to refute or assent to the author's discursive narrative of political incarceration in postcolonial Kenya, and specifically during the reign of President Jomo Kenyatta's regime.

According to Doran Larson, prison writing is defined by the thematic concerns and the author's relevant experience of imprisonment (143). Thus, the subject of such type of writing involve a writer's personal experiences of incarceration within a penal institution. Larson further informs us that prison literature bears both a common subject and a recurrent thematic issues on related to

the internal workings of prison as well as its power relations (143). Larson asserts that prison literature is a distinct type/genre of literary expression that can be defined by its subject matter and authors as well as “its expressive tropes” (143) which are characterised by both the local and international conditions of literary composition of prison literature. This implies that prison literature, including Ngũgĩ’s *Wrestling with the Devil* or *Detained* share some commonalities with prison writings produced by other writers of this genre in different parts of the world. Consequently, reading different prison writings one becomes aware of the characteristics of penal power, solitude and discipline which are experienced by those incarcerated as well as those who impose coercive confinement on the inmates.

In *Wrestling with the Devil*, Ngũgĩ reveals that detained writers will usually face difficulties to procure paper and pen for writing their stories. Furthermore, the prohibition of writing in prison worsens the situation for the imprisoned writers. This is what Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o faced while in detention. However, the memoir demonstrates that though a writer may be detained because of his writings or political reasons, it only amounts to physical detention of such a person. Therefore, the writer’s imaginative powers cannot be deterred from producing works of art. Despite being denied writing materials in prison, a writer will be compelled to device clever ways of putting into writing one’s imaginative output. For instance, Ngũgĩ claims that he used different materials to write down his ideas during daytime by taking “hasty notes on empty spaces of the Bible” and “bare walls” of his cell while during the night he wrote all of them “on toilet paper” (*Wrestling* 14). However, since one requires a lot of toilet paper to write a whole novel, this raises the question: Who supplied the toilet paper to Ngũgĩ? To persuade the reader about the practicality of what he did, he refers to Kwame Nkrumah’s autobiography, *Ghana*, in which Nkrumah claims that he also wrote his autobiography on toilet paper while he was detained. Ngũgĩ claims that he had thought it unreal to write on toilet paper until he also got detained; hence, his appreciation that any paper for political prisoners is among the most precious article (*Detained* 6; *Wrestling* 7).

To further underscore the claim, he informs the reader that, at Kamĩtĩ Prison, all political prisoners were writing their ideas on toilet papers (*Wrestling* 9). Apart from Kwame Nkrumah who wrote his autobiography on toilet paper in James Fort Prison, he cites other examples of

political prisoners who had successfully done so such as Dennis Brutus who was detained at the Roben Island and Abdilatif Abdalla who was at Kamĩtĩ Prison (*Detained* 6; *Wrestling* 9). Ngũgĩ's argument that these prisoners' experiences enabled him to defy the daily imprisonment of his mind is meant to extol the role of the writer in society and subvert the state for detaining writers. Thus, this demonstrates that the physical incarceration of a writer cannot deter one's genius and creative powers.

Difficulties in procuring writing materials, however, is not unique to the Kenyan prison contexts. In his study on prisons in England, Freeman found that prisoners who wished to write faced the challenge of obtaining the writing materials; thus, they improvised substitutes for writing materials. He gives examples of different prisoners who did so by writing on the margins and blank spaces of letters or "paper wrappings from gifts" sent to them (Freeman 144). Furthermore, Freeman notes that prison authorities usually strive to suppress any efforts of a prisoner who wishes to write by inspecting the cells for contraband materials such as pen, ink and papers (145). This is also the kind of experience that political prisoners including Ngũgĩ faced at Kamĩtĩ Prison during their incarceration.

Creative writing does not only enable detained writers to vent out their creative energies while being in detention; it also enables them to keep their sanity in the face of frustrations and the sufferings they are subjected to. That is why Ngũgĩ informs the reader that the act of writing his novel *Caitaani Mũtharaba-inĩ* (*Devil on the Cross*) had a therapeutic impact on him as demonstrated when the narrator informs the reader that his act of writing the novel in prison was "one way of keeping my mind together" (*Wrestling* 11). Thus, writing while in detention was a process through which Ngũgĩ experienced an emotional catharsis. Ngũgĩ has demonstrated this in his self-assurance against expectations of a longer stay in detention when the narrator declares that while in detention, he was compelled to device means which could sustain his sanity by engaging himself in the creative writing of a novel (*Wrestling* 130).

*Wrestling with the Devil* exposes Ngũgĩ's virulent tone and contempt for oppression and its perpetrators. This is revealed through the murderous instincts and thoughts he harbours while being detained at Kamĩtĩ Prison. Though he does not execute these murderous instincts, they get

physical expression through his act of writing his novel, *Devil on the Cross*. This points to his outrage at the agents of the dictatorial regime that made him feel like killing them. Thus, his creative writing activity while in prison can be seen as Ngũgĩ's avenue through which his suppressed frustrations, desires and intentions get an outlet. This can be taken as an act of extreme contemplation of rebellion against the oppressors. It further reveals Ngũgĩ's Marxist ideology that advocates for revolutionary acts against bourgeoisie dictatorship.

Ngũgĩ's claim of the therapeutic role of writing has also been acknowledged by studies done on imprisoned writers. For instance, according to Rivkah Zim, self-discipline and writing activities by the incarcerated writers can be "mentally-liberating" and a deliberate "strategy of resistance in exigent conditions" (Zim 6) that can cushion the imprisoned writer against the shock of being arrested, incarcerated and subjected to solitary confinement. Thus, writing does not only relieve the incarcerated writer of the pressures of the temporal and spatial conditions imposed on one but also distracts the incarcerated person from the daily suffering experienced in prison. This therapeutic role of writing can also be extended to the reader as Zim points out that prison writings can also be a form of their resistance against their incarceration as well as a consolation of their implied readers (Zim 6). In this case, the kind of reader being referred to here is one who is a victim of brutal captivity and penal confinement.

*Wrestling with the Devil* reveals to the reader that the act of creative writing can be an act of challenging the oppressive character of an autocratic state. This is brought out through the different arguments that Ngũgĩ puts forward for the writing of his novel, *Devil on the Cross*. He argues that his choice of the Gĩkũyũ language in writing the novel was motivated partly by his desire to affirm his conviction that African literature should be written in African languages. It is also his way of declaring his fight against cultural imperialism in postcolonial Kenya. Writing for the detained writer, therefore, becomes an act of defiance against the oppressive regime as affirmed by Ngũgĩ when he proclaims that he was in "daily combat against the forces" that had unjustifiably imprisoned him (*Wrestling* 195). However, since Ngũgĩ was writing a novel (which was in reality a work of fiction) rather than a diary of his daily prison experiences while he was in prison, writing therefore becomes a continuation of the authors' ordinary vocation. In this

case, Ngũgĩ can be said to have continued his writing career while being in detention despite the inhibitive prison circumstances and regulations.

In *Wrestling with the Devil*, it is revealed that an autocratic state detains writers in order to destroy their mental health and dissipate their creative and intellectual abilities. To counter the government's intention, the writer, therefore, should be engaged in writing creative works that are critical to the socioeconomic and political realities inherent in a dictatorial state. To persuade the reader on the effectiveness of this strategy, the narrator claims that he always reminded himself that the autocratic state had incarcerated him so that his brain would "melt into a rotten mess", hence, this inspired him to find a way of mounting a "spiritual battle against its bestial purposes" (*Wrestling* 14). To underscore his determination to resist the state's cruelty and malicious intentions against him, the narrator declares that he had to find a way of defeating the state's intentions of denying him a chance to write while being incarcerated.

Ngũgĩ's defiant tone can be discerned when he declares that, though the state may physically detain a writer, it cannot successfully thwart his ideological and political stand. As Zim points out, the state's prisoners or political dissenters and prisoners of conscience usually feel that they are discriminatorily and unjustly victimized and subjected to the humiliating conditions of detention; hence, they struggle to defend their integrity and principles for which they have been incarcerated (2). For these prisoners, therefore, resistance to the reasons and circumstances of their imprisonment enhances their "chances of survival" since, for personal and political reasons, the victimized captive decides to ensure that they are morally, psychologically and spiritually intact. Zim emphasizes that, to preserve and defend themselves against "fear, uncertainties and disinformation", the imprisoned writers resort to writing as the most significant, effective, long-lasting and reliable ways of self-expression. Though I agree with Zim on the idea that imprisoned writers may use prison writing as an act of self-defense and avenue through which they succeed in articulating testimonies about their prison experiences and preservation of their ideas (4), I would like to point out that he has not taken into consideration the possibility of some of the writers using their prison narratives to advance their propaganda or lies against their opponents who may include individuals, prison staff or even the state. For instance, Ngũgĩ has claimed, in *Wrestling with the Devil*, that the state in Kenya outlawed the use of the local native languages in the production of literary texts and education, in general. Also, his claim that the women he

worked with to produce *Ngaahika Ndeenda* were among those who were determined to resist the oppressive and exploitative conditions in Kenya may raise doubts in his readers because, when he was detained, these women were not among those who protested at his imprisonment.

Apart from its intention to destroy the creative and intellectual abilities of writers, an autocratic state will detain writers in order to cut them off from society where they draw their inspiration and raw materials for their creative output. Ngũgĩ informs us that writers "need people around them," "thrive on live struggles of active life" and utilizes these as their raw materials for their creative output (*Wrestling* 12). In order to overcome the obstacle of being incarcerated, Ngũgĩ, therefore, utilized the existing prison conditions to defeat the state's intention to stifle his creative writing endeavours as implied when he declares that, although he was forcibly detained, he would utilize the prison reality to compose new forms of writings (12). This reveals that, though a writer is physically put within the enclosed walls of prison, he utilizes the new space into which he is condemned to continue writing. In Gresham M Sykes' words, imprisoned writers should perceive prison life a "society within another society (1974, xii). As such, Ngũgĩ's incarceration only succeeds in physically removing him from the outside society from where he draws raw materials for writing his works, but it also introduces him to a new community of political detainees from whom he gets inspiration and raw materials for his new form of writing.

In *Wrestling with the Devil*, the reader is made aware of the role of the writer in advocating the plight of the underprivileged class in the postcolonial Kenyan society. We see this through Ngũgĩ's justification of his choice of the leading characters in the *Devil on the Cross* which he was writing while being held in detention. To convince his readers on their appropriateness, he argues that the choices he made are informed by the inspiration he got from strong women he had come across in his own life and history such as Me Kitilili wa Menza, Muraa wa Ngiti, Mary Muthoni Nyanjirũ, and the women soldiers of the Mau Mau movement (*Wrestling* 15).

Ngũgĩ's argument that the protagonist in *Devil on the Cross*, Warĩnga, "will be the fictional reflections of the spirit of women's resistance and resilience in Kenyan history" (*Wrestling* 15), underscores his own advocacy for resistance against different forms of oppression and exploitation in both the colonial and postcolonial milieu. In his intimation on the possible readers

for Ngũgĩ's *Devil on the Cross*, Bonaventure M. Muzigirwa has argued that the text contributes to the advocacy for social change and the improvement of the conditions of the working class in the Kenyan society. He further asserts that Ngũgĩ's commitment in the novel is to invite the oppressed and the exploited peasants and workers in the Kenyan society to free themselves from imperialism and neocolonialism ("Ngũgĩ's Marxist Invitation"). This corresponds with Ngũgĩ's claim that his daughter's photo which was sent to him when he was in prison and Warĩnga, the fictional character in *Devil on the Cross*, kept reminding him that his detention was not his own affair; that it was the autocratic government's strategy to instill fear among her oppressed population (*Wrestling*, 41). Therefore, through the writing of his novel while being incarcerated, Ngũgĩ's curtailed freedom of expression has got an outlet through which he articulates his anti-oppression ideas. As such, a writer can only defend himself against the oppressive regimes that are determined to silence dissenting voices from among the oppressed. To convince his reader to accede to his claims, Ngũgĩ, in a tone of understatement, claims that his intention was not to come up with a narrative on heroism but just scribble words using pen and paper as his defensive weapons against the oppressors and that he "would hate to court unnecessary martyrdom" (*Wrestling* 129).

