THE PROTEST OF NGUGI WA THIONG'O:

IN SEARCH OF UHURU

A Thesis

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Master of Arts

by

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The Ohio State University

1984

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the children of the world, who are the foundation of society and our hope for the future. The world could and would be a different place to live if as adults we would learn to change our ideas as easily as children can. It is, therefore, in the interest of world peace that we teach our children to accept constructive criticism and reflect on the past, in order to avoid the perpetuation of injustices, prejudices and myths in the present and future. Perhaps, then, future generations will be able to live without our mistakes, rather than with them.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis is the result of the political growth and re-evaluation that I have experienced during my years as a student at The Ohio State University. The resultant product, represented in this thesis, is due to the advice and encouragement I have received from faculty, staff and students while a graduate student in the Department of Black Studies. Without that experience and their guidance, it would have been much more difficult to overcome and acknowledge my "veils" of blindness imposed by socialization in a racist society.

I am most grateful to my adviser, Isaac James Mowoe, for his critical analysis and meticulous demands on content as well as grammar. I have learned to be almost as critical of my own work, by anticipating his comments. I also owe a great deal of thanks to William E. Nelson, Jr., Chairman of the Black Studies Department, for his material and political support of this project. I am especially thankful to Ms. Jackie Hosely for her assistance and encouragement which are the main reasons for the completion of the final draft.

Finally, I must thank Chacha Nyagotti Chacha and Rocha Chimera for their comments and advice during our long discussions in Kenya last summer, and my friend and mentor, Umbisa Gusa, who has helped my political ideas and criticisms grow more than anyone in my life. And, lastly, I am grateful to my daughter, Laura Howe, who has helped me grow and change in more ways, at times, than I have wanted.
I thank her for her patience and insight when I am contradictory or hypocritical. Her criticisms have stimulated me to re-evaluate myself and my ideas.
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...literature cannot escape from the class power structures that shape our everyday life. Here a writer has no choice. Whether or not he is aware of it, his works reflect one or more aspects of the intense economic, political, cultural and ideological struggles in a society. What he can choose is one or the other side in the battle field: the side of the people, or the side of those social forces and classes that try to keep the people down. What he or she cannot do is to remain neutral. Every writer is a writer in politics. The only question is what and whose politics?

Ngugi wa Thiong'o

INTRODUCTION

The topic of protest is one that creates different images in people's minds. Some societies stress conformity more so than others, so that even mild protest, i.e. criticism, is not tolerated by the culture. Other cultures, though, have found ways of accepting criticism but are unable to tolerate a more aggressive type of protest, such as strikes or boycotts. At any rate, protest is a real phenomenon of society and culture. In this study, protest will be discussed in relation to the African novel, as revealed in the writings of Kenya's Ngugi wa Thiong'o. Since the first Europeans arrived on the African continent with the intention of destruction and control, protest has been an integral part of colonial reality and has taken many forms. For Ngugi, the pen is the main avenue of protest.
The literature, though, does not always treat African protest as legitimate. It is sometimes referred to as spontaneous or irrational action. This is partially a carry-over from the past when Africans were labeled "uncivilized" and "primitive" and, subsequently many protests are negatively viewed as guerilla or terrorist activity. For instance, during the 1950s' Mau Mau struggle in Kenya the British accused the Kenyan freedom fighters of terrorism, even though the British themselves were responsible for thousands of deaths. African protest activity disturbs the colonizers because it not only challenges colonial mythology but it threatens the institution of colonialism itself. It seems to stimulate a response from the non-African that is triggered by a lingering image of the "savage" native. This image tends to inhibit understanding and creates a paradox. On the one hand, the colonizers assume an underlying notion of African inferiority and, on the other hand, the African assumes that the notion ends with the acceptance of European ways, i.e. Christianity, Western schools, clothes, food, politics, etc.*

Even after independence, these negative images of African continue to pervade the European perspective. A possible scenario

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*For the purposes of this study, the term "European" refers not only to the continental Europeans but those in diaspora as well, i.e. Euro-Americans, Euro-Australians, etc., those people who can trace their ancestry to western Europe. In addition, the terms "black" and "white" are not used in reference to people, instead the area of descent or origin of a person's birth is used.
for this is that the colonizers remain in a dominant position in world politics and economics and, therefore, have not changed (or needed to change) their interpretation of Africans. The myths that legitimised slavery and colonialism are still in operation as the colonizers deal with their now independent colonies. This also partly explains the misunderstanding between different people in countries like the U.S. and South Africa where racism is practised. Perhaps, a dominant culture does not necessarily change unless it is forced to do so, either by internal or external forces. And, except for superficial changes in the legal systems, these basic attitudes in European cultures have not changed. According to Ngugi, the European uses racism as a scapegoat - a means to ignore problems: "To create a religion of skin colour is to despair of a solution for social injustice."¹

