

## WOMEN IN THE LITERARY DREAM OF NGUGI WA THIONG'O: GENDER PORTRAITURE AND FEMALE REVOLUTIONARIES IN *DEVIL ON THE CROSS*

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### Abstract

*The trajectory in the portrayal of heroism by Ngugi wa Thiong'o began with his first late fiction. His massive affinity to strong female characters becomes the new paradigm that defines his latest narratives subsequently, complementing his total embossment of Gikuyu orature in his fictions after 1980. Ngugi introduces a women-driven revolution using a strong female character that is determined to fight capitalism and its enablers in the fictional country of Ilmorog. Using Devil on the Cross, Ngugi's first standard novel written in his native G(K)ikuyu language, this study attempts to portray woman power that is strictly intentional and enigmatic. Ngugi presents his women as remaining thorough in their revolutionist outlook even at the point they decide to bolster the role. Using the Jungian Theory of archetypes, this work attempts to establish the larger-than-life personality of Ngugi's heroine indicative of his frantic expectation of the brutal cleansing of the post-independent Africa, and a total wipe-off of neocolonization from the streets of Africa. He inaugurates this fantastical revolutionist approach with the introduction of an elderly woman, Wangari as part of a collective unconscious that must bring to fruition the redemption of the continent by all means. A textual analysis of Devil on the Cross illuminates the spontaneous tendency of Wariinga who quickly transforms from a bride to an assailant; typical of the woman of Ngugi's literary dream, at a time it is most needed.*

**Keywords:** Revolutionary agents, Gender portraiture, Feminist writing, Collective unconscious, Jungian theory of archetypes

### Introduction

*True for me... Njoki, with a picture sent through the mail, and Waringa, with an image created on rationed toilet paper, have been more than a thousand trumpets silently breaking down the fortified walls of Kamiti Maximum Security Prison to assure me that I am not alone. (Ngugi 40).*

From the first line of the narrative, Ngugi wa Thiong'o provides a peek into the tragic story of a young woman, Wariinga as "... too disgraceful, too shameful, that it should be concealed in the depths of everlasting darkness ... a matter for tears and sorrow, that it should be suppressed so that we should not shed tears a second time." (Ngugi 7). The novel quickly unveils an embattled Wariinga who had lost her job at Eldares after her refusal to open her legs for Boss Waigoko Kihara (10), lost her young boyfriend, ejected from her house in the city of Nairobi and already suicidal (12). – all narrated in brevity. This is to give way to the uncovering to Ngugi's readers, the reasons behind the experiences, situations and mindsets of all the passengers in Mwaura's matatu – which is the major aim of the writer.

Ngugi's apportioning of heroic characteristics to female characters in his late fictions, to a large extent, is a rare departure from the usual narrative style in African literature, typically described by Ojo-Ade (1983) as "... a male-created, male-oriented chauvinistic art. An honour-roll of our literary giants clearly proves the point: Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Senghor, Soyinka, Achebe, Mphahlele, and others." (158).

It is without any doubt that in his late fictions, Ngugi draws strength and fortitude from his female characters who are committed to fight the ugly consequences of the colonizers and 'the seventy years of their destructive alien presence' (44) - all of which are in variance with the Gikuyu culture. Ngugi decries, "The more I dig up the sordid details of their Happy Valley lifestyle, the more it disturbed me ... Thus the knight commander of two saintly orders was the founding spirit of mass land robbery and of the not-too-saintly Happy Valley lifestyle." (Ngugi 44 & 46).

The rediscovery of women as champions of victory over evil, and the realignment of Ngugi's perception of women as agents of revolution is the thrust of this paper. Unlike his fictions during his early and mid writing careers who present men as embodiments of strength and doggedness, Ngugi establishes a paradigm shift in his revolutionary ideology by announcing a roll call of heavy-duty women who tread the radical path that Ilmorog men fear to dare, keeping in mind all the time that "Despite independence, our status was still colonial ... a colonial affair in an independent Kenya. ... it is as if the phrase has followed me inside Kamiti Prison to mock me" (41 & 43).

It is impulsive to regard Ngugi a feminist writer as a result, yet his sudden heroic choice cannot be dissociated from his sudden consciousness which is part of his prison experiences: "Because women are the most exploited and oppressed of all working people. I would create a picture of a strong,

determined woman with a will to resist and struggle against her present conditions. ..." (15). Against this background, this paper seeks to illuminate Ngugi's heroines who respond to the call to do the needful in the face of the Kenya's struggle against neo(colonialism).