Some studies indicate that there are those who have concurred with Ngũgĩ's reasons for writing his first novel in Gĩkũyũ language while he was in prison. For example, Isaac Ndlovu argues that Ngũgĩ wrote *Caitaani Mutharaba-ini* in Agĩkũyũ language during his imprisonment at Kamĩtĩ as his symbolic denunciation of the hegemonic "neocolonial cultural forces" which he blames for what he claims to be his unwarranted imprisonment (20). However, Ndlovu fails to acknowledge that, though Ngũgĩ claims to have rebelled against the use of foreign languages in writing his works and as an expression of his anti-cultural imperialism, he still wrote his prison memoir *Detained* in English. We would expect that his prison memoir should be in his Gĩkũyũ language which he claims was one of the reasons for the ban on the performance of *Ngaahika Ndeenda* and the main reason for his subsequent imprisonment. Mwangi has said that, in 1977, Ngũgĩ declared that he would start using only Gĩkũyũ language or Kiswahili in his creative works and that in 1986, he emphasized in *Decolonising the Mind* that he had rejected the use of English in both his fiction and nonfiction writings (37). However, ironically, Ngũgĩ has failed to live up to his intention to reject English as the language of expressing his ideas as clearly evidenced by the

books he has subsequently written in English. In fact, he would have succeeded greatly to influence his reader to accept his arguments on the language of African literature if he had written *Wrestling with the Devil* in his mother tongue. It should also be noted that, though he promised to write his works in Gĩkũyũ language or Kiswahili, Ngũgĩ has never written any book in Kiswahili despite its status as a national language.

In *Wrestling with the Devil*, Ngũgĩ's metaphoric reference to the wealthy Kenyan exploiters as robbers is meant to influence the reader's attitude to dislike and condemn them the way the author has done. By comparing them with the devil, Ngũgĩ tries to win the reader's support for his condemnation of imperialism and exploitation in Kenya. He categorizes the imperialists together with the devil to denounce them and invite the reader's contempt for oppressors and exploiters as exemplified by the narrator's exposition that the "devil was an ally of Roman imperialism and its oppressive practices" (Ngũgĩ 181). The narrator further condemns the devil and Roman imperialism by derogatorily describing them as "self-serving criminals" and "exploiters of the poor" (Ngũgĩ 181). This is despite the historical evidence which shows that Christianity that condemns exploitation and oppression was indeed spread by the Roman Empire.

*Wrestling with the Devil* reveals that, in a dictatorial state, censorship of critical literary works and other writings is one of the tools that the government uses to oppress her people, and specifically the writers. Censorship has negative connotations since it implies that freedom of expression or information has been curtailed. For instance, through a letter sent to him by his wife Nyambura, the author brings out the government's covert censorship of certain literature in the country. This is revealed by the revelation that some of the books sent to Ngũgĩ by his wife were not allowed into prison (154). This brings out the paranoid character of dictators and their oppressive agents. This is further illustrated by the author's revelation that some literature which political prisoners had sent for were not allowed to Kamĩtĩ Maximum Security Prison because they contained issues about neocolonialism, oppression, socialism and the struggle against oppression (*Wrestling* 186 - 187).

Ngũgĩ's argument about the role of art in society is meant to ignite revolution and the struggle against oppressive regimes among his readers. This is demonstrated when he argues that works

of art motivate writers and the general public to struggle against all forms of oppression (188). To underscore the importance of reading books and art in society, Ngũgĩ further informs the reader that, while being in prison, he read about Micere Mugo's act of disapproving imperialism in Kenya (*Wrestling*, 195). In theorizing about prison literature, Larson submits that prison writing is a form of response to the immense power of the "sovereignty of the punishment apparatus" as it is dependent on the context within which it is produced and becomes inclined to a figurative and rhetorical interpretation of "prison poetics" (145). Based on Larson's argument, we can see *Wrestling with the Devil* as Ngũgĩ's resistance against his coercive confinement by the state as well as his condemnation of the pathetic carceral conditions to which political detainees in postcolonial Kenya are subjected to. As such, Ngũgĩ can be seen to have accomplished what Larson describes as a prison writer's gesture of dismantling "the isolating power" of imprisonment (145). This act, therefore, amounts to achieving both personal and political goals as Ngũgĩ succeeds in exposing the different forms of suffering imposed on the prison inmates but which, as Larson points out, are the most highly secretive and concealed components of the state's punitive process (145). The coercive and brutish carceral practices which are predominant at Kamĩtĩ Maximum Security Prison brings to the fore the state's mechanisms of power that turn to penal institutions as the primary means of establishing sociopolitical order when confronted with political and ideological attacks from her restive population or individuals.

In *Wrestling with the Devil*, Ngũgĩ has further attacked the government for its role in suppressing the writers whose works criticize the political and economic malpractices in Kenya. As an illustration of his criticism, he points out the cases of powerful government officials whose directives are deemed oppressive. For instance, he refers to the intimidating comments of Charles Njonjo, Kenya's Attorney General during Jomo Kenyatta's iron-fist rule, who once had warned Kenyan writers against writing about things which would embarrass the government. The author has ridiculed the irony inherent in the Kenya government's encouragement of writers to venture into writing yet it ends up detaining them. For instance, though Mwai Kibaki (who was Kenya's Finance Minister then) launched and praised Ngũgĩ's novel, *Petals of Blood*, in July 1977, in December the same year, the author was arrested and detained because of his involvement in the production of *Ngaahika Ndeenda* in the Kamĩrĩthu project. Ngũgĩ's biting

sarcasm and ridicule of the Kenya government comes out clearly when he describes his detention as “a strange way of encouraging Kenyan literature” (*Wrestling* 197). To further advance his argument, he refers to Kofi Awoonor, a Ghanaian novelist, and Wole Soyinka who were imprisoned for criticizing their governments by highlighting the wrong things in their countries (*Wrestling* 201).

Through the behaviour of some prison officers, Ngũgĩ has successfully demonstrated that the postcolonial Kenyan government is indeed paranoid of writers, and specifically of Ngũgĩ. This is demonstrated through the character of Edward P. Lokopoyet, a senior superintendent in charge of Kamĩtĩ Prison, who warns Ngũgĩ not to attempt to influence the other detainees or write any poems in prison (*Wrestling* 171). Lokopoyet further warns Ngũgĩ that, if he were to be given permission to write while in prison, what has been written must be seen by himself. It is such paranoia that leads to acts of censorship in dictatorial states. Helen Arnold, Alison Liebling and Sarah Tait note that most of the prison staff are “power-hungry” prison enforcers of authority (Arnold et al 471). The prison guards have a culture of antagonizing and frustrating inmates through their disrespectfulness and aggression (Arnold et al 490). This results in what Freeman describes as the “disgrace” of incarceration and degradation of those incarcerated. Freeman further points out that the conditions of imprisonment for intellectuals and writers is even worse and describes it as “galling” (141). Because of this horrendous reality, Freeman argues that writings composed in prison are usually sneaked out of prisons (141). This is the kind of situation Ngũgĩ finds himself. However, by defying such conditions and the prison staff’s threats to write while being in prison, Ngũgĩ aims at exalting the writer while undermining the state that incarcerated him. In this context, therefore, the act of creative writing is portrayed as a tool Ngũgĩ has used to contest and debunk autocracy.

Therefore, in *Wrestling with the Devil* and *Detained*, Ngũgĩ’s act of foregrounding his efforts to successfully write a novel within the highly restrictive conditions of imprisonment at Kamĩtĩ Maximum Security Prison during the one year he was incarcerated due to his anti-imperialism and anti-dictatorship writings may successfully persuade his readers to accede to his ideological and political agenda in the memoirs. The author’s reference to other writers who wrote their works while being incarcerated by their dictatorial governments bolsters his anti-oppression and

anti-imperialism convictions and strengthens his persuasive appeal to his implied audiences across the world. Consequently, the author succeeds in extolling the artist and subverting the autocratic state's spiteful efforts that are meant to undermine the role of the artist in unmasking the socioeconomic and political rot in many African countries.

## 5.4 Foregrounding Prison as a Site of Political Oppression

In *Wrestling with the Devil*, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o has foregrounded prison as a site for politically-motivated oppression in postcolonial Kenya. In this memoir, the author wants to demonstrate to the reader that, through his detention for one year at Kamĩtĩ Maximum Security Prison, he got a glimpse into the intricate character of a dictatorial regime and was exposed to the excruciating prison life that political detainees are subjected to. The narrator's argument that the carceral system is a "repressive weapon" which is meant to safeguard the interests and security of dictators "over the rest of the population" (4) clearly articulates the impact that detention had on him. Ben Crewe argues that prison is a unique institution that is characterized by "its own world" through which authority, inequality and conflicts between the state and the incarcerated are demonstrated. Crewe further notes that prison is metaphorically an expression of the symbolic character of a government's "power to punish" (Crew 123). The political detainees at Kamĩtĩ, therefore, can be seen as a representative of the class of people whom the Kenyan state has failed to integrate into the political culture of the dominant class of political leadership in the country.

The memoir reveals that political detentions in postcolonial African states are constitutionally designed, and, therefore, can be seen as a privilege utilized by dictatorial leaders to molest and subdue persons considered threats to their leadership. Ngũgĩ has demonstrated this by supporting his claims by providing a paratextual evidence of his detention order that was signed by the then Vice President and Minister for Home Affairs, Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi, which is dated 29th December 1977 (*Wrestling* "Detention Order"). This detention order can be interpreted as Ngũgĩ's explicit accusation of Moi as the person behind his detention and, it therefore, influences the reader's attitude towards him (Moi) in the subsequent narrative throughout the prison memoir. Consequently, political detention can be seen as a power contest between the dictatorial leaders and their subjects since it shows how the former are involved in exercising power

conferred to them by the state. Ngũgĩ's depiction of the role of prison in postcolonial Kenya corresponds with Benjamin Bogart's view that "rigid control" is the ultimate function of the "prison architecture" because through imprisonment, the inmate is forced to physically and mentally conform to the dictates of the state (Bogart 22). Bogart further argues that prison, as an institution of incarceration was designed by the dominant class to insure its "own continual power" (44).

Ngũgĩ has used a picture of a sculpture of a solitary confinement at the beginning of *Wrestling with the Devil* to create the impression of the tight security which is put in place by the government to ensure that political detainees are firmly confined in prison and totally cut off from society. This is symbolized by the strong metallic bars of the wall of the prison and the chain in the middle of the room. Conversely, another picture of the same sculpture, but with its strong metal bars ruined, is placed at the end of the memoir. Through the destruction of the strong metal bars of prison that is implied in the picture, Ngũgĩ suggests that oppression can be overcome by resisting dictatorship in postcolonial Kenya. This symbolic implications of the sculpture of the solitary confinement is consistent with Sykes' conceptualization of a "maximum security prison" as a protective institution that is reserved for criminals who require "very close supervision and control" in order to undergo a systematic process of reformation (xiii). However, in Ngũgĩ's prison memoir, the purpose of political imprisonment is not to reform the inmates but to induce in them fear for the state and entrenchment of dictatorship in postcolonial Kenya.

Dictatorial regimes are normally paranoid and totally distrustful of political detainees. Therefore, the leaders in such states will ensure that such detainees are completely secluded in solitary confinements in maximum security prisons. In *Wrestling with the Devil*, Ngũgĩ has described their confinement using highly emotive language to arouse fear in the reader by describing the tight security at Kamĩtĩ Maximum Security Prison. In the memoir, he shows that the political prisoners are regarded as being more dangerous than the ordinary prisoners who are convicted of different offenses. Hence, Ngũgĩ and other political prisoners were "quarantined" and that only highly trained squad of prison guards were allowed to deal with them. His claim that his cell was always "double-locked" and that the keys were always secured by being "locked in a box" (4)

creates the impression that the prison authorities and the government generally feared political prisoners.

