

# Postcolonialism and the Politics of Resistance: Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Wizard of the Crow*

by

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## Abstract

The colonial experiences of most African countries have refused to go after many decades since the colonial masters left. This is as a result of the myriad of social, political and economic problems still facing the continent. Independence promised a lot of good things for the masses and this brought about their active participation in the struggle for independence alongside the nationalist fighters in some African countries. It is pertinent to note also that some countries got their independence with fewer struggles though with equal promise of good life for the masses. Many factors have contributed to the plaguing of African development, with the major factor being bad leadership which Ngugi wa Thiong'o has rightly termed "the blacknisation of colonialism." Why has the leadership styles of most African countries refused to change for the better in spite of the rapid developmental trends all over the world today? This we believe is largely due to selfish nature of most African leaders. It has more or less become a form of relay race, which Chinua Achebe aptly refers to as "eat-and-let-eat" regimes. What has been responsible for this situation in most African countries that have been ravaged by abject poverty, corruption, war, political and economic instability, serious underdevelopment, etc.? Literature in Africa, which has been described as functional and committed, has been used by various writers to reflect this ugly situation which most African countries have found themselves. This essay therefore, makes serious attempt at investigating both external and internal intricacies that have been at play in the struggle for the soul of postcolonial Africa. Many writers have written extensively in this regard and have used their writings to document the postcolonial conditions of African countries.

They have equally used their writings to awaken the consciousness of the masses to the realities of their circumstances. Some of the writers do not only stop at this level of awakening but go further to recommend serious resistance measures against the enemies of the people. We therefore settled for Ngugi wa Thiong'o, who we consider the most appropriate as far as resistance literature in Africa is concerned.

The contemporary world is an epoch of national liberation revolutions. Masses of most Third World countries have risen to challenge their subjection to external domination or internal oppression and this has made them assert their right freely in order to determine their own destiny. Both the anti-colonial movement and the current struggle against neo colonialism in Africa are part of this historical trend. (Nzongola Ntalaja,: ix). This captures in clear term the real situation in Africa, which is most dismal. The continent has remained comparatively the least developed of all continents in terms of the production and sustenance of critically significant social -goods such as physical infrastructure, telecommunication facilities, food supply, electricity, medical and health services, shelter, employment and other vital materials for human, personal and social being.

The problems facing African societies are multi-dimensional and in phases. Slavery is the worst and darkest experience in the history of African people Colonialism immediately followed and now neo-colonialism through African dependent on the Western World for its economic and political stability. To sustain and promote their interests at the expense of Africa, the international hegemonic forces have ensured that their African collaborators remain in power to do their biddings. These agents consider and pursue policies that satisfy their interest and those of their imperialist masters even at the brink of economic collapse occasioned by the "fictitious debts" ostensibly owed to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and other Western banks and financial institutions, like the London and Paris clubs.

Day in and day out, the African continent is racked by afflictions, disasters, macro economic crises and dysfunctions, debt over-hang, corruption, high level illiteracy, squalor, disease, hunger and other negative and destabilizing conditions thrown up by imperialism in cahoots with greedy and unpatriotic ruling class. According to Ali Mazrui:

...these problems are brought about as a result of Africa being at the bottom of the global heap, with the Western world at the top. Africa has the largest percentage of poor people, the largest number of low- income countries, the least developed economies, the lowest life expectancy, the most fragile political systems. Moreso, it is most vulnerable continent with high incident of HI V/AIDS (whatever relationship there might be between HIV and the collapse of immune systems in Africa). (3)

And the continent appears to be in limbo and suspended animation as the received development paradigm from the West has failed abysmally in addressing the ravaging socio-political and economic problems that have engulfed it. Kofi Anyidoho articulates this point in an article thus:

Africa is a homeland that history has often denied and contemporary reality is constantly transforming into a quicksand; a land reputed to be among the best endowed in both human and material resources and yet much better known worldwide for its proverbial conditions of poverty, Africa the birth place of humanity and of human civilization now strangely transformed into expanding graveyards and battlefields for the enactment of some of the contemporary world's worst human tragedies. (76)

The Western world, on the other hand is triumphant at the top of the global caste system. What is more, the Western world created the international caste system which reduced Africans to the "untouchables" of global injustice. Africa has mineral wealth, which is exploited for the benefit of others, fertile land, which is under-cultivated, rich cultures that are being destroyed and brainpower, which is being "drained" to the other parts of the world. At the center of this calamity according to Mazrui "is the roles of the West in creating an international system like International Monetary Fund (IIMF), World Bank, World Trade Organization (WTO), etc which reduced priced Africans to the lowest caste of the twentieth century." (Mazrui, 2000:3). With this, it has become imperatively clear that we have to replace the old geographic definition by class-based progressive definition as captured by Peter Nazareth in *The Third World Writer*:

To belong to the Third World is therefore to accept an identity, an identity with the wretched of the earth spoken for by Frantz Fanon, to determine to end all exploitation and oppression. (118)

With independence therefore, new problems arose for the field of African literature, and instead of dealing with the relationship between Europe and Africa as brought about by colonialism, hence it had to broaden its scope to include the study of relations between African social groups and those between Africa and the world. This new trend which is the main focus of this essay is a very critical problem with regard to both sets of relations which was the assumption of political power by the African petit-bourgeoisie in an essentially unaltered social-economic framework, and consequences that all this was to have on the struggle of African peasants and workers for a better life.

In the field of African literature these two-fold struggle manifested themselves in the optimistic forecasts concerning the prospects for democracy in post-colonial Africa on the one hand, and pessimistic warning on the pervasiveness of political instability and disorder, on the other.

In addition to the attempt to resolve the national question, the African state is faced with the problem of what to do with the social question. Unlike the national question, which is not a serious problem in some countries, the social question is at the very centre of the present crises state throughout the African continent. This is very necessary considering the fact that it involves the state's capacity for economic and social development, or its ability to raise the standard of living of the population. This essay examines and tries to capture the crisis of the state in post-colonial Africa, and its declining capacity for stability and development, as a function of the social or class character of the state itself. The social character of a state reflects the nature of its leadership group, its objective interests and values, and its relative strengths and weaknesses in the international class struggle. According to Amilcar Cabral whose works shall be relied heavily by this essay:

In the post-colonial Africa, the leadership group is made up for the most part of petit-bourgeois nationalists who on the whole, were more interested in replacing Europeans in the leading positions of power and privilege than in effecting a radical transformation of the state and the society around it... (136)

This decision is obviously made for their own enrichment in alliance with imperialist capital instead of the more difficult road to a better life for all through a radical transformation of the colonially inherited structures of the economy and the society. They therefore failed the crucial test for post-colonial development.