### **Theoretical Framework**

Regarding the current literary leaning of Ngugi wa Thiong'o, he may be rightly referred to as a feminist writer. Archetypal criticism which is driven by the Jungian theory of archetypes as developed by the Swiss psychiatrist, Carl Gustav Jung in his theory of the human psyche, comes handy in the interpretation of this study. Archetypes are usually symbols prevalent in literature. Jungian archetypes are primarily applied to psychology and psychological patterns; but recently are also applied to arts, literature and music; and even advertising. (Toolshero) The word archetype, according to Golden is derived from an old Greek word 'archein' which means original, and 'typos' which also means type, pattern or model. Archetypes are clearly defined as "...unconscious, universal idea patterns ... frequently used in mythology, saga, fairy tales and folktales around the world."

Jungian theory deals with archetypes which refer to patterns or imageries drawn from the collective experiences of the past and present in humans. According to Jung, there are archetypes in the unconscious memory of human beings retained from birth. Most archetypes including heroism have existed from the origin of humanity, and these reside in the memory and are stimulated by circumstances. In this sense, this study explores what Nnolim notes as the 'darker recesses of the human psyche'. This actually drives Wariinga, Wangari, Muturi, the leader of the Ilmorog University Students' Association (ILUSA) who seek to redeem the hopeless situations closing in on Ilmorog. (Ngugi 202).

Although there exist over two hundred archetypes, Jung establishes the cogency of five kinds of archetypes: self, shadow, anima, animus and persona. Self reveals the authentic personality of a human which can be improved as depicted in the character of Wariinga. Shadow refers to the murky part of the human brain which craves to satisfy immediate needs. Mr. Hispaniora Greenway Ghitahy, the Rich Old Man from Ngorika and John Boy Jnr. represent what Jung calls the shadow.

Anima refers to the feminine aspect of the human psyche which is not gender specific. Animus is the male aspect of the human and like the Anima, is not gender specific. Finally, the Persona refers to the personality which the

human exposes to the world. This is the good impression shown to other humans and is therefore, regarded as a social mask because this is most times, the opposite of what actually is. It is acceptable to posit that themes are derived from archetypes; therefore, themes and archetypes are one and the same. While the mother depicts the protective female who births, nurtures, always loves and understands, the hero is the champion who always solves a problem even at the expense of life, position or substance; while the wise old man always presents with good counsel, and the trickster is always untrustworthy and a snitch; the maiden always a beautiful and elegant woman; the fairy mother comes in at the last minute with fantasies of desires, and so on. (Toolshero). Arguably, Ryan (2011) in his studies, accentuates that:

Archetype literally means "first print" and refers to those images in the human mind that have been present since the dawn of time. From Jung's point of view, they are the building bricks of consciousness that are repeated in the literature, art, and architecture of different cultures all over the world. (174).

Interrogating Ngugi's *Devil on the Cross*, it is identifiable that it is greatly inundated with myths, symbols and models drawn from different backgrounds and periods of time. Works which contain mythological elements adopt themes and symbols that are universal revealed in themes, character and characterization, imagery, and symbols; and these determine the unfolding of the plot of the work of literature. Because such works draw from universal archetypes, readers can easily relate with them because they are flooded with themes and other elements that are universal, therefore, easily graspable. Adoh (2014) in his detailed background of the mythological criticism affirms that it attempts to define:

... and explore in succinct terms the concept of myth and mythic symbols. This approach is rigorous and wide in its application, unlike other literary approaches. Archetypes or archetypal symbols are an important aspect of the mythological approach. These symbols are not universally interpreted but analysed from a specific culture's point of view, for example, death, creation, the celestial bodies, predestination are identified as common archetypal symbols and themes; however, they can only be understood when placed within the context of a people's existence. The mythic approach is not only concerned with myths in their entirety, but with the 'whys' behind these myths.