In detention, the political prisoners are diminished into mere objects by being defrocked of their human identity through their registration using mere figures instead of their names. Ngũgĩ says that his prison identity was just a number in a file, expressed as "K6, 77" (*Wrestling* 3), which was a mere "lifeless number among many files" with similar labels (28). Imprisonment, therefore, degrades a detainee by denying one his or her true identity and humanity, thereby making one to be symbolically dismembered from oneself. Accordingly, the detained individual becomes a mere figure among the many in prison as implied by Ngũgĩ's interpretation of his new signification in the number K6,$_{77}$ (*Wrestling* 158). This kind of situation is what must have compelled Ngũgĩ to write his prison memoir, since as Bogart argues, prison setting can become an inspiring factor for the prisoner seeking to "reclaim his or her identity" (Bogart 30). He further argues that, though the state's aim is to transform those in the carceral situation, an inmate will normally resist such intentions by attempting to protest against the prison space in order to reclaim their own identity and to challenge the state's act of mapping of an imposed identity that is created by the prison space (47). In this case, therefore, *Wrestling with the Devil* becomes Ngũgĩ's attempt to reject the identity imposed on him by the Kenya government; so, through the memoir, he attempts to give the reader his identity in terms of his political and ideological convictions. This attempt to resist the identity imposed on him as a criminal and a mere number in a file becomes a form of rhetorical action against the state and prison authorities. Similarly, Larson informs us that once a person is sentenced to imprisonment, the incarcerated person becomes "a numbered body" who is further placed within a numbered cell where one's individual persona becomes a location of behavioural management through penal disciplinary measures such as disgrace, intimidation and systematic torture under the control of the prison authorities (Larson 146). Since the prisoner does not have the power to resist physically, one uses language to fight back and reclaim one's identity which the state's power seeks to "impose, to know and to destroy" (Larson 147). In this case, therefore, writing becomes an "act of political resurrection" and the personal expression that will "speak back to the system" that imprisons other human beings (147).

*Wrestling with the Devil* demonstrates that, in a dictatorial regime, the state will normally use the prison guards and the police as its agents of state terrorism of the political prisoners. The actions, behaviour and intentions of such state mercenaries are encouraged by the state with the aim of intimidating and subjugating political prisoners by imposing fear on them. Ngũgĩ has used highly emotive terms to describe the prison guards at Kamĩtĩ Maximum Security Prison. By using terms or expressions such as "menacing boots" and "prowling guards" (4) to describe them, Ngũgĩ aims at creating the imagery of dangerous people and succeeds to arouse fear in the reader. In describing the vulnerability of prisoners to torture and even death, he appeals to the reader's fear of the prison guards and their dangerous behaviour by recounting one of his own experiences and intuitive feelings about the prison guards at Kamĩtĩ whose habit include peering at him while he is asleep (*Wrestling* 5). Expressions such as "menacingly sinister" and "the hunted" (5) place the detained individual in the position of vulnerability and, therefore, attracts condemnation of the behaviour of the prison guards from the author's sympathizers.

In *Wrestling with the Devil*, it is apparent that some prison guards are forced to do their work because of their pathetic economic conditions and a lack of opportunities for better jobs. The act of locking up guards with political prisoners brings out the irony of the conditions of their employment as the author comments satirically that the night guards are themselves reduced to the position of prisoners who are safeguarding other prisoners although they are paid for what the narrator describes as "their captivity" which is self-imposed due to a lack of alternative means of earning their living (*Wrestling* 7). The impression created by this revelation is that most of the prison guards suffer on their jobs because of the nature of the work they do. This accounts for their brutish behaviour that is exposed through the way they subject the political prisoners to what Ngũgĩ calls a "program of animal degradation" (*Wrestling* 9).

Among the most degrading prison conditions that subject the detainees to animal-like life is by ensuring that they live a monotonous existence. Therefore, the author likens the government's acts of oppressing prisoners to animals that are subjected to scientific experiments. Ngũgĩ claims that prisoners are subjected to life that is similar to that of animals that are confined to a small space and subjected to the same routine, a condition which makes them to end up becoming violent against each other (*Wrestling* 10). Because of the degrading monotony of life in prison,

an aura of death dominates the atmosphere of prison and this drives the prisoners crazy and instills in them a sense of fear as they always contemplate dying or being killed. Ngũgĩ's claim that the "white and grey" colours in the detention cells are symbolically the "colours of death" (10), shows that he was gripped by the fear of dying in prison. This kind of gloomy and monotonous prison conditions at Kamĩtĩ Prison reminds us of the architectural structure and function of Bentham's panopticon on which, according to Jewkes and Johnston, the modern "penal architecture" in the Western world are modelled (191). The scholars describe the internal character of life in a penal institution using terms such as the "bleakness or ugliness" (191) that permeate the whole life of imprisonment which comprise unpalatable food, the dreary prison attire, the lifelessness of prison cells and the lackluster prison existence which constitute the penal aesthetic (Jewkes and Johnston 191).

*Wrestling with the Devil*, therefore, shows that one of the most traumatizing experience of political detainees is their knowledge of the deaths of people who have been in similar detention situations. Also their awareness of others who languished in prison for many years makes the detainees develop some fears for the unknown as they live in prison without knowing when their detention will come to an end. This invites the reader's empathy for Ngũgĩ and other detained political prisoners at Kamĩtĩ as it creates an aura of hopelessness in the text. Ngũgĩ has captured this clearly when he intimates that some of the inmates who resisted the culture of fear died or were buried in deserts or their corpses were left for beats of the wild (*Wrestling* 128).

Ngũgĩ has used the term "ex-political prisoner" (*Wrestling* 128) in reference to President Jomo Kenyatta who, despite having been a victim of incarceration, subjected Kenyans to the same vice. Nevertheless, Ngũgĩ's act of excluding the "Preface" section in the recast prison memoir waters down his attack on Kenyatta.

*Wrestling with the Devil* reveals that subjecting political prisoners to inhuman treatment and the terrible prison conditions impacts negatively on their psychological states. Ngũgĩ has illustrated this claim by referring to a political prisoner "who had a mental breakdown" and was "reduced to eating his own feces" but was kept in that condition for two years (10). Ironically, whenever a prisoner succumbs to mental or physical breakdown, the prison staff device ways of escaping

responsibility through blaming the prisoner by claiming that "prison defeated him" as a cover-up of the prisoner's ill-treatment (*Wrestling* 133). This kind of scenario has been confirmed by different studies on imprisonment which reveal that cruel prison conditions normally drive some inmates to become deranged.

In their study which was conducted in the prisons of the UK, Jane Senior and Jenny Shaw found that prisoners experienced physical health problems and that the kind of diseases that affected them were different from those of the general community. They have reported that prisoners who were incarcerated suffered from "asthma, bronchitis and other related respiratory problems," "heart and circulatory illnesses" and a high incidences of mental disorders among the different categories of prisoners (Senior and Show 383). In another study by Arnold, et al., it was reported that the appalling prison conditions and the stresses of imprisonment cause mental health and drive the prisoners to drug use. These, in turn have played a crucial role in prison suicides (Arnold, et al 442).

*Wrestling with the Devil* demonstrates that the uncertainty that revolves around the possibility or impossibility of being released from detention is a serious form of psychological torture to the political prisoners. This is revealed when Ngũgĩ recounts about the anxiety that the prisoners usually have as they anticipate their release. For instance, he claims that for four months, August to December 1978, "feverish expectations" (16) of being released mounted among the detainees. However, such anxieties are met with the gleam reality of the long stay in prison by some political detainees. In reference to a case of a detainee's long stay in detention, Ngũgĩ expresses his apprehension and sense of pessimism which grips detainees as demonstrated when the narrator says that Wuodh Sijeyo, despite appearing cheery, strong in spirit and being a source of hope for the inmates at Kamiti Maximum Security Prison, he was serving the longest term and there was no hope of being set free soon (*Wrestling* 128); hence, was seen as contributing to the despair among the detainees who harboured some hopes of being released soon.

Being held incommunicado or concealing information about political prisoners can be a source of psychological anguish for the detainees, their families and the public. Ngũgĩ describes this kind of practice as mysterious rituals which are meant to instill and enhance fear in the

population as well as break them physically, emotionally and psychologically (*Wrestling* 29). In *Wrestling with the Devil*, part of the mystery surrounding the detention of political detainees involved keeping ignorant the detainees' families and the public on the whereabouts and the fate of those detained by the state. For example, Ngũgĩ claims that his arrest was kept a secret as the police and other government officials feigned ignorance until it was communicated through the government's gazette of January 6, 1978. Ngũgĩ describes this kind of mistreatment as "coercive violence" (28). Petert Bishop Caster informs us that prisons "are enclosed spaces" (Caster 5) in which those not themselves imprisoned imagine those interiors. Therefore, readers of prison narrative are likely to be enthralled by the excitement of exploring "how it must feel to be behind bars" (Caster 5). Caster's observations signal the possible rhetorical intentions of prison writings because its authors must strive to persuade the reader that what one actually reads unravels the hidden prison reality and mystery. As such, Ngũgĩ's revelations on the mysteries and mistreatments which occur within the prison walls and out of sight from the public attracts the disapproval of his sympathizers.

*Wrestling with the Devil* further reveals that political detainees in Kenya's prisons are subjected to unbearable conditions of solitude that contributes to their psychological breakdown. This is shown by the fact that Ngũgĩ was locked up alone in a cell for twenty-two hours every day during his first month of imprisonment (30). This kind punitive segregation forces prisoners to develop queer behaviour such as shouting from their solitary cells in their attempt to get into some communication with one another. The state of solitude they experience culminates into bouts of fear among the inmates when the narrator informs us that, despite the inmates' efforts to "break the walls of segregation", feelings of loneliness would sometimes steal into him and "I would be seized with momentary panic" (31) like that of a person overwhelmed by bouts of terror. In some situations, solitary confinement in prison leads to mental breakdown and development of queer behaviour in some inmates as Mũhoro wa Mũthoga's case demonstrates when the narrator recounts that the inmate developed queer behavior including talking to other detainees in whispers, using gestures whenever he asked for something and walking by tiptoeing due to the impact of a prolonged solitary confinement (*Wrestling* 32)

In *Wrestling with the Devil*, Ngũgĩ demonstrates that detention can be used as a tool for creating division amongst people, thereby thwarting their unity in the struggle against oppression. Therefore, the prison officials and the Kenya government ensure that every facet of prison is devised to reduce political detainees to a condition in which they finally presume that the masses they are fighting for have betrayed them. The disillusionment that grips them during such moments is captured in a prisoner's contemplation, "*Why should I sacrifice myself for them?*" (*Wrestling* 40). That is why the colonial government used detention in Kenya to break the Africans' resistance to oppression.

Ngũgĩ has recounted how detention was employed to destroy the fighting spirit of anticolonial leaders such as Harry Thuku and Jomo Kenyatta during colonialism in Kenya. On the negative impact of colonialism on Kenyatta, Ngũgĩ has raised some questions to influence the reader's convictions on its destructive nature (*Wrestling* 114). These questions hint at the possibility of Kenyatta's fighting spirit having been broken by the traumatic prison experience. To persuade the reader that the answers to the questions he raises are likely to be in the affirmative, Ngũgĩ concludes that the character of Kenyatta when he came out of prison had tremendously changed as demonstrated by his change of tact and language which were different from the one he used to speak when he was the fiery and leader of nationalist politics (*Wrestling* 115). Ngũgĩ's anger at Kenyatta's betrayal of Kenyans' postcolonial expectations comes out through his claim that, on August 12, 1963, during the independence celebrations, Kenyatta, paradoxically, asked for forgiveness from the outgoing brutish colonial state (*Wrestling* 115). However, this amounts only to Ngũgĩ's criticism of Kenyatta's change of character and betrayal of the Kenyan society in general. It is devoid of his angry and reproachful tone at Kenyatta which comes out clearly and strongly in the expunged "Preface" section of his original prison narrative in *Detained*.

In *Wrestling with the Devil*, Ngũgĩ appeals to the reader's emotions of pain using the metaphor of a wound to describe the tortuous tactics that prison officials employ to ensure that the prisoners are constantly subjected to physical and mental suffering. This is revealed through Ngũgĩ's claim that prison authorities ensured that they continually subjected the inmates to brutal treatments as demonstrated through the metaphors of the "wound" and "hot knives" (134). He informs the reader that political prisoners were subjected to severe beatings which could lead to

bodily injuries and immobility or even death of an inmate. To create a clear image of these sadistic tactics, the author metaphorically describes them as “the hot knives of torture” (134). The author further describes the vicious prison guards and other prison officials metaphorically as the “stony dragon” that could not be touched by the prisoners’ cries of agony. Muchiri has compared such tactics of torture to the experiences of those detained at Nyayo torture chambers. However, Nyayo House was used for detention and torture of the state’s critics by the brutal secret service police during President Daniel Arap Moi’s era when Ngũgĩ was already in self-exile in the U.S.A.