The class character of the state is thus to be defined not only in terms of the type of state, whether it is pre-capitalist, capitalist, but also in terms of form of state. In Africa, as in all Third World societies, the latter is determined by the objective interests' positions and strength of the various social classes in the nature of international class struggle. And it is by locating its place in this struggle that the nature of the class in charge of the state as well as its place in this imprint on the form of state can be determined. These are to be determined in relation to two major dimensions of the international class struggle. On the one hand, the seemingly contradictions between the Third World as the underdeveloped portion of the capitalist system still struggling to develop economically and the imperialist countries which continue to dominate, and on the other hand the fundamental contradictions of the epoch between two antagonistic social systems, capitalism and socialism.

The ancestry of the concept of Post colonialism can be traced to Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, published in French in 1961 and voicing what might be called 'cultural resistance' to France's African Empire. Fanon argued that the first step for colonized people in finding a voice and an identity is to reclaim their own past. This is so because, for centuries the European colonizing power will have devalued the continent's past, seeing its pre-colonial era as a pre-civilized limbo or even as a historical void. If the first step towards a postcolonial perspective according to Fanon is to reclaim one's own past, then the second is to begin to erode the colonialist ideology by which that past had been devalued.

Hence, another major proponent of Post colonialism, Edward Said whose books *Orientalism* exposes in specific term the Eurocentric universalism which takes for granted both the superiority of what is European or Western, and the inferiority of what is not. Said identifies a European cultural tradition of 'Orientalism' which is a particular and long-standing way of identifying the East as "other" and inferior to the West. This in essence, suggests that the relationship between Europe or West and "others" is a relationship of power, or domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony.

By the term Post colonialism, we do not intend or imply in this essay an automatic, nor a seamless and unchanging process of resistance but a series of linkages and articulations without which the process cannot be properly addressed. These linkages and articulations are not always directly oppositional considering the levels of betrayal that have attended the postcolonial societies. The material practices of postcolonial societies may involve a wide range of activities including conceptions and actions which are, or appear to be, complicity with imperial enterprise as we shall argue in the textual analysis of this essay. In his own argument, Stephen Slemon gives a broader meaning to the term Post colonialism:

Post-colonialism as it is now used in various fields, describes a remarkably heterogeneous set of subject positions, professional fields, and critical enterprises. It has been used as a way of ordering a critique of totalizing forms for a retooled notion of class", as a subset of both post modernism and post structuralism (and conversely, as the condition from which those who structures of cultural logic and cultural critique themselves are seen to emerge); as the name for a condition of nativist longing in post-independence national groupings; as a cultural marker of non-residency for a third-world intellectual cadre... (168).

Slemon analyses the positions of some of the major participants in the debates in a fresh and interesting way but also regards the debate itself as the product of the institutionalization of postcolonial studies within the practices of the present study. Slemon reminds us that the real context is what postcolonial studies seek to address is that between the conflicting participants in the imperial process and their residual delegates.

We seek to demonstrate here by asking whether literary resistance is in fact necessarily embedded in the representational technologies of those literary and social texts whose structures and whose referential codes they seek to oppose. This question sounds like definitional problem, but we think in fact that they are critical ones for a critical industry, which the present essay seems to suggest in its two central themes; post colonial and resistance. Arun Mukherjee makes this point with great dexterity by asking what specificity, what residual grouping, remains with the term 'post colonial' when it is applied, indiscriminately to both Second and Third World Literary texts. (18). The term resistance recently found itself at the centre of a similar controversy, when it was discovered how very thoroughly a failure in resistance characterized some of the earlier political writings of some great Third World writers, hence our inclusion of politics in the present essay in order to justify the intricacies that are at play in postcolonial discourse.

The basic issues we are pursuing in this essay with regard or respect to the relationship between public policy and societal goals in Africa today is the extent to which governments are able to satisfy their people's expectations of independence, namely; their sincere hope that freedom from colonial rule would usher in a new era of basic rights and freedoms long denied Africans, as Amilcar Cabral found out while leading the fight for the independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde. He reminds us in his writings on this experience that ordinary people have a right to expect a better life after all the sacrifices they endured during the liberation struggle. People do not fight for ideas, he writes, but for peace, material benefits and a better future for their children. (Cabral, 1979:24 1)

Echoing the same line of thought, Professor J.F. Ade Ajayi, a distinguished African historian, has summed up the meaning of independence for the African masses as follows:

Insofar as they fully appreciated what was involved in the independence movements, their basic expectation was to see an end to the unpredictability and irrationality of the white man's world. Without the dubious advantages of western education, they rejected the white man's culture. ...These wants developed and became more specific with each new hope and each disastrous frustration....and adequate water supply electricity, health—care facilities and other such amenities of life. (5)

In line with the above, it is pertinent to note that the state in post-colonial Africa is not properly structured to undertake development tasks. This is evident going by the ways and manners many governments in post-colonial Africa would readily and gladly entrust the welfare of their people to the so-called international development agencies, particularly the specialized United Nations agencies and non-governmental organization (NGOs). It is also instructive to observe that even where a political commitment and will to development is evident, as in the case of Nyerere's Tanzania, the colonially-inherited structures of the economy and the state act as an obstacle to development, together with the class forces whose interests they promote.

Like the colonial state, the post-colonial state is a regressive mechanism in charge of an export-orientated economy that serves primarily those who manage it and their trading and other business partners in the developed countries, at the expense of the welfare of ordinary people. In the words of Franz Fanon:

The national middle class that takes over power at the end of the colonial regime is an under-developed middle class. It has practically no economic power, and in any case it is in no way commensurate with the bourgeoisie of the mother country which it hopes to replace. In its willful narcissism, the national middle class is easily convinced that it can advantageously replace the middle class of the mother country... keep in the running and to be part of the racket. (119-20)

We have sought to show that the crisis of the state in post-colonial Africa is a function of its nature as an authoritarian control structure preoccupied with the political survival and material interests of those who control it. With exceptions related to the resource endowment of a few countries and the maturity of their rulers, the post-colonial state has failed to address, let alone satisfy, the basic needs of ordinary people. Needless to say, it is largely incapable of fulfilling the deepest aspirations of the African people for a better quality of life and a more prosperous and secure future for their children. Like the colonial state, which preceded it, it must be smashed and replaced by a people's state in which the democratic rights and basic freedoms that ordinary people had expected from independence would be guaranteed. It is only when the ordinary masses can participate in the process of their own economic and social development that the state can be said to represent their true interests. To achieve this, is not necessarily going to be a docile action rather active resistance to all forms of oppression and regression by the ruling class must be employed.