### **Heroic Characterization and the Forte of Ngugi wa Thiong'o's Feminist Writing**

The heroic characterization of Ngugi's protagonist which is a female character and other female characters will form the basis for this study. Simply put, these women whose ages are between the twenties and the sixties. Beginning with the identical characters of Wangari and Wariinga, these women can be regarded to be in Ngugi's words, women look beyond the usual parlance that "Modern problems are resolved with the aid of thighs" (19). They go ahead and walk their talk as soon as they establish their own purpose. (204, 253). Kareendi's story which Wariinga recounts from pages 17 to 26 is actually her experience, and is quite remarkable to the plot; especially the denouement and falling action of the work. Wariinga's angst against the Rich Old Man from Ngorika is summed up in Kareendi's story, therefore, his eventual murder is a cancerous feeling which Wariinga had walked about for a long time before the story begins, and she did not hesitate to unleash the torment when the opportunity calls. Muzigirwa (2010) accentuates that, not only does Wariinga eventually succeed in going through school afterwards, to become an engineer, but also, she,

... takes the responsibility as community spokeswoman and therefore sharpens her forces against forces of evil, gathers means and skills, shows her concern for masses of workers, peasants and students' welfare above her personal pleasure and satisfaction ... and chooses a place among the peasants, workers, students and all those who pay by their brain, sweat and body serve the kind of the Old Rich man from Ngorika.

Ngugi recalls Kenya's historical heritage and the place of women, which not only informs his female affinity as revolutionary agents, but also, establishes the successes which are associated with them thus:

... Had I not seen glimpses of this type in real life among the women of Kamirithu Community and Cultural Center, with whom I worked to produce the play, *Ngaahika Ndeenda*? Isn't Kenyan history replete with this type of woman? – Me Katilili wa Menza, Muraawa Ngiti, Mary Muthoni Nyanjiru, and the women soldiers of the Kenya Land and Freedom Army? (Ngugi 15).

Kenyan history and Ngugi's writings remain inseparable even as his thrust variegates. Fully exploring the oral traditions of the Gikuyu people, Ngugi is in

touch with the geneses and the subsequent close of the true ownership of nature's gift to Kenyans, not only to the colonizers but also, to the Kenyan leaders who have consistently robbed the peasants and workers of their heritage, sadly. Ngugi's remarkable connection with this salient aspect of Kenyan history and the energy which he draws from this realization are thus expressed, "Waringa, by constantly making me conscious of my connection with history, and Njoki, by constantly making me aware that I am now in prison because of Kamirithu and its people, buoyed up my sagging spirits." (40-41).

It is important to proceed with this study using the description of Wangari, an elderly woman, whose bravado unleashes self-discovery prompting the heroine, Wariinga. Wangari's significance explains Ngugi's passion to develop the character of Waringa as the facilitator of the remarkable events that begins with the journey in Mwaura's matatu to the Devil's Feast at Ilmorog and beyond. This passion is not to be overtaken by any distraction as Ngugi declares "Tonight I don't want to think about guards and prisoners, colonial or neocolonial affairs. I am totally engrossed in Waringa, the fictional heroine of the novel I have been writing on toilet paper for the last ten months or so!" (Ngugi 7).

The introduction to Ngugi's *Devil on the Cross* leaves his readers with great suspense which runs wild with imagination regarding what his story will be about. Ngugi shocks his readers with the reality of the Organization for Modern Theft and Robbery and the membership of many of the competitors at the Devil's Feast, who make public their current and intended sources of wealth basically dependent on the extortion of the peasants. Their outrageous and outlandish strategies for robbery and theft; and also, their claims of cleverness are described by the author with the same deportment with which the imprisonment of Muturi, Wangari and the students' leader. The introduction of Wangari gives credence to the revolutionist stance which propels Wariinga from the middle of the story till the end.

The significance of the Devil's Feast in the Cave which runs through the most part of the novel, cannot be overemphasized. The revelation which the Devil's feast provides remains invaluable in the thorough comprehension of the reasons why Wariinga is exploited by Waigoka, why Boss Kihara attempts to exploit Wariinga sexually and his bitterness when he is unable to succeed with that, why her young boyfriend jilts her, why her landlord spontaneously ejects her; and why she has on several occasions attempted to take her own life. It is therefore, appropriate to surmise that the Devil's feast is a vehicle through which Ngugi vividly illustrates the hopelessness of Kenyans, especially the