In *Wrestling with the Devil*, Ngũgĩ has revealed that disease and unhygienic conditions in prison are used as a means of torture of the political detainees at Kamĩtĩ Prison. By subjecting the prisoners to unhealthy conditions, the prison authorities create favourable conditions for the prisoners to contract diseases easily. As a form of torture, disease became the most dreaded form torture and suffering in Kamĩtĩ Prison; hence, Ngũgĩ was once advised by other inmates to “try not to be ill” (135) since the prison authorities would procrastinate in taking a detainee to hospital until the disease has fully pervaded the victim’s body before attempting to treat him. On the issue of disease, Ngũgĩ informs us that each political prisoner suffered from one or more diseases that included “headaches, backaches, toothaches, eye and skin ailments” among others (136). To substantiate his claim and persuade the reader on the use of disease as a form of torture in Kenyan prisons, Ngũgĩ gives examples of detainees who got incapacitated by diseases at Kamĩtĩ Prison. Among the cases he has mentioned include Martin Shikuku (who was a prominent politician in Kenya) and two others, one of whom suffered swollen veins while the other had a wound in the anus which was caused by a fatal infection. Ngũgĩ says that one of the prisoners suffered for seven years before he was finally taken to Kenyatta National Hospital for surgery while the other one had an operation after suffering for six months. The two sick inmates had their surgery while they were in chains. In this context, Ngũgĩ succeeds in arousing anger in the reader for the government and sympathy for the sick prisoners.

Using the image of Martin Shikuku’s sickly and incapacitated body and describing his sickness as the most disreputable and disgraceful instance of “disease as punishment” (*Wrestling* 137), Ngũgĩ aims at exposing the state’s cruel and sadistic character. The description of the situation as

an apparition expresses Ngũgĩ's shock at the dehumanizing detention conditions that the political detainees faced during Jomo Kenyatta's regime. It is such terrible conditions that drove Shikuku to a hunger strike for a week which almost cost him his life. Ngũgĩ argues that a hunger strike is premised on one's "readiness to die" (*Wrestling* 199) when a prisoner's demands are not met. To evoke a contemptuous feeling for the state, the author says that it is a terrible thing to watch death threatening a Kenyan because one has made a principled stand on political and national issues. Because of the prisoner's self-denial and sacrifice to advance one's cause, the suffering victim evokes strong emotions of empathy in the reader for the suffering detainee.

McEvoy et al, argue that inmates' hunger strikes mostly elicit extensive reader's empathy since they demonstrate the political prisoners' commitment to their goals and subvert the state's claims or accusations against the detainees (McEvoy et al 311). However, in Ngũgĩ's *Wrestling with the Devil*, Shikuku's hunger strike can be seen as a highly perilous action which almost costs him his life. Though it is an effective resistance strategy against politically-motivated incarceration and the appalling carceral conditions, it is a strategy which should be executed after carefully assessing logistical issues such as one's ability to endure it, the body's fitness to sustain it for some time and the possible political repercussions of the aftermath of the strike. McEvoy et al informs us that a hunger striker banks on the fact that one's death prompt widespread condemnation of the state; hence, compelling it to address (312) some of the demands that trigger such an act. The kind of prison authorities and government against whom Shikuku went on a hunger strike consist of individuals whose main intention was to completely annihilate the political prisoners at Kamĩtĩ Prison. Therefore, his hunger strike could not have easily triggered any substantive reaction from the same people who were out to finish him and his political inmates. Shikuku's case, therefore, amounts to violence against his own body and results in acts of self-sabotage. The hunger strike, though, is an effective strategy that can arouse strong feelings of empathy for the victim while creating a bad image of the government.

In their essay on imprisonment, David Scott and Helen Codd argue that a prisoner who is involved in acts of self-harm including subjecting oneself to a hunger strike attempts to deal with negative emotions by transforming the psychological pain into physical pain. This is because self-harm arises from intense "psychological pain" and one's deterioration into total despair

(Scott and Codd 89). Though Scott and Codd consider self-harm as one of the steps to a prisoner's survival during one's confinement, I would like to point out that, in a situation like the one in *Wrestling with the Devil*, self-harm would only aggravate one's suffering as demonstrated by Shikuku's condition during his hunger strike. After all, the 1970s Kenya government would have wished that the political prisoners undergo total destruction.

At Kamĩtĩ Prison, prisoners did not only fear becoming ill while being in detention, but also feared being killed. This was intensified by their perpetual fear of being killed through poisoning "under the pretext of being treated" (*Wrestling* 146). This reveals that political prisoners in Kenya during Kenyatta's regime were always at the risk of being exterminated by the state. Ngũgĩ's claim that the prison authorities could actually infect political prisoners with fatal diseases "if the natural ones failed", reveals the prisoners' deep mistrust of the state. They also feared being injected with a fatal drug to destroy them. This criminalizes the autocratic leadership for its sadistic practices against dissenting voices in the Kenyan society.

Apart from being infected by diseases, the poor health of the political detainees at Kamĩtĩ Prison is worsened by the unhygienic conditions and poor quality food given to the inmates. Ngũgĩ has graphically described the appalling conditions of prison to attract the reader's revulsion against prison and its culture of oppression and human degradation. To project the disdainful image of prison, he describes its stinking smell using the phrase a perpetual pall of "polluted air" (*Wrestling* 161) which he claims had hit him on the face, and choked him till he started gasping for breath making him develop the fear of facing a possible attack of asthma. Ngũgĩ's choice of terms such as the "smell of un-sugared", "unsalted" and "uncooked porridge" to describe the kind of meal they were given creates a disgusting imagery of the taste and smell of the food. To express his disgust at that kind of food, he tells us that it "is nauseating" and makes him "feel like vomiting" (*Wrestling* 161).

The act of chaining prisoners whenever they are taken to hospital for treatment or when being allowed to meet and talk with their visiting family members has symbolic implications in *Wrestling with the Devil*. Ngũgĩ's argument that the chains are "badges of humiliation" (*Wrestling* 141) makes the act of chaining the prisoners to attain some form of Foucault's idea of

public torture; hence, making the act a form of punishment meted on the accused by the prison authorities on behalf of the Kenyan state. Freeman has pointed out that conditions of imprisonment of highly educated individuals and those of higher social standing becomes worse because they are subjected to severer "hardships of prison" such as being put in chains and subjected to severe torture (*Wrestling* 141). Therefore, Ngũgĩ's resolve to resist being chained as a prerequisite to be taken to hospital can be interpreted as his advocacy for resistance against this kind of oppression. His declaration that he would not "willingly or cooperatively put out" his hands to be chained and that he would revolt even when being led to a slaughterhouse is meant to attract the reader's admiration for his resistance as well as enhance his ethos as a fighter. To discredit the act of chaining the sick prisoners, Ngũgĩ terms the practice an "oppressive requirement" and an act of "blatant oppression" (*Wrestling* 141) to encourage imprisoned readers to accede to his advocacy for resistance against repression. Therefore, Ngũgĩ is appealing to people in the same situation, particularly victims of political oppression, to resist such kinds of oppression by the state.

*Wrestling with the Devil* further reveals the impact of political detention on the family of the detained person. The prison authorities use the family as an instrument through which the detained person is subjected to psychological torment. For instance, it is indicated that being forcibly separated from one's family and kept in an unknown location can be a traumatizing experience to both the detained as well as one's family. For this reason, Ngũgĩ argues that, owing to the intense emotional attachment to one's family, it can be employed to destroy the political will of an unprepared political prisoner. He describes any forceful severance from one's family as being a painful experience and points out that it worsens due to the prisoner's utter sense of helplessness (*Wrestling* 146). Since Ngũgĩ was arrested when his wife was expectant and, therefore, a time when she needed his support most, the arrest and detention had a significant degree of psychological torture for them. Therefore, Ngũgĩ's eagerness to know how his pregnant wife, new born daughter, other children and his mother were going on at home in his absence exposes the reader to the kind of psychological torment such prisoners experience while being in prison.

Taking the act of separating a detainee from one's family as a source of torture, Ngũgĩ informs us that during one's incarceration, the political prisoner's family members are normally given wrong information about their detained relatives. This is normally done to falsely manipulate those outside prison to believe that their loved ones are fighting a futile war with the government or to see the government as the one that has been wronged. The prison officials also create an artificial meeting place to hoodwink the family members and conceal the exact prison where their loved ones are being held. For example, Ngũgĩ recounts how the detainees' family members used to be driven to the airport where they could meet their detained loved ones. He angrily dismisses the whole business of meeting family members by describing the "elaborate lies" involved in it as a "surreal exercise" that was meant to create the impression that the prisoner was well-treated by the state (*Wrestling* 150). For instance, the narrator recounts that once a prisoner has been taken out to meet a family member, he is unchained and granted few minutes to meet the person who has come to see him under security men and prison guards. After the brief encounter, he would be whisked out of the meeting room and chained before being driven back to prison (*Wrestling* 150).

This scenario shows that the detained were denied any form of privacy when meeting their family members during such visits since they were a "supervised encounter" (*Wrestling* 148). This kind of behaviour by the prison officials reveals that Kenya's autocratic regime was paranoid of the detainees. Furthermore, this may be seen as an act of intimidating and humiliating both the prisoners and their family members. The painful and meaningless encounter between the detainee and his family members enhances the psychological torture of those involved as the narrator points out that whenever prisoners were visited they become depressed after the brief encounter with their kin (*Wrestling* 150).

Studies conducted on imprisonment confirm that it strains families in different ways. For instance, Scott and Codd note that incarceration has a serious psychological impact on both the imprisoned person and one's family members as it affects their relationships (144). They further point out that, sometimes, the prisoners' partners and children face social stigmatization which may force them to move away from their houses or even adopt new names to conceal their identities from the public (145). Apart from the emotional impact on family members,

imprisonment of someone results in the loss of the main sources of family income. Though *Wrestling with the Devil* does not reveal how the detainees' children are affected by their parents' imprisonment, such children are affected emotionally and may react badly to their parents' imprisonment especially if they witness the arrest or prosecution of the parents. According to Scott and Codd, such children may exhibit "externalized problematic behaviour" (148).

Another form of punishment associated with detention in *Wrestling with the Devil* is the torture inflicted by the perpetual dream of waiting for freedom whose time is uncertain to the detained, their families and the public. The political prisoners in Kenya during Jomo Kenyatta's regime faced the uncertainty of being set free. Though they lived in perpetual hope that they would eventually be set free, Ngũgĩ problematizes the idea of freedom by suggesting that a political prisoner's release from prison takes two forms, through actual release from prison or death. His conclusion that a "release of one sort or the other is eventually assured" (*Wrestling* 207) keeps the political prisoners in a dilemma since none of them knows the form his release from detention shall take. Specifically, what complicates the psychological anguish for the prisoners is the uncertainty of the time of their release from detention. Ngũgĩ has described this situation as "the cruelties of detention without trial and conviction" (*Wrestling* 207) to convince the reader that this kind of uncertainty is itself a form of torture for political prisoners. The uncertainty of release does not trouble only the political prisoners themselves, but also their families and friends. That is why the author argues that imprisonment of political prisoners is a kind of torture that is not only for those within prisons, but also for "those outside the prison walls" (*Wrestling*, 208).

This uncertainty is worsened by the existence of dysfunctional government-created bodies such as the eight-member Detainees' Review Tribunal which was established to handle the cases of all political detainees in Kenya during the 1970s. Ngũgĩ argues that the tribunal served "political purposes" and acted as "a public relations team" (*Wrestling* 208) to dispel both the national and international fears regarding Kenya's prisons' conditions. The author compares the tribunal to the colonial screening teams which were used to oppress the colonized during the State of Emergency era in colonial Kenya. Ngũgĩ's revelation that the tribunal's advice to the

government on the detainees' cases was not publicized nor communicated to the political detainees attests to the government's malicious intentions against them. These revelations bring out the sly character of Kenya's autocratic government in dealing with political prisoners.