Inasmuch as the essay is basically a study of the relationship between the national liberation struggle and the class struggle, or the interplay between resistance and counter-resistance in post-colonial Africa, it is mainly concerned with analyzing the class contradictions inherent in the struggle of the African people for liberation and development in an attempt to illuminate the nature and basic dynamics of contemporary African politics. All over the continent, the anti-colonial struggle was a great event in the lives of the African people. Both the masses and their petit-bourgeois nationalist leaders expected a lot from it. The masses had hoped that their living conditions would improve as a result of what they saw as a revolutionary experience, and this was in fact what their leaders promised them. But the promise was not honoured after independence, for many reasons, one of which was the fact that the anti-colonial struggle had masked the class contradictions between the petit-bourgeoisie and ordinary people. These contradictions became manifest after independence when instead of fulfilling their promises, the new rulers responded to the people's demand either with more promises or with repression.

In this respect of the class contradictions in the struggle for liberation and development in Africa, we would like to assess the role of African writers' vis-à-vis the resistance and counter-resistance dialectics, and to appeal to those among them who desire radical social change to get involved in the historical process of achieving it. Among those is the author whose works is the central point of our textual analysis in this essay. To assist the struggle for political change in Africa, Ngugi wa Thiong'o has gone beyond university campuses to join those social forces opposed to the neo-colonial state. Ngugi has therefore joined the popular struggle for radical change by accepting the challenge posed to all of us by Amilcar Cabral to become revolutionary workers.

Most African writers have tended to draw their materials from past and continuing history of their people and have shown their concern for or commitment to the aspirations of their people. Their commitment could be limited to the affairs of their countries as Achebe, La Guma, Ngugi (except *Wizard of the Crow*) and Ekwensi have done to the affairs of the continent as Armah, Ousmane have done in *Two Thousand Seasons* and *Gods Bits of Wood* respectively. This suggests that their writings can be nationalist in orientation, pan-Africanist, or both. They equally champion the cause of their people against threats coming from outside. Their commitment could also go beyond merely depicting the harshness of man's environment and his absurd conditions to suggesting a radical solution to the situation they have identified. This suggests therefore that commitment tends to be preoccupied with policies and the discourse is heavily political writings.



As we can correctly infer from the background analysis given so far, the theoretical framework of this essay shall be tailored along post-colonialism in accordance with the materialist understanding of cultural consciousness depicting socialist realism as propounded by Karl Marx. It is against the background of the foregoing that Ngugi's recent novel *Wizard of the Crow* becomes very important in understanding the sorry state to which Africa has become and the need to mobilize patriotic and concerned people for a collective battle against the forces that have hijacked Africa's development.

This essay attempts to investigate Ngugi's concern about and perspectives on Africa's march towards genuine statehood and independence. The focus on Ngugi and particularly this very novel becomes increasingly important given the rampaging effects of imperialism and dictatorship on African soil, and the need for political struggle and consequent liberation of the people.

This novel which may well be considered as the hallmark or watershed of Ngugi's writing depicts in its deepest sense the various political, economic and social intricacies that have conditioned and plagued the postcolonial African States' quest towards real development. Ngugi is at his best in the use of metaphysics which he has to a very great extent, succeeded in introducing into the resistance theme of African literature. Coupled with this is the incisiveness and the exposure of the leadership personalities in postcolonial Africa. It (the novel) represents a rather worrisome internal bickering and visionless leadership that have characterized various governments across the continent of Africa.

Though the novel cast serious aspersions in satirical mode on the internal build-up and the effect of external collaboration of the West in the impoverishment of the African masses, it aptly reflects with great efforts the roles of sycophants in the destruction of African States. This novel, which is arguably, the most voluminous and ambitious novel ever written by an African writer is divided into six books that reflect deeply the various intricacies in the governance of African people and how informed and conscious people have equally risen to resist and oppose the draconian rule of dictatorship and oppressive regime. The weakness and ineffectiveness of leadership in Africa is highly exposed with the dictatorial and oppressive tendency of most African governments showcased. Our rulers as we shall soon see have refused to quit the stage even when there is practically nothing for them to offer the people again.

*Wizard of the Crow* is set in the fictional Free Republic of Aburiria. For as long as anyone can remember, the country has been under the dictatorship of one known simply as the Ruler. The Ruler is a combination of Idi Amin, Mobutu Sese Seko and Pere Ubu, a larger-than-life figure (this is played out literally and hilariously late in the novel), whose Machiavellian grip on power is so absolute that his ministers trip over each other offering up slavish praises:

There is nobody in the whole Aburiria., “Sikiokuu pleaded tremulously, “who does not know that the ruler is this country and this country is His mighty country. It is also well known that many other leaders are jealous of that irrevocable identity. All I was saying is that ... (161)

The Ruler’s cult of personality is so strong that he is often played on the same level as God, and as frequently chanted throughout the novel. The Ruler and the country are one and the same. Anyone who even vaguely questions his omnipotence is quickly fed to crocodiles:

You little cunt of a man” the Ruler shouted angrily. “Why do you go on and on about my enemies and those of the country? Is there a distinction between me and the country... who know that you and the country are one and the same (Wizard: 136).

At the beginning of the novel, a huge crowd convenes to celebrate the Ruler’s birthday and at the ceremony his sycophantic ministers, in an effort to out-do one another, escalate the national tribute to their leader to the point where it is proposed that a structure be built similar to the Tower of Babel, called Marching to Heaven: This will allow the Ruler to be closer to God:

The whole country, the Minister for Foreign Affairs was saying, the entire Aburirian populace, had decided unanimously to erect a building such as had never been attempted in history except once by the children of Israel, and even they had failed miserably to complete the House of Babel. ...The Ruler would be the daily recipient of God’s advice, resulting in a rapid growth of Aburiria to the heights never before dreamt by humans. (16).

This system, which dissolved into crisis in the 1980s and endured till the 1990s in most African states, is purposeful for the sustenance of power as it demands loyalty from the citizens. Such loyalties are mandatorily expressed in support marches, assemblies of applaud touring dignitaries, purchase of party cards, display of the presidential portrait, participation in plebiscitary elections etc. this kind of patrimonial autocracy and loyalty in the postcolonial Africa state is captured in the rapturous encomium to Mobutu of Zaire by his then interior Minister, Egulu Beanga in 1975:

...in our religion, we have our own theologians. And at all times, there are prophets. Why not today? God has sent a great prophet, our prestigious Guide Mobutu. This prophet is our liberator our messiah. Our church is the MPR (political party). Its chief is Mobutu; we respect him like one respect Pope. Our gospel is Mobutism. This is why the cruxifixes must be replaced by the image of our Messiah. And party militants will want to place at its side his glorious mother, Mama Yemo, who gave birth to such son. (Young, 2004:35)