women, even in the hands of the government of her own people; and the futility of patriotism that only spells doom. The unwillingness of Kenya to be redeemed from herself is best revealed in the arrest of the elderly Wangari by the police while she conforms with the conditions of bail earlier given to her. This is equally demonstrative in *Matigari* with the introduction of the barmaids who serve drinks at the pub where Muriuki and Matigari sit to feed and have a drink, is remarkable. (Ngugi 26). The subject of the programme which catches their intention also portrays their mental obsession. It is the subject of interest of the barmaids that exalts Guthera's struggle with Matigari after he saves her from the police officers and their dog. (29-32); therefore, Guthera's doggedness in resisting the policeman who seeks to lay her and her reasons for refuting his desire, defies the struggles of the subaltern woman. As brave as Wangari proves, Guthera explains the reason she won't mingle with a policeman, "... cops' money stinks of blood. I'd rather beg for a beer even from a total stranger - ..." (28).

#### **Ngugi's Women: Loose and Lost**

At the beginning of *Devil on the Cross*, Ngugi takes his time to describe Wangira's economic state while she walked from one stall or hotel to another seeking a job, penniless and stranded, as a prelude to the introduction of the heroine, Wariinga and her significant meeting with Gatuiria. In fact, Wangari's joblessness earns her a detention in the police cell, and she secures a conditional release which boosts her interest to attend the Devil's Feast, in fulfillment of her conditional release, which eventually earns her the indefinite detention before the end of the story.

Wariinga belongs to the class of ladies regarded as 'loose', and this almost ruins her life as she takes most of the events in her life for granted. Using the allegorical narrative of Mahua Kareendi which she shares with Gatuiria, Wariinga summarizes the major factor that lures young ladies into promiscuity - unemployment, (Ngugi 19). Extortion is a scourge which stifles many a woman in Kenya and hardly did any woman survive without a huge prize. Heartless landlords enforce unlawful and brash ejections especially on women using intimidations and extortions, irrespective of their vulnerability. These women usually lose their self-confidence or their lives. It is for this reason that Wariinga decides to go back to her parents in Ilmorog after her ejection from 'the house in Ofafa Jericho'. She attributes her woes to very insignificant factors:

... convinced that her appearance was the root cause of all her problems.  
Whenever she looked at herself in the mirror she thought herself very

ugly ... Insistent self-doubt and crushing self-pity formed the burden that Wariinga was carrying that Saturday as she walked through the Nairobi streets towards a bus stop to catch a matatu to take her to her parents' house in Ilmorog." (Ngugi 11-12).

The case of Muriuki's mother in *Matigari* is severe and irremediable. She experiences a worse form of exploitation in the hands of a ruthless landlord:

She used to rent a hut in the village but she could not afford to pay for it. The landlord told her to leave, but my mother asked him: Where will I go if I leave this hut? You can't throw me out into the wilderness like a wild animal. Money isn't more important than life! But the landlord answered: You have to go whether you like it or not. I will see to it myself that you leave ... It was midnight when I was woken up by the smell of smoke ... She was fast asleep. I tried to wake her up. I jumped out through the window, but my mother got stuck because the window was too small. Then the house burst into flames. (Ngugi 25-26).

After her personal rediscovery, Wariinga and Wangari become supernatural beings as they both in their unalloyed determination beat all scientific and logical possibilities beyond human comprehension. While Wangari leads a peasants/workers revolution, Wariinga launches an epoch of cleansing. Ngugi transmits this heroism to his female child, Njoki born five months after his abduction whose picture posted to him at Kamiti Maximum Prisons carried a message from the peasants earnestly protesting, praying, groaning and wishing for his release. For Ngugi (2018):

Njoki is a message from the world. A message of hope. A message that, somewhere, outside these gray walls of death, people were waiting for me, thinking about me, perhaps even fighting for my release with whatever weapons they had. A protest, a hastily muttered prayer from the lips of a peasant, a groan, a sigh, wishes of helpless children: today such gestures and wishes may not be horses on which seekers of freedom may ride to liberty, but I embrace them as offerings of a much needed moral solidarity with us and with the issues for which we have been jailed. One day the organized power and united will of millions will transform these moral wishes into people's chariots of actual freedom from ruthless exploitation and naked oppression, but just now merely sensing them through Njoki's photograph is a daily source of joyful strength. (17).