Ngũgĩ's experience in his first appearance before the tribunal justifies his description of the tribunal as "a hoax" that was designed to hoodwink the nation and whole world generally (*Wrestling* 208). He recounts his experience with the tribunal by informing the reader that after brief and polite introductions, the members of the tribunal vacantly stared at him and when he asked them to tell him why he was detained, the members simply said that they "didn't know" either. Instead, the tribunal chairperson asked Ngũgĩ to say whether he had anything he wanted them to "tell the government" (*Wrestling* 212). This scenario demonstrates the detainees' frustrating experience before the members of the tribunal as concretized when the narrator recounts that, "an incredible hollowness" gripped him whenever he looked at the disappointment on the faces of inmates who had just attended the tribunal (*Wrestling* 213).

These false hopes of being set free also make the detainees pessimistic and cynical towards any dreams or promises of freedom. As an illustration, Ngũgĩ gives an account of how one of the detainees, Wesonga Sijeyo, had been falsely assured of his freedom that he packed his things and set himself to go home but at the gate he was informed that there was an error which had occurred concerning his release. These false promises led to detainees' belief that they could not be set free unless President Jomo Kenyatta died (*Wrestling* 221-223).

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault's idea of Panopticism indicates that the person under penality is always subjected to constant surveillance by the state security apparatuses (Foucault 267). Ngũgĩ's *Wrestling with the Devil*, similarly, shows that even in their solitary cells, the political detainees are closely observed by the guards. Therefore, the warders' act of invading the privacy of the detainees while being in their cells becomes a form of punishment and torture for the political prisoners. Ngũgĩ expresses his disgust and frustrations at what he terms a "brutal invasion" of his privacy by the guards when he recounts how they watched over him when he was asleep by lamenting that, the habit was scary and excruciating (*Wrestling*, 9).

The act of watching somebody relieve himself is a traumatizing experience which is both humiliating and debasing. The author's employment of the expressions 'brutal invasion', 'daily trailed', 'in waking and sleeping' and 'truly unnerving' appeals strongly to the pathos of Ngũgĩ's sympathizers since they evoke emotions of pity for the victim of such an invasion. It is also quite haunting to wake up at the middle of the night and find someone watching over you. Or even more traumatizing for one's acknowledgement that one will be watched over while sleeping.
Such acts amount to violations of the prisoner's bodily integrity and attract disapproval reactions from different categories of readers who may include those imprisoned, human rights' groups and advocates of prison reforms.

In *Wrestling with the Devil*, Ngũgĩ has presented prison as a monotonous existence of inmates using animal imagery. He has compared the prisoners with caged animals waiting for slaughter to expose the vulnerability of those detained in relation to their detention authorities. He describes the monotonous nature of prison life as "a cliché" which is characterized by "dull, mundane, downright monotonous, repetitious and tortuous" atmosphere which almost takes what he terms the "animal rhythm" of existence as they wait to be slaughtered or escape the anticipated ordeal (*Wrestling* 157).

Ngũgĩ's description of the monotony of prison life gives the impression of a meaningless existence that is felt by the prisoners at Kamĩtĩ Prison. This is illustrated by Ngũgĩ's description of prison life as being erratic, meaningless and worthless (*Wrestling* 163). Associated with the dull and monotonous existence is the white and grey colours of the Kamĩtĩ Prison which Ngũgĩ relates with death to reveal his perpetual fear of death while in prison. By so doing, he aims at expressing his abhorrence for prison while instilling in the reader who has not been to prison the fear of imprisonment. This is a traumatic experience since constant fear of and anticipation for one's death demonstrates the persistent images of death in the minds of the detainees. As such, the monotonous existence becomes a strategically programmed form of torture which is aimed at psychologically unhinging the detainees.

In *Wrestling with the Devil*, prison is portrayed as an instrument for breaking the willpower of the anti-oppression and anti-government crusaders. The state achieves this by subjecting the

prisoners to callous forms of treatment that include poor diets and long hours of incarceration. In this regard, Ngũgĩ refers to some prison officers who were ruthless and determined to destroy political prisoners. One such a case is Edward P. Lokopoyet, the officer in charge of Kamĩtĩ Prison, who he claims was always determined to destroy the inmates' will to fight for their rights (167). To justify his claim, Ngũgĩ claims that Lokopoyet had political prisoners locked up in their separate cells for "twenty-three hours a day" and prescribed uncooked food with bits of grass and sand, while the beans and yellow vegetables had worms (Ngũgĩ 168). This portrayal of prison authorities is meant, not only to expose the difficult prison conditions facing political prisoners in Kenyan prisons, but also to persuade the reader of their sadistic character. Ngũgĩ's description of Lokopoyet as the embodiment of the oppressive Kenyan laws and "a mini-god" (168) brings out the cruel character of government machineries and makes the reader to detest both prison authorities and the government of Kenya. Ironically, the prison conditions in post-independent Kenya have been presented as being worse than those of the colonial period as revealed through Wesonga Sijeyo's testimony in which he claims that his five years' experience of prison during the colonial period was better than the one he has encountered in his nine years in prison in independent Kenya as revealed when says, "But these last two years have been the worst of all the previous twelve years" (*Wrestling* 170-171).

From the various oppressive and dehumanizing practices through which Ngũgĩ and his other political detainees at Kamĩtĩ are subjected to by the autocratic government through its state coercive mechanisms which include the prison guards, tribunals and the security apparatuses, the author has succinctly projected prison as one of the worst and most brutish symbols of political oppression in post-independent Kenya and Africa in general. Therefore, the author's strategy of projecting prison and the government's oppressive mechanisms as a site of intimidation, humiliation and destruction of those opposed to the government's oppressive character demonstrates his concerted effort to effectively persuade his implied audience to assent to his anti-oppression politics and advocacy for resistance against all forms of economic exploitation of the masses.

## 5.5 The Ambivalence of Adopting the Not-Guilty Plea Strategy

Throughout *Wrestling with the Devil*, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o has taken a defensive position in his attempt to persuade the reader that he was not guilty of any wrongdoing to warrant his arrest and detention for one year by the Kenya government in 1978. He has taken this position in order to attract the reader's support and sympathy for him while placing himself in a position from which he can attack the Kenya government as well as articulate his ideological and political ideas. Therefore, the position Ngũgĩ places himself in his prison narrative calls our attention to Aristotle's arguments on the types and roles of rhetoric in society. Aristotle notes that among the three functions of rhetoric is its forensic role. Forensic rhetoric deals with issues related to courtroom discussions in which the speakers make speeches of allegations and defence, the basic issue being establishing whether one is guilty or innocent. Forensic rhetoric "either attacks or defends somebody" (Aristotle 18). According to Zim, acts of incarceration and repression may prompt those incarcerated to speak out through writing, "either in self-defense or for their cause" (2). Therefore, the reader who is acting as a judge while reading Ngũgĩ's prison narrative and the arguments raised therein shall be influenced depending on the strength of the author's rhetoric of self-defense and his accusation or condemnation of the state that incarcerated him.

In defending his ideological position and sociopolitical worldview in *Wrestling with the Devil*, Ngũgĩ has portrayed the masses, peasants and workers as being democratic and the Kenya government as dictatorial and exploitative. He claims that the postcolonial Kenya government was involved in acts of detaining workers, democratic-minded persons and progressive intellectual whom it perceived as being subversive to the state (17-18). His argument is premised on the assumption that, Kenya being a dictatorial and corrupt government, was facing criticism and resistance from her people; hence, its adoption of iron fist rule to induce and perpetuate fear among the masses. For him, therefore, detention of intellectuals and rebellious workers is motivated by the government's fear of their awareness of the leaders' involvement in the "plunder of national wealth and heritage" (*Wrestling* 18). Therefore, the detention of those critical of the state aims to forestall any real or imaginary uprising against its leadership. Ngũgĩ argues that, to protect their selfish interests, the autocratic and corrupt Kenyan leaders are

determined even to incarcerate all the peasants and workers as the British colonialist attempted to incarcerate the rebellious Kenyans during the state of emergency in the 1950s.

In *Wrestling with the Devil*, Ngũgĩ has put the government authorities on the offensive by claiming that they falsely label the dissenting voices they detain as “power hungry, misguided and ambitious agitators” to justify their oppressive ways and cover-up their intentions. The author sarcastically describes the oppressive authorities as the “wronged, self-righteous gods” and their oppressive activities or assassination of their opponents as “divine mission” (19). In this context, therefore, the political detainee is assumed to have committed a political sin or crime to warrant severe punishment from the all-powerful state “gods”. However, the political criminal may contest the accusations levelled against him. McEvoy et al. have pointed out that notions of “political crime or political prisoner” are generally politically and ideologically contested terms. As such, in situations of political imprisonment, the contest is usually between those presumed to have committed unacceptable political actions and the state whose punishment is executed in terms incarceration. In this regard, therefore, the prisons become locations within which considerably greater and symbolic “battles are fought” (293). This kind of perception of the relationship between the state and the political prisoner signals the reader to the possible invocation of rhetoric by either side to justify their actions and beliefs. On the side of the state, the rhetorical strategy is the portrayal of the prisoner as a dangerous person or criminal whose activities, if left unchecked, will impact negatively on the general public or citizens. On the side of the prisoner, the main rhetorical strategy is to portray himself as being innocent; hence, not guilty of the accusations directed against him.

In this memoir, therefore, Ngũgĩ wants to convince the reader that his arrest and detention has symbolic implications. He argues that detention psychologically affects both the detainees and the rest of the country’s oppressed (*Wrestling* 20). To Ngũgĩ, the detention of some people is “a psychological siege of the whole nation” to create the impression that political imprisonment affects all the citizens of an autocratic state. Therefore, as Sykes argues, prison is not merely a system that hides the prisoners from the public but rather is an instrument of the state which is modelled by “its social environment” since it is acted upon by various groups that struggle to advance their interests that may include political, human rights agitators, religious and even

ethnic groups (8). This further implies that when Ngũgĩ writes his prison narrative, he targets different categories of readers both of whom may be within or outside the penal institutions.

In *Wrestling with the Devil*, Ngũgĩ has used his arrest and detention to expose the excessive force with which an autocratic state handles dissenting voices in an African country and Kenya in particular. His arrest during night hours reveals the government's intention to keep the public away from witnessing its brutal way of handling its victims. He draws the reader's attention by revealing that the police who arrested him were heavily armed with machine guns, rifles, and pistols and that they were in two Land Rovers and a sedan which was flashing red and blue lights (*Wrestling* 20). He claims that the Special Branch "swarmed" his house, "pounced on" his books and their leader "growled" at him when he attempted to talk to them (*Wrestling* 21). He further describes their search as "raiders' activities" and the books they collected from his shelves as their "loot" (*Wrestling* 22) to criminalize their actions and create an atmosphere of terror. In this context, Ngũgĩ successfully creates an image of a mighty state and expresses his defenseless position. To arouse fear in the reader, Ngũgĩ describes his arrest as an "abduction" and the police squadron as the "abducting team" (*Wrestling* 24). He declares his innocence by claiming that the police who were heavily armed abducted him from his house as if he were a dangerous person yet his only form of resistance was in his writings (*Wrestling* 24). He describes the whole situation of his arrest as "armed terror" to create an atmosphere of apprehension and express the might of the Kenyatta regime of the 1970s. Therefore, in describing the ruthlessness with which the state handles or attacks its perceived political enemies, Ngũgĩ successfully brings out the cruel character or image of what Sykes calls "the armed might of the police" (*Wrestling* 41).

Ngũgĩ's arrest further reveals the murderous nature of the Kenya police force during the 1970s. He arouses strong emotions of fear by invoking the memory of past assassinations by the state during the reign of Jomo Kenyatta as the president of postcolonial Kenya. To express fear for his own life when he was arrested, the narrator says that the brutal assassination of J.M. Kariuki in 1975 occupied and disturbed his mind as the police officer called Mburu was dealing with him. To express his fears of the possibility of being executed, he thoughtfully wonders: "Could Mburu be on the same mission?" (*Wrestling* 26). Therefore, the description of the mystery created by the police after Ngũgĩ's arrest intensifies the reader's fear for the narrator's life since his wife

had only known that he had been arrested by the Tigoni police but was not aware of his being taken to Kiambu and Kilimani police stations. From the complex and mystery surrounding the arrest and handling of Ngũgĩ by the state security apparatuses, we get a clear picture of how political prisoners are handled in suspicious and mysterious ways and subjected to fear of being assassinated by the state.