This is a classical example of some of the sycophantic excesses in postcolonial Africa. The Ruler is pleased by this excess, but loan will have to be secured from the Global Bank (IMF and World Bank) to make the project a reality and this provokes the chains of resistance throughout the novel starting from the birthday celebration. The people's aversion to the project is highly reflected, the gloom and silence that follow Machokali's speech, is an evidence of the people's mild resistance to such white elephant projects that have dominated most postcolonial African states:

Except for members of parliament, cabinet ministers, officials of the Ruler's party, and representatives of the armed forces, nobody clapped ...Are you so overwhelmed by happiness that you are lost for words? Is there no one able to express his joy in words? (17)

From the above scenario, people's disenchantment with the regime of the Ruler is highly depicted. In postcolonial Africa, most governments abandon people-oriented projects for frivolous projects that do not have any significant impact on the people's lives. This pitches some of these regimes with the revolutionary masses who will stop at nothing until they overcome the oppressive regimes across African states. The disruption of the birthday celebration when the Ruler is presenting his speech by some revolutionaries shows people's aversion to the whole process and to his regime thus:

He stopped, for suddenly near the center of the multitude• issued a bloodcurdling scream. A snake! A snake! Came the cry taken up by others. Soon there was pandemonium. People shouted and shouted in every direction to escape a snake unseen by many... The head of the secret police woke up from a stupor and whispered to the Ruler. This might be the beginning of a coup d'état, and within seconds the Ruler was on his way to the State House (22).

From then on the Ruler never makes a successful public outing as opposition to his rule by the revolutionary group known as Movement for the Voice of the People keeps on rising throughout the novel despite government's propaganda and coercive measures.

When we first encounter Kamiti, the co-arrow head of the resistance, he is lying on a garbage heap, having an out-of-body experience as a bird. Trash collectors mistake him for a corpse and are terrified when the dead apparently arises. This sets off a chain of events that will lead to many changes in Aburiria. Kamiti needs a job; having armed himself with a master's degree goes into the Eldares Modern Construction and Real Estate Company where he encounters the beautiful Grace Nyawira who later turns out to be the arrow head of the Movement for the Voice of the People.

As we will soon find out, Kamiti and Nyawira are soul mates in sorcery, and their relationship will begin the process of change in Aburiria. As their powers which they utilize so much in resisting bad governance and policies especially the Marching to Heaven project grow, the envy and the wrath of the Ruler will focus on them. Over the course of the novel which is presented through six books as earlier mentioned, a queuing mania will occur which demonstrates and reflects the decaying nature of the Aburirian societies. A condition called white-ache will be cured with mirrors (mirrors and their self-reflecting nature play a very important role in this novel). The novel is full of episodes of surreal magic and Brechtian exaggeration, which makes the novel look like a fantasy, but it is pertinent to know that the fantasy is well grounded in the stark reality of the postcolonial Africa which makes it a very complex allegorical depiction of African societies.

As the narrative unfolds, Kamiti who could not find a job decides to become a beggar at the high rise hotels in the city of Eldares. Incidentally, the resistance group (The Movement of the Voice of the People) is using begging as one of their resistance strategies. This compounds the problems of the Ruler because of the subtle approach adopted by this group. Kamiti thus becomes real beggars to resist the Rulers policies:

There were always beggars loitering around those kinds of hotels at all hours of day and night. But that night they were there in unusually large numbers, looking for the entire world to see like wretchedness itself. The blind seemed blinder than usual, the hunchbacked hunched lower, and those missing legs or hands acted as if deprived of other limbs. The way they carried themselves was as if they thought the Global Bank had come to appreciate and even honour their plight. (73-74).

This scenario is created during the visit of the Global Bank officials to Aburiria to assess the feasibility and the viability of the Marching to Heaven project before granting the loan or agreeing to finance it. This validate the fact that World Bank, IMF and other financial institutions in the West have collaborated heavily with postcolonial African leaders to further pauperize the masses through their financial support in form of loans to bogus and anti-people projects. This makes the foreign journalists that have accompanied the Global Bank officials to focus their attention on the beggars for they reason that no news from Africa is complete without poverty:

The foreign journalist were particularly interested in the scene, for they believed that a news story from Africa without pictures of people dying from wretched poverty, famine, or ethnic warfare could not possibly be interesting to their audience back home (74).

With this belief, the real intention of the fake beggars is brought into focus through their revolutionary songs and slogans. This strategy is informed by the fact that this is evidently the only way they could attract media attention as a result of their underground movement. Their slogans not only cast serious aspersions on the role of the West in even contemplating granting of loan to the government but trying to hold them responsible for all the many woes of postcolonial Africa through questionable and fictitious loans:

Marching to Heaven is Marching to Hell. Your Strings of Loans are Chains of Slavery. Your Loans are the Cause of Begging. We Beggars beg the end of Begging. The March to Heaven is led by Dangerous Snakes (74). (86).

These slogans in form of song make the beggars to be suspected and they were subsequently dispersed before they could cause further damage to the image of the Ruler before the international media.

As stated earlier, Kamiti, the poor job seeker, inadvertently becomes involved in a protest by the underground Movement for the Voice of the People during a visit by a delegation from the Global Bank. During their dispersion by the police, Kamiti, along with the mysterious female leader of the movement, Nyawira, finds himself running for his life chased by policemen. Hiding out in Nyawira's house, he comes up with the ingenious notion of posting a sign claiming the property is inhabited by a powerful sorcerer in order to frighten the pursuers away. The novel derives its title from this very action and almost all the actions in the novel are premised on this:

The other beggar tied the bones and rags together. He then took a felt pen from his bag and wrote on the cardboard in big letters: WARNING!. THIS PROPERTY BELONGS TO A WIZARD WHOSE POWER BRINGS DOWN HAWKS AND CROWS FROM THE SKY. TOUCH THIS HOUSE AT YOUR PERIL. SGD WIZARD OF THE CROW. (77)

What begins as a ruse soon takes on a life of its own. The wizard, played by Kamiti but sometimes by Nyawira, begins to receive a stream of visitors. First comes the policeman who pursued them and largely become the main narrator in the novel (Arigaigai Gatherer), seeking help in gaining a promotion. When his dream coincidentally comes true, word spreads of the Wizard's power. After the wealthy, come the poor and the oppressed by their thousands to the shrine seeking one help or the other:

Now it was Kamiti's turn to let out a cry of surprise, even dismay. He stood rooted to the ground. He feared he would fall but just stared in disbelief: standing outside were ten more patients Every time I try to escape, fate stand in my way. (132)

In a world that seems hopeless, magic provides the only possibility of hope. But what at first appear to be all smoke and mirrors, plus a basic understanding of human psychology, soon have both Kamiti and Nyawira wondering if Kamiti does indeed have magical powers. During a trip home to his family's village, Kamiti's father reveals that Kamiti comes from a long line of sorcerers. When a corrupt businessman loses the power of speech, the Wizard diagnoses it as a case of "white-ache", the yearning to be European:

He saw his skin as standing between him and the heaven of his desire. When he scratched his face, daemons within were urging him to break ranks with blackness and enter into union with whiteness. In short, he suffers from a severe case of white-ache (180).