Ngugi's characterization enables him to achieve the didactic aim which he sets out to do, in positioning the trio of Muturi, Wangari and the unnamed ILASU students' leader, as patriotic Kenyans like himself who choose the grassroots revolutionary approach unacceptable to the post-independent government of Kenya and earn their incarceration. By this, Ngugi creates in these three figures, post-independent heroes in Ilmorog, just like he presents Kihika as the pre-independent hero in Thabai which Nnolim (Eileen Julien 136-137) affirms thus, "It is the struggle against the British, the Emergency and Mau Mau that create for Kihika the occasion to realize his ideals for both himself and his people." In other words, Ngugi consciously recollects the heroic landmarks established by women in the history of Kenya, and thus determines that, "Wariinga will be the fictional reflection of the spirit of women's resistance and resilience in Kenyan History." (Ngugi 15).

Inarguably, the economic condition has debased femalehood in Kenya, and the women are given to promiscuity to survive. Yet the slight contrast is that Guthera is more defiant and poised. Both Wariinga and Guthera learn eventually to stick to one man – that which is worthy of their fidelity and dedication. While Wariinga decides to settle in with Gatuiria, Guthera decides to be with Matigari, and these decisions they stick to till the end of both stories. Through their men, Guthera and Wariinga attempt to redeem hapless Kenyans from untold tragedy which Enewaridideke Ekanpou relates to societal error as he redefines the African tragedy beyond obvious factors, "Everybody waited for the words of Pere with curiosity, "I thank you all for coming; but let it be known that I shall satisfy the curiosity of my wife who had led me into this action and turn into a hill." (Ekanpou 66). Wariinga promptly decides the fate of Mr Gitahi, who Ngugi chooses to reveal as The Rich Old Man from Ngorika owing to his allegorical significance in the narrative, who not only abused her sexually, but also, brought untold hardship to her when he got her pregnant and abandoned her after fathering her own daughter, Wambui. (Ngugi 248, 249). Wariinga states her mission categorically, when she realizes that her fiancé's father, "I'm not going to save you. But I shall save many other people, whose lives will not be ruined by words of honey and perfume." (253).

### **Heroines and Women: Ngugi's Projection of Female Revolutionaries**

In *Devil on the Cross*, Ngugi's few female characters principally Jacinta Wariinga, a young girl from the Iliciri District, and an elderly and upright woman and peasant, Wariinga build up a revolutionary spirit when the societal ill is at the verge of swallowing them, first, as females, and second, as humans living in

post-independent Kenya. It is with a strong of determination that these females rise up with arms and people to save themselves from exploitation and victimization that establishes the success and aesthetics associated with Ngugi's 1982 novel.

Ngugi employs a female revolutionist to stamp out capitalism, and citing Brumley, Honore (2018) avers, "... she chooses to reject the enslavement of capitalism, maintain her purity as her own woman, and kill the symbol of the capitalist beast. There is no doubt that Wariinga's feminization is complete." For the first time, Ngugi's commitment to project a female revolutionary is total. This he explains in these words:

Because women are the most exploited and oppressed of all working people. I would create a picture of a strong, determined women with a will to resist and struggle against her present conditions. Had I not seen glimpses of this type in real life among the women of Kamirithu Community Education and Cultural Center, with whom I worked to produce the play, *Ngaahika Ndeenda*? Isn't Kenyan history replete with this type of woman – *Me Katilili wa Menza*? *Muraawa Ngiti*, *Mary Muthoni Nyanjiru*, and the women soldier of the Kenyan Land and Freedom Army? *Waringa* will be the fictional reflection of the spirit of women's resistance and resilience in Kenyan History. (Ngugi 15).

Using heroines, Ngugi demonstrates that females can also be sensitive to social issues and can be championed like them also. Women become alternative models through which Ngugi sustains the revolutionary tendencies in his work. It may be illogical to accept Wariinga's revolution as a result of two experiences with *The Rich Old Man from Ngorika*, whose colonial name is *Hispaniora Greenway Ghitahy* and *Boss Kihara* who offered a job after the two experiences narrated by *Kareendi*, "She (*Jacinta Wariinga*) finds Nairobi, soulless and corrupt. For Wariinga, all her problems started with the *Rich Old Man's* adventure." (Honore, 2018).