In *Wrestling with the Devil*, the state and her leaders are assigned cannibalistic qualities because of the politically-instigated assassinations of some politicians by the Jomo Kenyatta's government. For instance, Ngũgĩ argues that the postcolonial Kenyan state assumed a "malevolent character" (29) such as that of a scary supernatural force that can be pacified only by the entreaties of a people on their knees and gratified only by the flesh of human sacrifice through the assassinations of people as it happened to the brutal murder of Pio Gama Pinto and J.M. Kariuki (29). Ngũgĩ further extends the metaphor of cannibalism to the government's corrupt and exploitative character by employing expressions such as a "man-eat-man" state, "state of man-eaters" and the culture of "drinking human blood" to describe Kenya's capitalistic character. This creates strong repulsive feelings in the anti-capitalist and pro-communist readers owing to the author's description of Kenya and her capitalistic leaders as people who practice "social cannibalism" (163). Therefore, in expressing his anti-imperialism views, Ngũgĩ prescribes resistance against the exploitative class in society by arguing that the exploited victims will not always allow themselves to be exploited and oppressed by others.

Despite being a professor and in the class of the educated elitists, Ngũgĩ has positioned himself as one of the oppressed ordinary folk in Kenya who include peasants and workers. He has, therefore, struggled to gain his reader's approval of his criticism of the Kenyan state by using the government's ban of the Kamĩrĩĩthu open theatre and the performance of the play *Ngaahika Ndeenda* (*I Will Marry When I Want*) which, he claims scared the government and expressed the determination of the peasants' resistance against economic and cultural imperialism. Nevertheless, Ngũgĩ denies that the play calls for a class struggle despite its Marxist interpretation of the Kenyan socioeconomic and political realities and insists that it only reflects the already existing part of the Kenyan history of anti-oppression struggles since the colonial period. This claim problematizes the defensive position he takes against his arrest since it creates

self-contradictions in his arguments. For instance, in an interview with Emily Wilson of AlterNet in 2015, Ngũgĩ argued that in using the Agĩkũyũ language in writing the play, *Ngaahika Ndeenda*, the peasants were able to comprehend well the Kenyan history of exploitation and oppression; hence, the "community discovered its own voice" as it "awakened their consciousness." The government, therefore, became unconformable and "afraid of the language" used in the play since this awakened the people to the reality about the oppressive and exploitative nature of the Kenyan society. However, Ngũgĩ's claim that the state feared the use of an indigenous African language is contrary to the Kenya government's language policies in education since the colonial period which emphasized the use of local languages in lower primary school classes.

Despite his political and Marxist ideological positions, in *Wrestling with the Devil*, Ngũgĩ struggles to convince the reader that his arrest and the ban on the Kamĩrĩthu project were uncalled for. He claims that they were based on mere suspicion of his intentions by the government because of his involvement in the Kamĩrĩthu project which was meant for peasants. Nevertheless, despite his denial of the possible political implications of his involvement in the production and performance of *Ngaahika Ndeenda*, it would be difficult to persuade the reader that he was really innocent. According to Ndlovu, Ngũgĩ was imprisoned because of his uncompromising attitude in talking about what he considered as being correct or to be the truth about the Kenya government which resulted in his detention (Ndlovu 21). This, therefore, is suggestive that it was not his act of being involved in the Kamĩrĩthu project, but rather his political utterances and writings which provoked those in the Kenyatta government.

In *Wrestling with the Devil*, Ngũgĩ has attempted to portray the Kamĩrĩthu theatre and the performance of *Ngaahika Ndeenda* as a national issue by claiming that it attracted grateful thousands of people who walked on foot and in hired vehicles from all parts of Kenya (89). He further claims that Kamĩrĩthu is central to the history of Kenya's struggle against colonialism and postcolonial oppression to influence the reader to believe that it was indeed a national issue and, therefore, attract the reader's disapproval of the government's ban on its activities. However, Ngũgĩ's claims at this point may be seen as being problematic since the reader cannot be easily

persuaded by such sweeping statements because of the nature and composition of the members of the Kamĩrĩthu theatre project.

Apart from expressing his political and socialist ideology by advocating for a socialist state in Kenya, Ngũgĩ can also be seen to be attempting to immortalize the Agĩkũyũ nationalism and hegemony in Kenya's history in the memoir. There is evidence from the memoir that the history of Kamĩrĩthu did not have the national outlook that Ngũgĩ wants the reader to believe in. For instance, the initiative to form the Kamĩrĩthu Community Education and Cultural Center was made by a community development officer called Njeri wa Amoni. All the people who formed the first committee of the centre came from the Gĩkũyũ community and included Adolf Kamau, as chairman, and later Ngigi Mwaura. Karanja was the secretary while Ngũgĩ himself and Ngũgĩ wa Mirii were among the top officials of the project. It should also be pointed out that even the cast of the *Ngaahika Ndeenda* production was composed of only members of the Agĩkũyũ community. From these bare facts, the reader may wonder how the Kamĩrĩthu project assumes a national status. The plausible reason for Ngũgĩ's strategy can be to attract sympathy for his suffering from the rest of the country and conceal his political and ideological agenda in the whole of the Kamĩrĩthu project.

In the same interview with Emily Wilson of AlterNet in 2015, Ngũgĩ reiterated that he resolved to write in his native Agĩkũyũ language after discovering its implications when he was arrested and detained. For him, therefore, writing *Devil on the Cross* was an act of resistance which was evoked by his detention. When asked about the "larger implications" of writing a novel in his native Agĩkũyũ language, Ngũgĩ's response, however, was imbued with ethnic chauvinism as revealed when he said that it meant that he had an authentic novel in an "African language that could be read by people who understood Gĩkũyũ". Although he argues that a translation of the text into the English language still reached the audience he targeted before, the fact remains that his first target audience are not his fellow Africans, but rather members of his native Agĩkũyũ community.

In his effort to project his innocence, Ngũgĩ has referred to his wife's letter which she wrote him while he was in detention at Kamĩtĩ Prison. Using the content of the letter, he expresses his

innocence and criminalizes the state for detaining him unjustifiably. In the letter, his wife's words give the impression that Ngũgĩ was innocent. For example, through this letter, Ngũgĩ's wife Nyambura reassured him by telling him that she got courage from her knowledge of the fact that he was not arrested because of "any crime" he had committed (*Detained* 154). This can be seen as Ngũgĩ's strategy to express his innocence as the reader can trust his wife's claims. This is because letters between family members contain an element of truth due to their sense of intimacy. However, it should be noted that Ngũgĩ has expunged other letters from this revised edition and only included this one to achieve his political intention of portraying himself as a victim on injustice.

Notwithstanding his concerted efforts to defend himself and appeal to the reader's sympathy, I want to point out that, though Ngũgĩ may not have committed any criminal offence, he cannot exonerate himself easily from getting involved in political activities that may have attracted the attention of the dictatorial leadership of the Kenyatta administration. Therefore, though he claims that all those who were involved in acting the play, *Ngaahika Ndeenda*, were workers and peasants from Kamĩrĩthu (*Wrestling*, 159-160), the reader cannot easily be persuaded to exonerate him from using the performance of the play to attack the character of Kenyatta's government; hence, attracting the state's vicious attack on him. We can only sympathize with Ngũgĩ's unfortunate imprisonment and condemn the government for its autocratic leadership which subjected many Kenyans, including Ngũgĩ and other political prisoners, to suffering.

In *Wrestling with the Devil*, Ngũgĩ has further placed himself in the defensive position by narrating the history of detention in Kenya right from the colonial period to post-independent Kenya. This is demonstrated by the fact that the different groups of political prisoners at Kamĩtĩ Prison "span the entire history of post-independence upheavals" (Ngũgĩ 166). By so doing, he attempts to persuade the reader that greed for power was the key catalyst for the government's act of cracking down on "the upheavals" which were perceived as a challenge to the ruling party's "monopoly of power" (Ngũgĩ 166). By capitalizing on the many political prisoners at Kamĩtĩ Prison, the author wants to convince the reader that the struggle against oppression did not end with the acquisition of independence; that the political detainees can be seen as symbolizing the perpetual struggle against all forms of political and economic exploitation in

post-independent Kenya. Closely linked with this view is the author's claim that the mounting "anti-imperialist consciousness" (167) among the working class, peasants, and the university community was the key reason for his detention. By describing himself as the "sacrificial lamb" (167), Ngũgĩ aims at attracting the reader's sympathy for him while at the same time inflaming the reader's anti-government feelings. His declaration that he was not going to despair and that he was an active part of the history of struggle is meant to boost his ethos and project himself as a fighter for the oppressed.

In his self-defense against being unjustly detained, Ngũgĩ seems to contradict himself in his prison narrative. This is because, whereas he claims that he was solely detained because of his involvement in the production of *Ngaahika Ndeenda*, he still hints at what led to his incarceration by the state. This contradiction becomes apparent through his claim that when he was arrested, some of his colleague intellectuals blamed him for attacking the government and described him as a "naïve ideologue" (*Wrestling* 202) who did not know the limitations of dissent and be engaged in self-censorship. This reveals that Ngũgĩ's agitation for revolution and establishment of a socialist society in Kenya through his writings was the major reason for his incarceration. The government, which was dominated by capitalist leaders could not just sit and allow him to continue setting the citizens against their autocratic leadership and corrupt practices.

Despite taking a not-guilty position, Ngũgĩ's self-contradiction in his narrative of self-defense and claim of innocence further comes out clearly when he declares that his unspecified allegations for his political imprisonment were his anti-imperialism and anti-neocolonialism stance (*Wrestling*, 209). At this point, it is clear that Ngũgĩ's portrayal of the Kamĩrĩthu project and his act of writing in the Agĩkũyũ language as the key reasons for his detention can be seen as a red-herring which he has used to divert the reader's attention from his real political and ideological agenda which were in reality the main causes of his detention.

Nevertheless, the reader is likely to sympathize with Ngũgĩ and other political detainees at Kamĩtĩ Prison who were subjected to excruciating physical and psychological torment because of the state's oppressive activities against them. For instance, the judicial systems are presented as

being suspect in their ways of dealing with political prisoners. Ngũgĩ's argument, for example, that the Detainees Review Tribunal's recommendations to the government were not revealed to the public brings out the government's underhanded character in dealing with the cases of those detained. The fact that political prisoners were also "prejudged to be guilty" and that "the burden of self-prosecution fell on them" exposes the Kenyan government's malice in the cases of the political prisoners. This is clearly brought out by the author's claim that, whenever one came before the tribunal, the prisoner was placed in a position where "one was to be one's accuser, prosecutor, and witness against oneself" (*Wrestling* 211). At this point, Ngũgĩ can be seen to be winning the reader's support to his anti-government arguments and claims.

Therefore, the detention of Ngũgĩ and others by the Kenya government was largely driven by political interests rather than the desire to rid society of criminals. This kind of situation is what Richard Spark describes as "politicization of imprisonment" (Spark 73) which results in serious consequences for the conditions under which political prisoners live. This informs us that the state has sweeping powers that determine not only the conditions and operations of its carceral institutions but also the kinds of political crimes appropriate for detention. It is this kind of scenario that Ngũgĩ brings out in *Wrestling with the Devil* in which the Kenya government is portrayed as a regime that is politically intolerant to its critics. This is exemplified by the fact that some of those in detention with Ngũgĩ at Kamĩtĩ Prison had been under incarceration for many years.

Owing to the unparalleled political powers of the dictators in African countries, Ngũgĩ suggests that the only possible escape-route for political prisoners is the death of such leaders. This is because, as long as a dictator is in power, there will always be a sense of apprehension and uncertainty amongst the oppressed. Ngũgĩ has expressed the Kamĩtĩ Prison inmates' excitement at the death of Jomo Kenyatta by describing the situation as an opportune for them to realize their dreams of gaining their freedom (*Wrestling* 205). He also refers to one of the prisoners' claim that he had crushed their hopes of being set free when he once informed them that Kenyatta's health was excellent (*Wrestling* 221). This is because some political prisoners had been detained for as many years as ten years and that the only hope of their release depended on the president's death. The description of Kenyatta's death by the prisoners indicates the

immensity of power he wielded and the fear with which he was held. The choice of words such as "the greatest has fallen" carry with them the sense of the urgency of the event. By claiming that his death was "vital information" (*Wrestling* 223) for the political prisoners, the author demonstrates the wish of all the detainees. However, even in his death, his power was still felt as demonstrated by the secrecy surrounding it as talking about it openly could be seen as a treasonable offense.