Later, a similar ailment, though with a different cause, afflicts the Ruler. And the common people themselves feel the same weight of silence, which explains the appeal of the Movement of the Voice of the People, "we want our voice back", (183) cry by the protesters.

When the novel begins, he is petitioning the Global Bank (IMF and World Bank) for funds to create Marching to Heaven, a latter-day Tower of Babel that will be, in the Ruler's words, the world's first 'super wonder':

Once the project was completed, no historian would ever again talk about any other wonders in the world, for the fame of this Modern House of Babel would dwarf the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, the Egyptian Pyramids, the Aztec Tenochtitlan, or the Great Wall of China. And who would ever talk of the Taj Mahal? Our project will be the first and only super wonder in the history of the world. (17).

It is pertinent to note here that part of the problems and the causes of great underdevelopments that are visibly evident throughout postcolonial African states are reflected in the above passage. The government is not interested in the people-oriented projects and policies but for the aggrandizement of their (ruling class) interest. The government is least ready financially to undertake this worthless project, but ready with the connivance of the West to get loans and further pauperize the masses.

The contrast between Aburirians decaying cities and Marching to Heaven's pointless extravagance and the wealthy Aburirian dignitaries who figure to profit from it is ripe:

One was made up of people in custom suits, standing stiffly and solemnly as if at a fashion parade; it reached all the way to the door... The second line started at the billboard TEMPA JOBS: APPLY IN PERSON... which as Nyawira later learned, had sparked a rumour that the chairman was hiring thousands of workers for Marching to Heaven (138-139)

Just as the Ruler begins trying to present a good image to the Westerners who hold the fate of his super wonder in their hands, the dissident Nyawira's Movement for the Voice of the People begins to emerge as a thorn in his flesh. They vow to:

...oppose the Ruler's birthday cake and the Global Bank mission of putting us in a permanent debt trap. We must all oppose this business of Marching to Heaven (86).

As a result of opposition coming from this underground movement, the finds from the global bank are not forthcoming and eventually the Ruler decides to go on a diplomatic mission to shore up the support from the international communities for his project and subsequently becomes absurdly pregnant:

The chance to go to New York to be wined and dined while lobbying for support for marching to Heaven was medicine to the Ruler's wounded soul (243).

Yet just when it looks like the poverty, rebellions and runaway violence will bring the Ruler's reign to a close, he manages to escape and birth "Baby D" democracy a multiparty system in which the legislature is complaint and the Ruler automatically becomes head of whatever party receives the highest votes:

...but he added that the new Aburirian system was only making explicit what was latent in all modern democracies, in which parties were basically variations of each other. He would be the nominal head of all political parties.... (698-699)

This makes those who would forge a cause for a reformed and changed Aburiria to go back to square one (233-234. 701 724)

*Wizard of the Crow* is a breakthrough because it drills down deep into the heart of how politics gets done, the Ruler ordering his subordinates about and sowing seed of discord:

The dictator's reputation for making minister plot against minister, region against region, and community fight against community was now a matter of legend...would be would be embraced by all the feuding parties as a Solomonic prince of peace (231).

This is the main political strategy of the Ruler to remain firmly in control of power. This is also the strategy employed by most contemporary African Rulers to hold on to power despite serious resentment from the populace. This is highly enhanced by the subordinates' own machinations, the deals made by leaders of Aburirian's business community, the rise of upstarts in government like Kaniuri and the methods of the resistance. Ngugi takes us to the atomic level, showing us how politics happens in Aburiria on a person-by-person basis (262, 291, 330, 361, 407, 575, and 680). And in all these transactions and incidents, exaggerated storytelling and rumours is the central key to their development.



This storytelling exemplifies the techniques and the architecture used by political actors in Aburiria as they continually invent tales that, with breathtaking speed, become the new realities that the country must live by. These realities include the bizarre things that take place daily in various government houses across postcolonial African States which have greatly undermined the developmental desires of the masses. Whether it is the Ruler purposefully creating realities with an iron hand, businessmen doing it in ignorance as they arrange deals:

Each card was handed over with thousands of Buns. A few dignitaries had tried to write checks, but Tajirika would not hear of it, cash or nothing, Tajirika told them, and they were quick to say that they completely understood. A few insisted on a business luncheon appointment, adding even more Buns with their cards. (104).

This also applies to even the resistance movements innocently slipping into stories that help them toward their goals, the creation of stories remain central to the plot development:

Can you believe it? Outside gates of the state House, under the very noses of the police and the soldiers guarding the palace! The question is, how did the pamphleteers get inside these heavily guarded locations without detection? (127)

The act of ignorantly and innocently promoting the resistance movement without realizing the essence and the efficacy of their action is captured in the queuing scene outside Eldares Construction and Estate Company. The refusal of the queue to disappear creates a very serious problem for the ruler and his ministers who attempt and decide to use the queue to their advantages:

And now a sight even more amazing unfolded. When those at the head of the queue read the notice and broke the news, those immediately behind them refused to believe their ears ...no seeing this apparent movement, would rejoin the queues at the rear, Queues without an end (141)

The government not knowing what to do with the queues of the jobless and unemployed Aburirians decides to reverse the essence of the queues to their advantage; because the Ruler initially is worried:

It became obvious, at the emergency session at the State House, that what most concerned the Ruler was the crazed rider's observation that the queues seemed to have no beginning and no end. That sounds dangerous, doesn't it? (159).

With the expression of this worry by the Ruler, the stage is thus set for the political dexterity of his ministers to come into play. With serious polemic and somewhat sound argument, they succeed in dissuading the ruler into believing that the queues signify total support and the people were simply demonstrating their solidarity with the Ruler's Marching to Heaven project:

It is obvious that the queuing is connected with Marching to Heaven. Employers and workers knew the project meant economic growth and jobs galore; that was why even before the project had been launched employer and employee stood shoulder to shoulder in the streets of Eldares in support of Marching to Heaven!..., we should present it to the world as the very picture of a nation lining up behind its leader's vision" (162).

This statement is made by Machokali while trying to exonerate himself from the blame of being responsible for the queue mania. Fortunately this argument catches the interest of the Ruler who subsequently endorses it thereby exhibiting his legendary act of pitching his ministers against one another. An example to flesh this all out, Ngugi tells us in the narrative that the Ruler delights in playing his principal ministers, Sikiokuu and Machokali off one another. The two well know that the price for falling out of their ruler's favour is likely death (231, 162, 88, 408), but they are inexperienced and incompetent, completely unfit to execute the tasks the Ruler sets before them. When they inevitably fail, they fall back to the very politics of resistance, the only resource they have which is the use of their tongues.