Using the character of *Kareendi*, who is actually *Wariinga*, Ngugi wa Thiong'o reveals the vileness of sex exploitation of women in Kenya using two denigrating experiences. These frustrate her while searching for a job in Nairobi in Chapter Two. While at the second office she had entered, "She finds there another Mr. Boss. The smiles are the same, the questions are the same, the rendez-vous is the same – and the target is still *Kareendi's* thighs." (Ngugi 19). As a matter of fact, the anecdote of *Kareendi* becomes the archetype of a female in Kenya. In combating with the class discrimination, many women

resort to changing their natural lifestyle and physical features in order to remain relevant. The pressures associated with Wariinga's existence inflicted on her by the Kenyan aristocrat imbues in her a complex that erodes her self-confidence:

Wariinga was convinced that her appearance was the root cause of her problems. Whenever she looked at herself in the mirror, she thought herself very ugly. What she hated most was her blackness, so she would disfigure her body with skin-lightening creams like Ambi and Snowfire, forgetting the saying: That which is born black will never be white. Now her body was covered with light and dark spots like the guinea fowl. Her hair was splitting, and it had browned to the colour of moleskin because it has been straightened with red-hot iron comb ... (11).

Her presence in Mwaura's matatu and listening to all the conversations opened her eyes to the sullen economic and social incapacitation which the Kenyan aristocrat places the country. The speech of Mwireri wa Mukiraai is significant in surmising the essence of Kenya's capitalism. His remarkable logic is later to unfold during the Devil's Feast at the Cave. (79).

Wariinga's revolution actually begins with herself – her mindset, her personality and her career. Thus, the narrator exclaims, "Here is Wariinga! ... This Wariinga is not the one we met two years ago. This Wariinga is not the one who used to think that there was nothing she could do except type for others ..." (216). Attending to one of the research objectives, the deification of women as better revolutionists authenticates the fantastical entanglements with the major character, Jacinta Wariinga whose otherworldly encounter with the Devil from the beginning of the novel ceases after the Devil's Feast. This marks a turning point in her life, complementing her association with Guthuira and her self-discovery which puts her back on her career path. She becomes a confident woman with the audacity to walk over her impediments while searching for an end to the societal ills that attempt to suppress and frustrate her.

In *Devil on the Cross*, Ngugi's protagonist, Wariinga at the end of the novel is successful launched as a vanguard to cleanse the society. This begins with redirecting her to a valuable skill, restoring her self-confidence and arming her with a past, for the task ahead of her:

Today's Wariinga has decided that she'll never again allow herself to be a mere flower, whose purpose is to decorate the doors and windows and tables of other people's lives, waiting to be thrown on to the rubbish heap the moment the splendor of her body withers. The Wariinga of today has decided to be self-reliant all the time, to plunge into the

middle of the arena of life's struggles in order to discover her real strength and to realize her true humanity. (216).

As she realizes her dream career by proceeding to the Polytechnic where she qualifies as mechanical engineer who specializes in motor vehicles and other internal combustion engines, she rises above her ilk especially as the Kenyan society "... loves to denigrate intelligence and intellectual capacity of our women by saying that the only jobs a woman can do are to cook, to make beds, and to spread their legs in the market of love." (218). Ngugi rightly challenges this mindset thus:

The Wariinga of today has rejected all that; reasoning that because her thighs are hers, her brain is hers, her hands are hers, and her body is hers, she must accord all her faculties their proper role and proper time and place and not let any one part be the sole ruler of her life, as if it had devoured all others. (218).

Yet Wariinga in challenging the mindset of Kenyan men reminisces loudly, "Why have people forgotten how Kenyan women used to make guns during the Mau Mau war against the British? Can't people recall the different tasks carried out by women in the villages once the men had been sent to detention camps?" (245). While she pursues her education in engineering, she also enrolls in "... judo and karate classes at the Kenyan Martial Arts Club in the Ngara area. Wariinga had resolved that she should be able to defend herself and stand on her own in every way." (219).

Although she runs into financial difficulties while in school, she refuses to accept help from her boyfriend, Gutuiria or any other person, as self-reliance was for her, a hallmark of her new self. During her first year in school, she would rather take up side jobs like typing research papers and dissertations for other students, or work in the hairdressing salon, than beg. (219). By her second year, she learns to offer her services to the Mwihotori Kiwanja Garage where she proves her worth, "... daring to storm a man's citadel' and received better pay and nicknamed, 'Wariinga, daughter of the Iregi rebels!'" (220-222).