*Wrestling with the Devil* reveals that the Kenya government did not only oppress its political opponents, but also was intolerant to the academia. Therefore, in the memoir, Ngũgĩ has condemned the government's use of excessive force when dealing with university students who demonstrated against bad governance and lecturers who criticized its leadership. He describes the police's habit of beating up university students during protests as the "yearly ritual fully sanctioned by the government" (143) and exemplifies his claim by referring to police' brutalities against students in 1974 which also resulted in rape cases, serious injuries and several deaths (174). The author points out that he was irked by his fellow academia's silence when they failed to raise their voices against oppressive practices in the country. He condemns them for their "complicity" with the autocratic Kenya government which he angrily describes as a "fascist evil" (144). In this context, Ngũgĩ's condemnation of their complicity can be seen as his direct appeal for the academia to come out openly and condemn all forms of political oppression.

From the foregoing, it is apparent that one of Ngũgĩ's rhetorical agenda in *Wrestling with the Devil* and *Detained* is to persuade his implied audience that he had not committed any criminal offence to warrant his arrest and detention by the Kenya government. Though he succeeds to exonerate himself from any criminal engagements that could necessitate his arrest, it is however, difficult to persuade the reader that his advocacy for class warfare in the country through his play *Ngaahika Ndeenda* (*I Will Marry When I Want*) and extolling of Marxist ideology in his other writings such as *Petals of Blood* could not invite the capitalist government's wrath on him. It is this ambivalence that the author has attempted to maneuver through in order to persuade his readers to comply with his political and ideological agenda in the memoir.

## 5.6 Invoking Colonialism as a Frame for Political Detention in Kenya

In *Wrestling with the Devil*, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o has linked detention to colonialism to amplify its oppressive nature, articulate his forthright angry tone at dictatorship and arouse embittered feelings in the reader for independent Kenya's political leadership. He argues that during colonialism, concentration camps, prisons and police stations were the central support pillars of the lifestyles of the colonial state in Kenya (53). In an ironic tone, Ngũgĩ has attacked the postcolonial African leaders for perpetrating the colonial legacy of detention despite having been victims of the vice during colonialism. He illustrates his claim by saying that, through the British colonial state's act of imprisoning Kenyatta during the anti-colonial struggle, Kenyatta, in turn, ironically learnt from the colonialist how to jail defenseless innocent Kenyans in independent Kenya (5). His reference to his own detention as a "neocolonial affair" and Jomo Kenyatta's as "a colonial affair" (5) brings out clearly the connection between the British colonial regime's act of detaining anti-colonialism Kenyans and post-independent Kenya's practice of detentions of those critical of the government. By claiming that Kenyatta was innocent when he was jailed, Ngũgĩ insinuates that detention is a violation of the basic human rights, whether it is in the context of colonialism or in independent Kenya.

Historical evidence indicates that the concept of imprisonment as punishment was not practiced in Africa prior to colonialism. Jeremy Sarkin, in his article "Prisons in Africa," argues that the African prison is "another legacy of colonialism" ("Prisons in Africa"). He argues that prison is a European import which was introduced in Africa to subject African political opponents to imprisonment and corporal punishment. This shows that imprisonment in Africa was a tool that was used by the colonial powers to conquer and control the Africans, especially during the time of anti-colonial resistance movements and wars. Ironically, despite the end of colonialism in Africa, many countries including Kenya still employ political incarceration as a tool for intimidating or destroying political opposition. Sarkin describes political detention in Africa as being arbitrary, widespread and under appalling conditions ("Prisons in Africa").

The situation in Kenya is not different from that in other countries in Africa. After gaining her independence, Kenya inherited some colonial structures and utilized them to perpetuate

oppressive practices similar to those witnessed during the British colonial period in the country. For instance, Ngũgĩ says that Kamĩtĩ Prison which was established during the colonial period, has been associated with many deaths and detentions of both the colonial freedom fighters and opposition leaders in independent Kenya. To arouse the fear of this prison in the reader, Ngũgĩ describes its gates as "jaws of a ravenous monster" which is "swung open to swallow" detainees. He further argues that Kamĩtĩ's walls "still dripped with the blood of the many Kenyan nationalists, fighters, and supporters of the Kenya Land and Freedom Army" (*Wrestling* 27). This enables him to evoke anger in the reader for the authorities of the independent Kenya for subjecting Kenyans to suffering similar to the one done by the colonial state. At this point, we regard Kamĩtĩ as a symbol and instrument of oppression of innocent Kenyans both during the colonial and postcolonial milieu.

Ngũgĩ asserts that detention during the colonial period was a form of oppression whose main intention was to "instill fear and impose silence" on the colonized who wanted to resist the British colonial regime. He describes the State of Emergency period in Kenya in grisly terms to attract the reader's contempt for the colonial state's acts of mass detentions, trials and killings of Kenyans by arguing that the culture of instilling fear on a people became worst between 1952 and 1962. The narrator further describes that that tormenting period of ten years as the time when the colonized Kenyans suffered mass incarceration in concentration camps/prison as well as were wantonly killed since "the sword and the bullet" (*Wrestling*, 58) were unleashed upon them.

The oppressive system of "preventive detention" (*Wrestling* 67) which was adopted by the Jomo Kenyatta's regime is similar to the one witnessed during colonialism. For instance, there was no petition against the president's or colonial governor's exercise of the power of detention orders during colonial or postcolonial systems. In *Wrestling with the Devil*, Ngũgĩ depicts those in power as wielding authority that is unchallenged by the victims of the successive repressive regimes in Kenya and Africa in general. He describes such powers as being "fascist" (67) to inform the reader that freedom of expression was suppressed during both the colonial time as well as in the post-independent Kenya. It is such absolute powers that saw many political figures in post-independent Kenya get detained without trial while others like Tom Mboya and J.M. Kariuki got assassinated. Further, to justify his claims about the colonial origins of detention in

Kenya, Ngũgĩ illustrates his claims by referring to leaders such as Harry Thuku, Waiyaki wa Hinga and Arap Manyei (73) who were detained by the colonial state to subdue the anticolonial resistance in the country.

*Wrestling with the Devil* reveals that the oppressive detention orders in independent Kenya were inherited from the colonial legal structures. This is indicated by the fact that, although the draconian colonial regulations were repealed from the constitution at independence, the "Preservation of Public Security Act" (75) maintained all the basic evils that were practiced by the colonial regime and these have been applied in the suppression of Kenyans who are critical of the government. Ngũgĩ metaphorically compares the re-introduction of detention laws in independent Kenya to an act of resurrection of someone from death as demonstrated by the narrator's allegorical claim that "colonial Lazarus raised from the dead" and haunted the political prisoners at Kamĩtĩ Maximum Security Prison (77).

Detention of political leaders in postcolonial Kenya can also be seen as the betrayal of the Kenyan population by their leaders whose behaviour and character are worse than those of the colonialist. Using the collective plural personal pronoun "we," Ngũgĩ invites the reader to share with him his view that it is not only the detained who have been betrayed but also the rest of Kenyans. This is expressed by the narrator's articulation of his disillusionment by linking their imprisonment at Kamĩtĩ with the outcome of their betrayal by their African leaders (*Wrestling* 78). In a tone of disappointment, Ngũgĩ asserts that Kenyans have experienced an "irretrievable loss" to underscore the truth about the legacy of colonialism being perpetuated through political detention in Kenya. His claim, that each political prisoner at Kamĩtĩ struggled "against mounting despair" because of "bitter reflections" (*Wrestling* 78) on the oppressive Kenyan state, demonstrates their collective frustrations.

During the colonial period in Kenya, both freedom fighters as well as artists were detained. *Wrestling with the Devil* reveals that the songs and dances which were associated with the struggle for freedom were banned and many artists "hounded to prison" (80). The author, at this point, wants to persuade the reader to believe that the detention of the artists and political prisoners in independent Kenya have their genesis in the colonial legacy of detention without

trial. Ngũgĩ exemplifies his claim by revealing that, during the anticolonial resistance by the Mumboist anti-imperial movement among the Luo and Dini ya Musambwa, “many singers and composers were jailed or hounded to death” (81). The fact that the colonial government also banned publications of poetry and songs in Gĩkũyũ language during the colonial period also is proof that imprisonment of writers in the independent Kenya has some colonial foundations. Ngũgĩ claims that in the 1940s and 1950s, the colonial regime banned publications written in native African languages and detained their publishers (81). Therefore, in Ngũgĩ’s opinion, by banning the Kamĩrĩĩthu project and detaining him, the government had invoked the colonial tradition of detention without trial which he metaphorically terms “colonial Lazarus” (*Wrestling* 104). The narrator’s rhetorical question can be interpreted as Ngũgĩ’s implied advocacy for resistance against the culture of oppression that is characterized by incarcerating those who are opposed to the Kenya government’s undemocratic practices.

In *Wrestling with the Devil*, the reader is exposed to the negative impact of detention during the colonial period in Kenya. Ngũgĩ has given some examples of freedom fighters such as Harry Thuku, Mbiyu Koinange, and Jomo Kenyatta whose anticolonial fighting spirit was broken by being subjected to difficult detention life by the British colonizer. In describing the broken Thuku, Ngũgĩ asserts that he “was broken by nine years of detention” which forced him to yield to the “colonial culture” of fear and silence (109). Ngũgĩ’s narrative of Kenyatta’s nationalist character before his detention reveals that he used to be anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism before being detained. However, detention broke down his anticolonial fight and vigour. In describing Kenyatta’s pre-detention strong character, Ngũgĩ has cited some evidence from different authorities such as his anti-imperialist writings in the *Sunday Worker* of October 27, 1929; the *Daily Worker* of January 1930; and Marcus Garvey’s *Negro Worker* among others to justify some of his claims.

In *Wrestling with the Devil*, Ngũgĩ has ridiculed Jomo Kenyatta’s betrayal of Kenyans and his act of embracing imperialism by assuring the white settlers of the protection of their interests in Kenya and attacking Mau Mau using the derogative expression “gangster government” (116). The author further accuses him for his act of “eliminating” some of the anti-oppression nationalists to allude to the assassinations of his political opponents such as Jean Marie Seronei

and J.M. Kariuki. These assassinations bring out Kenyatta's intolerant character in dealing with his political opponents. However, it is ironical that during his reign as the president, and even after his death, Kenyatta was projected as the leading anticolonial nationalist during the October 20th celebrations of the freedom heroes as symbolized by the name of the commemorative holiday, Kenyatta Day.

Therefore, in *Wrestling with the Devil* and *Detained*, Ngũgĩ's act of linking the painful legacy of colonialism to political detentions of the anti-government advocates such as writers and politicians, the author succeeds in foregrounding the cruel character of the autocratic Kenyan government which ruthlessly subjected her own people to suffering that was equivalent to that of the colonial master. Thus, this strategy may be seen to be effective in advancing his anti-dictatorship political rhetoric in the memoir to his implied audience who, just like Ngũgĩ, will equally condemn colonialism for bequeathing Africa with one of the terrible legacies of colonialism, which is the imprisonment of political writers and dissidents without trial.

## 5.7 Conclusion

The rhetorical strategies Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o has employed to contest autocracy in postcolonial Kenya in his prison narrative are informed by a variety of motivations. The dominant inspiration that propels Ngũgĩ's prison writing seems to be the appalling conditions which he experienced while he was incarcerated at Kamĩtĩ Maximum Security Prison. His main intention, therefore, is to express his anger at and condemnation of the Kenya government for what he believes was an unwarranted or unjust political detention which has had a remarkable impact on the rest of his life. The prison memoir exposes to the public the intricate and highly secretive machinations that are associated with political imprisonment in Kenya as well as the horrid prison conditions that political detainees face in Kenyan prisons. The memoir further demonstrates that fruitful discussions on the practice of political imprisonment in Africa cannot be divorced from their colonial origins. In this case, Ngũgĩ succeeds to create a clear picture of what it means to be a political prisoner in Africa and Kenya in particular and evokes various reactions from different readers such as imprisoned persons, Ngũgĩ's admirers and sympathizers, advocates of prison reforms and anti-detention activists among others.