As stated earlier, in the novel, the Ruler convenes his cabinet to decide how best to persuade the West to disburse the necessary funds for the Marching to Heaven project. Spurred by the rumours of work related to the construction of the project, long lines of people spring up all over Aburiria, and the Ruler becomes worried that this will make a bad impression. He looks angrily to Machokali for an answer. Machokali knows that if he does not come up with an explanation quickly, he is dead meat, but what is he supposed to say? That Aburiria is so destitute that people will spring up in miles-long lines at the slightest hint of employment? Instead Machokali has the bright idea to tell the Global Bank that the lines are manifestations of support for the project:

The mission has seen for itself the queues cropping up all over the city. And what are the queues and this assembly telling the Global Bank and the world? It is all quite simple.... The Ruler is not like some of those Third World leaders who are always whining about their commitments, going so far as to ask that their debt be forgiven. (248)

From the above, Ngugi has succeeded in exposing to a very great extent the politics of debts of postcolonial African States. This is largely responsible for the deplorable conditions of most African nations. With the connivance of the imperialists, African leaders have sold the future generations into bondage by the fictitious loans from World Bank and IMF. African leaders or Rulers get funds for projects that are bound to fail and thereby mortgaging the life of the masses for life. They spend almost all their national income on debt servicing. This is the very realities in postcolonial African States that Ngugi is trying to expose and he does it with clear precision.

Instead of developing policies that will enhance the quality of lives of the masses, government officials are conniving with the West to obtain loans for fictitious projects. The funds granted are stolen and stashed back in their banks and the masses suffer the burden of debt repayment and servicing that never benefited them.

In the space of just a few pages, a miraculous inversion has been effected. Marching to Heaven has gone from a boondoggle that has revealed Aburiria's desperation to a new vision of national strength, fervently attended to by popular demonstrations all over the does not come up with an explanation quickly, he is dead meat, but what is he supposed to say? That Aburiria is so destitute that people will spring up in miles-long lines at the slightest hint of employment? Instead Machokali has the bright idea to tell the Global Bank that the lines are manifestations of support for the project:

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This is the very reality of the existence of most postcolonial African States today. This has given rise to various resistance movements across the continent. The approaches and situations may differ as regards various nations, but the realities are the same. This makes the position that Ngugi is trying to maintain in *Wizard of the Crow* infallible because this is how an African dictatorship functions.

And so it goes, on and on throughout the 700 plus pages of *Wizard of the Crow*. Each new development in Aburiria is twisted by Sikiokuu and Machokali to fit narratives meant to facilitate their lust for power and preserve them from the Ruler's wrath. Soon it becomes evident that Sikiokuu and Machokali are master storytellers, and that this gift and not any capacity to actually govern is what has made them suitable for the high echelons of government.

Marching to Heaven is eventually scuttled because the West will not hand over the cash due to some prevailing shortcomings in the negotiations coupled with well organized resistance strategies from the Aburirian masses:

The letter was about ten lines. After reviewing the entire project, the Global Bank did not see any economic benefits to Marching to Heaven. To argue that the project would create jobs... was given seven days to come up with better facts and arguments for Global Bank to reconsider funding Marching to Heaven (485-486).

With the above statement from the officials of Global Bank, the dream of the Ruler, in building a super wonder is dashed. However, the Aburirians already have their own tower of babble, one that Sikiokuu, Machokali, and a cast of dozens more Aburirians are building every day. Theirs is a shaky edifice, haphazardly patched together with layer after layer of stones; it holds atop itself the whole of Aburiria. As the narrative takes Sikiokuu, Machokali, Kamiti, Nyawira, Kanirun, Tajirika etc. higher and higher, the country tips ever more precariously toward chaos and revolution, and finally, after a climatic showdown between the Ruler and the Wizard in alliance with the Movement for the Voice of the People, the tower crumbles to the ground. The narrative takes us through the first days of the new regime "democracy" which implies that the Aburirians are well on their way to erecting a new tower, but unfortunately not a more representative government.

Ngugi sees the act of storytelling as an allegory for the mechanisms of naked power and its attendant resistance which have held down his nation for so long, he also sees in it a potent engine for renewal. His emphasis on dynamic self-fashioning and cultural renewal, he has long conceived his own relationship to indigenous African forms, particularly storytelling, as a productive dialogue rather than a nostalgic embrace of tradition, complements the value placed on the quest for an authentic and resistance voice, whether individual or collective, that is at the heart of the novel's politics and morality. If the political angle of *Wizard of the Crow* is best displayed by the Ruler, Sikiokuu and Machokali, self-renewal is most manifest in the *Wizard of the Crow* (Kamiti), Vinjina and Tajirika (248, 261, 375, 490, 533, 601, 654, and 733).

When we first meet the Wizard, he is not the Wizard at all. He is Kamiti, a beggar lying half-dead on a trash heap:

He arrived not a minute too early. A rotation truck full of garbage had just pulled up at the foot of the trash mountain. He was about to reenter his body but he held himself in check and floated a bit longer to see what they would do with his shell (39).

After dragging himself back to life he goes off in search of a job (despite his master's degree from a prestigious Indian University, he has been searching, for months), is humiliated by would-be employer, and decides to simply exist as a beggar. That night as stated earlier he inadvertently joins a group of political activists that are protesting Marching to Heaven by pretending to be beggars:

You mean you were there to beg for real? She asked, why, weren't you? Kamiti responded, puzzled...Nothing. Nothing, really. We oppose the Ruler's birthday cake and the Global Bank Mission of putting us in permanent debt trap. We must all oppose this business of marching to Heaven, by pretending to be poor and beggars. What is the connection between doing politics and donning rags...Politics involves choosing sides in the struggle for power. So on which side are you? (86-87).

Answer to this question is all that is needed for the self-renewal to be fully manifested. Before now he seems not to be interested in the politics of his country despite the fact that his ordeals are conditioned by bad public policies brought about by maladministration. When he regains his full political consciousness he decides to join the resistance group though at a spiritual level. This decision gives potency to the movement as they now operate from both spiritual and physical angles:

There is nothing for you to be sorry about” Kamiti said. “Since we parted I have been turning over what you and I talked about. ...You women of Eldares have shown the way. (265-266).