By taking up a career that is male-dominated, she gears up for the confrontations which her new mindset would thrive on. Her first male victim is a male client who touches her breasts and buttocks. (Ngugi 221). She moves to destroy the unrepentant Rich Old Man from Ngorika who on meeting her as his daughter-in-law to-be attempts to destroy the new life she had begun to lead, (Ngugi 251). Wariinga like Soyinka's Iyaloja in *Death and the King's Horsemen*

according to Okolocha (2015) is "... the true hero because she remained steadfast in her responsibility to society and that her character calls attention to the existence of powerful female figures ..." (96) within her society.

Although Ngugi's heroine, Wariinga did not lead any industrial strike, she champions a cause that is equally decisive by taking up the responsibility to deliver the society from the wiles of thieves and robbers by outright extermination. In a decrepit post-independent Kenya where the rich manipulate the public institutions including the police, the presidency, the courts of law, and other institutions lacking in justice or truth, Wariinga takes laws into her own hands and heeds the call to duty. Having taken her revenge as relating to her circumstances, she "... walked on, without once looking back." (Ngugi 254).

What is most significant is that women's revolution against the collaborators of the Devil identified by Ngugi in his narrative according to Honore (2018), is "... against neo-colonialism as a political system and capitalism as the economic system ruling the particular fictional society called "modern Kenya". Women protagonists use methods and strategies to free themselves from victimization. Through their conquest, the aim is to save all Kenyan people, especially the ones who belong to the lower class.

Experiencing the colonialist Emergency from childhood, eventually succeeded by the insensitivity of the postcolonialist and neocolonialist periods, Ngugi has remained in touch with the social injustices met to Kenyans which directly affects his own family. He therefore, finds *Devil on the Cross* as a vehicle to reveal the weight of his angst against the Kenyan leading aristocrat. All he needs is the social experience to reveal the Kenyan leaders who permit the rot in the system. In a 2012 study, Gbilekaa opines that social experience is to the writer what water is to the fish as it provides the source materials which the writer's imagination reflects on in order to produce pieces of artistic writing including a hero figure to complement. (29).

Like God, who after creating the world looks back and said that his creation is good, Ngugi in creating the character of Wariinga looks back after thirty-six years, and expresses a deification of his heroines. In his 2018 memoir, he recounts emotionally "...Waringa ... Njoki ... my symbol of hope and freedom ... I am the first political prisoner to hear these words. I shout the news across the walls. "Free ... We are now free." I am no longer K6.77. I have regained my name. Ngugi wa Thiong'o. (Ngugi 237, 239, 240).

### **Conclusion**

The liberation which women seek is for the entire Kenyan population under the yoke of exploitation and abuses. As far as the aim is concerned, Wangari successfully makes by attempting to arrest the thieves and robbers of the Kenyan economy and the forerunners of capitalism in Kenya a statement, and this influences Wariinga. This organically launches a more decisive and continuous cleansing that is obviously suggested at the end of the novel. Further than this, is Wariinga's resolve for which she sacrifices her long sought-for love, a rosy affair that sprouts between her and Gatuiria, in order to crucify the debauchery of Waigota by murdering him, despite the fact that he is the father of the man he loves and her only child. Ngugi weaves a story which from the onset sets the target of the novel in the first place, outside which nothing else matters, "The Devil who would lead us into the blindness of the heart and into the deafness of the mind should be crucified, and care should be taken that his acolytes do not lift him down from the to pursue the task of building Hell of the people on Earth ..." (Ngugi 7). The (imaginary) women in Ngugi's literary life wear a significant robe that endear them to Ngugi in ways he is unable to appropriately describe yet he is able to put it so perceptively:

Wariinga and Njoki also keeps reminding me that my imprisonment without trial is not a personal affair. It's part of the wider history of attempts to bring up the Kenyan people in a reactionary culture of silence and fear, and of the Kenyan people's fierce struggle against them to create a people's revolutionary culture of outspoken courage and heroism. (Ngugi 41).

Like Habila's girls, Ngugi's heroines are "... ordinary girls who had taken a leap of faith ... Like most things in life, it all came down to chance, opportunity, and desperation. There was no single explanation." (Habila 85).

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