However, Ngũgĩ's ideological and political agenda in the memoir may be seen to have been used to influence the readers disapprovingly. Therefore, the rhetorical appeal of the recast version of the prison narrative in *Wrestling with the Devil* has been weakened by Ngũgĩ's deliberate exclusion of some sections which validated his claims in his earlier version, *Detained*. Specifically, the exclusion or paraphrasing of some parts of *Detained* that directly castigate President Jomo Kenyatta, shows that he has mellowed his resentful attitude towards the Kenyatta family. This problematizes the sincerity of Ngũgĩ's attack on dictatorship in the country. By expunging sections with crucial information from the text and rephrasing some parts of his earlier claims in *Detained*, the author raises doubts in the reader because, in nonfiction writings, fidelity to telling the truth is paramount. Therefore, though he successfully uses prison as a site for contesting political autocracy in Kenya and Africa generally, his manipulations of the narrative paradigm in the recast version of his prison narrative to advance his political and ideological agenda can be seen as a serious weakness that may compromise his ethos and hinder the intended rhetorical appeal to his readers.

*Detained* and *Wrestling with the Devil*, generally appeals to different categories of readers who can be identified or classified on the basis of their interests vis-à-vis the political and ideological agenda of the writer in the memoirs. Firstly, Ngũgĩ is talking to his sympathizers who include fellow political inmates (as when he encourages others to resist aspects of oppression while one is incarcerated such as being put in chains whenever one is taken to hospital or is being visited by family or friends). Secondly, he may be addressing the prison reformers who he appeals to improve the terrifying prison conditions by exposing the pathetic conditions which include poor diets and unhygienic conditions. Thirdly, he is talking to the anti-political detention lobbyists (by trying to portray himself as being innocent of any known crimes) and his fellow writers (by encouraging them to defy oppressive conditions of censorship as it happens to the ban on *Ngaahika Ndeenda* (*I Will Marry When I Want*). In this prison memoir, Ngũgĩ can further be said to be addressing his anti-imperialist sympathizers; however, this intention seems precarious to the author who, ironically, criticizes the imperialists while in almost half of his life he has been residing in the USA which is considered as one of the leading capitalist nations in the world.

# CONCLUSION

In this study, I have undertaken to demonstrate that Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's choice and employment of different rhetorical strategies in each of his five memoirs are significantly influenced by his political and ideological agenda. As such, the rhetorical strategies employed are intended to influence the author's implied readers to act, behave or assent to his anti-colonial, anti-imperialism and anti-dictatorship ideas. Since these memoirs are about what the narrators saw, experienced or were told, Ngũgĩ has employed different rhetorical strategies to reveal/voice or conceal/silence the truth about himself, other persons and the events narrated vis-à-vis the colonial and postcolonial experiences in Kenya and Africa generally. Consequently, some of the rhetorical strategies employed effectively advance the author's political and ideological agenda and, therefore, persuade his implied audience in a variety of ways to accede to his claims and arguments while others do not.

The study establishes that in his five memoirs, Ngũgĩ draws heavily from the legacy of colonialism and its structures in articulating his political and ideological agenda. Chapter two connects the memoir as a genre to Ngũgĩ's anticolonial, sociopolitical and ideological stand which is distinctly discernible in both the author's fiction and nonfiction. The chapter demonstrates that, in *Dreams in a Time of War*, Ngũgĩ's overriding rhetorical strategy is the establishment of the anti-colonial exigency in the memoir. As such, the author has foregrounded the tremendous and ineffaceable impact which colonialism had on his childhood, his immediate family, the Agĩkũyũ community and Kenya in general. Through the child narrator, the author strives to persuade the reader that colonialism and its attendant structures was the worst experience in the history of Africans, hence, should be condemned by all means. The economic impoverishment and disintegration of Ngũgĩ's family because of the loss of their land, his father's diminished masculinity and economic emasculation, his mother's estrangement and struggle to raise her children single-handedly and his brother's involvement in Mau Mau have strong emotional appeal to the readers and symbolically expresses the impact of colonialism in other parts of Africa. Thus, this chapter succeeds in documenting Ngũgĩ's rhetorical agenda of portraying a childhood trauma as well as the colonized African family's and community's disintegration. Therefore, the reader's perception and emotional reactions are intricately

influenced by the narrator's condemnatory tone and melancholic mood in *Dreams in a Time of War* which equally permeate all his other five memoirs.

Chapter Three of the thesis is concerned with evaluating Ngũgĩ's rhetoric of the ambivalence of anti-colonial discourse in his memoir *In the House of the Interpreter*. In this chapter, I have tried to examine how Ngũgĩ has used the memoir to advance his anti-colonial and anti-cultural imperialism politics and articulate the contradictions that are inherent in postcolonial writings through colonial education, racism and Christianity. The chapter interrogates Ngũgĩ-the-school-boy's engagement with colonial devastation brought about by the realities of the State of Emergency in Kenya which was occasioned by the Mau Mau's anticolonial struggle and downright terror that was witnessed and experienced by the narrator. The chapter demonstrates that Ngũgĩ has employed the colonial iconography to concretize the oppressive hegemonic character of the colonial state which comes out effectively through different iconic symbols that include the Union Jack, the concentration camps/villages, the colonial police/military, the home guards and home guard posts and the colonial state documents (written permit, the identity card and the passbook). These symbols which effectively expose the brutish character of the British colonial government as well as her conquest and subjugation of the colonized enable Ngũgĩ to arouse his perceived anti-colonial reader's contempt for the colonizer; hence, advancing the author's rhetorical agenda vis-à-vis his political and ideological position.

In Chapter Four, I have evaluated the rhetorical strategies that Ngũgĩ employs in *Birth of a Dream Weaver* to create and project his identity as a writer. Therefore, I have examined how Ngũgĩ uses the memoir genre to self-reconstruct himself as a creative writer by adopting certain stylistic strategies to document his choice of becoming a writer while foregrounding his major influences, early creative output and sociopolitical and ideological vision in his writings. The study demonstrates that Ngũgĩ's strategy of invoking personal, ideological, historical and sociopolitical experiences succeeds in enabling him to express his writing intentions and rhetorical agenda in the memoir. The chapter reveals that Ngũgĩ has effectively invoked colonialism as special topoi upon which his early writings have drawn heavily on, in terms of their exigencies, thematic concerns and stylistic choices.

Therefore, it is not surprising that Ngũgĩ has employed colonialism and its related structures as the loci or schemata upon which he has relied on to articulate his political and ideological agenda while recounting the narrative of his early creative output and beginnings as a writer. The study demonstrates that even long after Kenya gained her independence in 1963, Ngũgĩ's latest memoir *Wrestling with the Devil*, which is a recast version of his 1981 prison narrative *Detained*, is riddled with the ghosts of colonialism. The author has rhetorically linked the political detentions of political dissidents in postcolonial Kenya to the culture of colonialism to express its oppressive nature, attack the dictatorship of the Jomo Kenyatta regime and arouse his implied readers' contempt for the autocratic Kenya government. Therefore, Ngũgĩ's strategic juxtaposition of political imprisonment in post-independence Kenya with concentration camps, prisons and police stations which were used to suppress the struggle for independence during the colonial period in Kenya becomes rhetorically effective.

Nevertheless, though Ngũgĩ's criticism of colonialism and its denting impact on the colonized and the post-independence dictatorship in Kenya comes out clearly, his overindulgence in foregrounding his sociopolitical and ideological agenda overshadows the progress of the narratives and plots as well as the artistic qualities of the memoirs. That is why it is easy for one to detect in the memoirs the author's adult political and ideological arguments on language, religion, culture, economic exploitation and oppression which are predominant in most of his polemical essays. This can be seen to be compromising the effectiveness of some of the rhetorical strategies he has employed in his five memoirs.

For instance, Ngũgĩ's awareness of the rhetorical impact of the artistic manipulation of a narrator to advance his political and ideological stance is ostensibly distinct in his childhood narrative of colonialism in *Dreams in a Time of War*. He has deliberately attempted to influence the narrator in the memoir by adopting his adult voice in the child narrator's narrative in order to articulate his political and ideological intentions. Therefore, although this strategy enables him to narrate and critique those things, events or ideas which the narrator did not witness as a child or are just beyond the child narrator's intellectual scope such as the historicity of the Berlin Conference of 1885, Britain's taking over East Africa and the First World War that started in 1914, it amounts to the author's infringement of the autobiographical norms. Furthermore, Ngũgĩ's juxtaposition

of orality and literacy in this memoir to subvert colonial hegemony is an artistic strategy that he has extensively employed to advance his anti-colonial ideas by foregrounding the weaknesses and brutal character of the colonial state while concealing those of the Mau Mau movement. This may be seen to work against his overall rhetorical agenda and portrayal of the character and activities of Mau Mau.

What comes out strongly in Ngũgĩ's employment of Western formal education, Christianity and racism in *In the House of the Interpreter* as frames for colonial entrenchment in Kenya is the author's awareness of the rhetorical impact of his arguments on his intended reader. His claims on the hegemonic character of English language and literature and the irrelevance of European History and Geography to African students can be seen to be ideas beyond the intellectual grasp of the narrator who is merely an adolescent boy in secondary school. Therefore, the ideas can be attributed to Ngũgĩ's artistic manipulation of the narrator in the memoir to project his political and ideological agenda while influencing the reader to detest Western formal education which he projects as an effective tool for cultural imperialism and neocolonialism.

However, the narrator in *Birth of a Dream Weaver*, unlike those in *Dreams in a Time of War* and *In the House of the Interpreter*, is much more aware of the complex politics of the Cold War between the Western capitalistic world and the communist East. Because of this awareness, Ngũgĩ's appeal to the global imaginings becomes one the rhetorical thrusts that he has effectively employed to persuade the reader that world politics and events influenced his interests in writing. Though his communist/Marxist ideology is not reflected in his early creative output which have mainly explored themes related to cultural conflict, colonialism and post-independence disillusionment, the readings he encountered in his English classes including Peter Abrahams, George Lamming and Joseph Conrad among others have had a significant bearing on his thinking and later writings.

Chapter Five interrogates Ngũgĩ's rhetorical strategies of narrating the self in incarceration in *Detained* and its recast version, *Wrestling with the Devil*. Therefore, I have tried to examine the inner re-workings of the memoirs and attempted to bridge the gap between the two memoirs while focusing on the author's rhetorical strategies of contesting autocracy in postcolonial

Kenya. These are the rhetorical strategies of advocacy. The chapter establishes that Ngũgĩ has effectively strived to persuade the reader by exalting the artist to subvert the state, foregrounding prison as asite of political oppression and invoking colonialism as a frame for political detention in Kenya. The study further demonstrates that by the time Ngũgĩ wrote *Detained* and *Wrestling with the Devil*, he had already fully embraced the communist/socialist ideas, hence, this accounts for the predominance of anti-imperialist politics and ideas in the memoirs. However, Ngũgĩ's strategy of manipulating the prison narrative by expunging or recasting some sentences/paragraphs that are vilifying Jomo Kenyatta in his rebranded prison narrative works against his efforts to persuade the implied reader to approve of his claims and arguments in the memoir. Consequently, this can be seen as a deliberate effort by Ngũgĩ to suppress some historical truths or facts in his work since, as Were argues, nonfiction subjects "apply selectivity in reconstructing their life experiences" by deliberately sharing some information with their readers while "repressing the rest from public cognition" (239).

The rhetorical strategies that Ngũgĩ has employed in his five memoirs reflect the author's own insinuations of the kinds of readers he anticipates through his ideological and political arguments that predominantly echo those in most of his essays such as *Decolonising the Mind*, *Re-membering Africa*, and *Writers in Politics* among others. Therefore, his thinking, anti-colonial, anti-oppression and anti-imperialism arguments which include those on the appropriate language of African literature and his choice to write some of his works in Gĩkũyũ as opposed to English signals the kind of audience he anticipates not only for his nonfiction but also his fiction.

Since in this study I have evaluated the rhetorical strategies in Ngũgĩ's five memoirs, the study, however opens more avenues for further research. First, this kind of literary criticism could be extended to Ngũgĩ's essays and other writers' life writings in Kenya and Africa in general. If this can be done, it would establish the African life-writing genre as a critical rhetorical artefact. Secondly, it could be interesting to conduct a comparative research on the rhetorical strategies in nonfiction and fictional autobiographical writings of different writers. This kind of study will establish the similarities or differences that exist in the two types of autobiographical genres.

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