It is here that the self-renewal of Kamiti is completed. It is here also that the Wizard is born. This is further demonstrated in the following lines:

The problems of the country are ours. Nobody can alone. We cannot run away and leave the leave the affairs of the land to ogres and scorpions. This land is mine. This land is yours. This land is ours. Besides, in Aburiria, there is nowhere to run. As you’ve said, even these forests are threatened by the greed of those in power (208-209)

In order to frighten the police from looking for them in Nyawira’ s house, Kamiti and Nyawira now united in the struggle against bad governance develop wizardry act as part of their resistance strategies by putting threatening sign outside their house.

Rather than dissuade the police, this sign attracts Officer Arigaigai Gather (who is the master storyteller in the novel), who wants the Wizard to use his powers to help him advance in the police force. When he arrives, A.G. (as he is referred to in the novel) is told to “stand in front of a small window” (113). It “looked liked that of a confessional in a Catholic Church (114). A.G is convinced the Wizard can help him, and the Wizard, still terrified of being discovered, just wants to get rid of him. He asks A.G. some suggestive questions, letting him do most of the talking, and A.G. confesses that he believes “there is a person whose shadow crosses” (116). If he could eliminate this shadow, he would be promoted. The wizard tells A.G. to bring him a mirror. “We need mirrors to see our shadows We need mirrors to see other people’s shadows crossing ours” (118) It is interesting to know how this kind of mere invention gets the attention of people in power This accounts for the frivolities that emanate from most state Houses across postcolonial African States:

It is not the love of science that brought me to your shrine” the man said with passion...What did the future of the country hold with these men at the helm? (151).

With this, A.G. promptly complies. Deeds define needs and the promptness with “which I executed his commands and wishes must have convinced him of my desperate need for a cure” (154). The Wizard tells A.G. to mentally focus on the image of his enemy; by doing that, he “will capture it in the mirror --- Once the image is captured in my mirror, I will take a sharp knife and scratch it, and from that moment on, your enemy will vanish forever” (156). At the end of the ceremony, A.G. “felt tears, but they were not tears of sorrow but of joy at having the burden of many years lifted from his heart” (119). It is worrisome to see how the minds of our so-called work in postcolonial African States.

The absurdities and frivolities are most alarming and this is the reason some writers have resorted to the use of magical realism to reflect the ugly situations across postcolonial African States. With this kind of mindset of our leaders and their utterly dependent on the West, Africa seems grounded and stranded as far as real development is concerned. Furthermore, this exchange encapsulates the way that self-discovery through storytelling works throughout *Wizard of the Crow*. The Wizard knows that he has no magic powers; if anything, he has potent capacity for seeing into the heart of his countrymen. He capitalizes on the stupidity and foolishness of the ruling class and takes his act of sorcery to even the state House and to New York. As with A.G., the Wizard works with “magic” by getting people to discover themselves and then speak what lies latent in their minds. The Wizard’s shrine looks like a confessional, but instead of asking people to confess their sins, the Wizard gets people to confess their deepest ideas of who they truly are. A shadow does cross A.G, but it is not the shadow of an enemy. it is the shadow of another A.G., the person that A.G. truly sees himself as and wants to become. The Wizard puts this shadow in the mirror so that from now on A.G. will see himself as he wants to be seen from that moment, despite the fact that what the Wizard applies is unreal and a farce, A.G. lives not as the old A.G., but as one who has been freed from his thoughts. He begins to tell himself new stories of the world, stories that coincide with this new A.G., and, unsurprisingly, he succeeds where he previously failed.

It is highly essential that the Wizard gets his patients which eventually include the Ruler himself, to speak their thoughts. At many points throughout the novel, characters (including the Wizard himself at one point as part of resistance strategies 669-670), become afflicted with an inability to speak. When this happens, their development becomes stalled; they are in a complete status, stuck in a world that continues to evolve around them:

Good. If you can hear, you will certainly be able to talk. Don't worry. There is a strange illness in the land. It is a malady of words; thoughts get stuck inside a person. You have seen stutterers, haven't you? Their stammer is a result of a sudden surge of thoughts, or calculations, or worry. Now I ask you: who has more worries than a head of state?...

But don't worry about putting your thoughts into words. What is important now is for the mind and heart to think and feel. (490)

Similarly, when Tajirika, (who at the end overthrows the Ruler in a palace coup and subsequently becomes an ogre neither being black nor white) a small-time businessmen with political connections, becomes chairman of Marching to Heaven, eager contractors line up outside his office and begin giving him business cards laced with bribes to carry favour in hopes that the Global Bank will approve loan for the project and they will get fat contracts. No sooner has Tajirika pulled three sacks of money home with him than he loses almost all ability to talk; he can only stare in the mirror and declare 'if' and 'if only' as he scratches at his skin. In a scene similar to A.G's, the Wizard gets Tajirika to speak with the aid of a mirror and reveals the source of his affliction. "White ache" and overwhelming desire to be white.

In an interview with Kwadwo Osei-Nyame in 2007, Ngugi has this to say as regards the concept of white-ache:

It is important to change, at least question these signifies. Regarding 'white-ache' my view was that the African bourgeoisie as a whole suffers from white-ache as described by Fanon in his *The Wretched of the Earth*. Fanon sees the African bourgeoisie as having a kind of incurable wish for identification with the worst aspects of the Western bourgeoisie, or the decadent ways of the Western bourgeoisie. That is how I saw white-ache. In those terms of a class that identifies with the Western bourgeoisie but with the worst aspects of the bourgeoisie. (29)

Tajirika is temporarily "cured" when he vomits up the words stuck in his throat: "if only I was white" it goes further thus:



Daemons of Whiteness took possession of your husband the night he brought home these three bags of money He suddenly realized that at the rate the money was coming in he would end up being the richest man in Africa...Do you now see the danger of words that want to come out but are unable to do so? (175-180).

When he becomes the Head of State after the palace coup, he changes almost everything including his name to reflect this desire to be white:

The climax of Tajirika ascension to power came when he addressed the nation as Emperor Titus Flavius Vespasianus Whitehead and pronounced the end of Baby D. a new era of imperial democracy had dawned, he said, and ordered the construction of a modern coliseum on the once earmarked for marching to heaven. (754)

Ngugi probably presents this as a moment of momentous self-discovery, up till then, even Tajirika did not realize that he had “white ache’ It only becomes real for him when he speaks it into being and then how does the Wizard get Tajirika to momentarily relinquish his desire to be white? He and Tajirika collaborate on a story in which they envision what the white Tajirika would be like. They quickly turn into cautionary tale, as the white Tajirika is left as a destitute Englishman. The story of this possible future contains such power that it frightens Tajirika and his wife of their desire to be white

Your white English destiny is as a homeless ex-colonial couple living solely on the memories of what used to be. Now, how soon would you like to achieve your white destiny? No! No! Tajirika and Vinjinia shouted, opening their eyes in fright. “Black is beautiful. Give us back our blackness”, they moaned, as if; the Wizard of the crow had already shorn them of it. (188).

Although the *Wizard of the Crow* helps many characters realize and renew themselves through storytelling, the Wizard himself remains the novel’s best and most thoroughly realized example of the quest for one’s own true voice. When the Wizard first starts as Kamiti, he is undergoing a period of intense self-doubt: was he wrong to get his university degrees and look for a career? Perhaps so, as he gives up the job search for life as a beggar; Kamiti then becomes the Wizard adding nuances to his new self, each time he counsels a patient, but even then he is not complete.

As this mammoth tale unwinds before us, Kamiti becomes discontented with his role as the Wizard and re-envisioned and recreates himself once again, this time as a hermit in the countryside. Eventually returns to being the Wizard, and as he suffers more ups and downs, he adds new layers to this story of himself. He continues to evolve, and by the end of *Wizard of the Crow*, the Wizard is a very complex character with a very complex story, whose characterization and contributions give great quality and impetus to the overall resistance strategy to the novel.

The Wizard evolution from a passive to a very active revolutionary figure, exemplifies what is possibly the novel's greatest innovation: the zigzagging paths that each of the main characters take through the novel. Back and forth, these narratives pass whole-cloth from black to white, development to counter-development, and occasionally they intersect. What emerges from these very coarse developments are very nuanced, conflicted characters, a morality and a vision of the world that is deep and troublesome because it feels so true. In this novel, Ngugi has perfected in *Wizard of the Crow* an act of radical simplicity, of sharply defined conflicts that, paradoxically, is less reductive than ostensibly more nuanced accounts of Africa proffered by historians and political analysts in which he (Ngugi) is an authority.

## **Conclusion**

We seem to agree with Ngugi's belief in the supremacy of historical change and the use of narrative as a tool for ordering and shaping history which is highly evident in the novel studied in this essay. Ngugi's novels seem to conform to a carefully drawn scheme based on Marx's theory of historical evolution. He has consistently traced the history of his characters in the novel studied back to their origin and moving through the colonial and postcolonial periods to a projected future society of equal opportunities for all Kenyan citizens and all Africans as reflected in *Wizard of the Crow*. His attitude is socialist in nature and he has not disguised his hostile opposition to the present order in society. His art is not the type which only mirrors society to produce what socialist writers and critics would refer to as ossified or decadent social forms" since such art would imply stasis. Socialist critics would consider his novels; especially the one studied in this essay, genuine art because it is "dialectical" and strives to transcend a mere "recording of reality by organizing the emotions through artistically creating novels which serve a higher, future purpose". (Swingewood 1995:92). In this regard, Ngugi is a kind of "psycho-engineer" or "psycho builder" who actively helps the proletariat understand their situation better and strive to change it. He not only describes the situation but also prescribes remedies for the situation.

We have equally argued in this essay that Ngugi's recourse to allegory could be traced principally to the state of fragmentation engendered by the political paralysis after the struggle for independence was over, if at all and indeed, to the fact that Ngugi as a writer of political praxis and activism, has suffered a lot at the hands of the two successive regimes in Kenya after independence. He was detained without trial for one year and has spent close to three decades in exile with no hope of returning to Kenya again with the bitter experience of his brief return in 2004 still afresh.

Ngugi's commitment does not end in his novels. He conforms to Maria Vargas Llosa's expectations of a truly committed writer," to be an artist, only an artist, can become, in our countries of Third World a kind of moral crime, a political sin" (Llosa, 1970:8)

Recent events like the current political impasse in Kenya and North African countries show that the day of oppressive regimes in Africa are numbered as a result of people's resistance culture. Even without Ngugi the growth of consciousness, which his writings and other social forces have so far engendered, will continue to motivate the people to resist their government's oppressive policies. So long as he is able to write he will continue to expose the betrayal of the people's aspirations, the failure of the leadership in Africa, and the general corruption in the African societies and calling on the masses to rise in resisting all these social maladies.

The essay is also of the opinion that the middle class should rise up and align itself with the struggle. The peasants should not be the only people struggling for a new order and a new society. The middle class condescending disposition to the struggle is not good for African advancement and development. It (the middle class) should put at its people's disposal the intellectual and technical capital that they have acquired when going through the colonial universities as exemplified by Kamiti and Nyawira. This is so considering the fact that with the kind of knowledge they have, they will be in better position to understand the intricacies in the politics of resistance and therefore provide the intellectual manpower, which are evidently lacking among the masses. This need is evidently seen in the novel studied in this essay. The intellectual powers of *Wizard of the Crow* (Kamiti), Nyawira, etc. go a long way in advancing the struggle. However, their shortcomings or weakness arises from the fact that they lack adequate supports (if there is any) from the middle class who have the penchant of staying aloof in the time of national crisis.

They should therefore, abandoned their ambivalent and opportunistic position and identify with the yearnings and aspirations of the peasants towards a better future. This is so, because their assumed intention of wanting to aspire to the level of the ruling class will inevitably become a mirage. The facts remain that the middle class is the only unstable class in the history of the world. The ruling class will always use and dump them.

From what we have said so far, it is evidently clear that most of the problems facing African continent have strong rooting in the relationship between the leaders and their imperial lords in the West.

In *Wizard of the Crow*, Ngugi continues with his position on what should be the role of the masses in opposing tyrannical rules in the continent. For the first time in his entire literary career Ngugi gives a broader setting to reflect what is common to many African states as opposed to his customary Kenyan settings. In the introduction to this essay we discuss how many governments across Africa have delegated their responsibilities and duties to foreign donors and NGOs. This is made evident in *Wizard of the Crow* where major projects of the government rely solely on the approval of financial institutions from the West. Their (West) interest is the first consideration before the masses' interest. The opposition to this postcolonial or neo-colonial system is what we have traced in this paper, which makes it convenient for us to align ourselves with the position of Ngugi over the years. His call for total opposition and resistance against neo colonial system has been given great credence considering the recent political upheavals in his native country Kenya. As a result of people's resolve to fight for their right in what has been termed globally as "Kenyan Option", constitution amendment was made possible forcing the tyrannical government to cede power to the opposition. This has greatly justified our position in this essay and the approach of total resistance against oppression regimes in Africa. Kenya's example has therefore served as frontier for other oppressed masses across Africa, that they will achieve what was achieved though belated, if they can rise up and challenge the status quo. This is exactly what happens in *Wizard of the Crow* where the masses directly and indirectly frustrate government oppressive policies and thereby causing a change of government despite the fact that it is also belated, we therefore believe that, African total emancipation is and should be a gradual process. The paper therefore, concludes that for Africa to experience the bliss of political, economic and social stability Ngugi's efforts and viewpoints on what should be true position and nature of the resistance culture of the peasants must be appreciated and embraced.

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