Protest is a real and serious statement about society and the works of Ngugi are a testament to that. There are various forms it may take - the novel is only one of them. Ngugi's statements are a continuation of earlier opposition that began when the first African was forced from the continent into slavery. As mentioned above, protest may be mild or aggressive, i.e. criticism or strikes. That is, it may be active or passive, constructive or destructive. It may be expressed through theft, murder, suicide, banditry, song, music, writing, talking, not-talking, not-writing, etc., etc. In relation to colonialism, protest is a cry for liberation from oppression. It is the mind's and/or body's demand for freedom from outside restraints. In independence struggles, it is the search for
an alternative to the repressive social, political, and economic conditions imposed by colonial powers.

The aim of colonialism was to dominate and control the African continent. It consisted of calculated methods of control through overt and covert or subtle means. Religion, education, and physical administration were used to capture the African mind and body. According to Ngugi, "the colonizing power tries to control the cultural environment" of a people, in order to make it easier to control their land and its products.\(^2\) History reveals that the colonizers used any means necessary, from theft to genocide, to get what they wanted. There are many examples of this experience with Europeans who decided to settle permanently outside of Europe, i.e. U.S., Australia, Cuba, Kenya, Canada, South Africa, etc. Walter Rodney explains that,

Colonialism was not merely a system of exploitation, but one whose essential purpose was to repatriate the profits to the so-called mother country.... It meant the development of Europe as part of the same dialectical process in which Africa was underdeveloped.\(^3\)

It is a relationship of exploitation and the colonizer wants that relationship to remain, permanently. This is ensured through a process of institutionalizing exploitation, making it an integral part of the culture.

The educational systems of the Europeans in Africa helped "to nurture a dependent native middle class, sharing the values of exploitation, to take positions of influence after constitutional independence."\(^4\) Education was geared toward making the African
dependent on Europe, not only economically and spiritually, but intellectually as well. All the while, the true exploitative motives were camouflaged with prayers, school certificates, administrative jobs, laws, etc. The ruling elite (business and government) concerns itself with its profits, this was the case in 1884 at the Berlin Conference and it is the same 100 years later.

One writer in 1946 exclaimed:

> Are wars of aggression, wars for the conquest of colonies, then just big business? Yes. It would seem so however the perpetration of such national crimes seek to hide their true purpose under the banner of high sounding distractions and ideals. They make wars to capture markets by murder, raw materials by rape. They find it cheaper to steal than to exchange; easier to butcher than to buy. This is the secret of (all bourgeois colonial) wars. Profit. Blood. Money.

In order to understand Ngugi's protest against colonialism, one needs an understanding of the mechanisms of control, for colonization of a mind can be as deadly (and costly) as physical colonization. According to Kwame Nkrumah:

> The social effects of colonialism are more insidious than the political and economic. This is because they go deep into the minds of the people and therefore take longer to eradicate. The Europeans relegated us to the position of inferiors in every respect of our everyday life. Many of our people came to accept the view that we were an inferior people. It was only when the validity of that concept was questioned that the stirrings of revolt began and the whole structure of colonial rule came under attack.

Before examining Ngugi's attack on colonial rule as expressed in his writings, the following discussion will first review some of the effects and the nature of colonial education in Africa. An
understanding of educational systems helps explain why some people accept or internalize the view of African inferiority, as Nkrumah noted in the above passage. Following the presentation of background information, the main body of this study will address some of the major issues raised by Ngugi in his novels, plays, and short stories. This includes an investigation of specific writings with clarification of various issues or themes by several literary critics. The examination concludes with an analysis of some criticisms of African writers which reflects anti-African/colonial attitudes. These critics' perspective encompasses inferiority-superiority myths, for example, and further complements a major purpose for this study: exposure of racism that manifests itself subtlety in European attitudes toward people of African descent. The ramifications of these attitudes are expressed in actions as well as intellectual criticisms of African literature, politics, customs, religions, etc.

Finally, the main goal behind this analysis of Ngugi's writings is to assist the European student in understanding the political and social atmosphere of Kenya and colonial history in general. Furthermore, the aim is toward "partial emancipation" from cultural restrictions imposed by socialization that prevent the student from discussing or viewing Africa and Africans, in general, objectively. Through liberation from these cultural restraints in relation to the concept of "Africa," the student is able, then, to analyze and/or criticize history, colonial or otherwise, without the confines of defensiveness. As noted in the discussion on "criticism
of the African novelist," some of the disapproval of African writing exists because of a European tendency to defend rather than criticize the past, whether good or bad. Therefore, in the context of the African writer who criticizes European activities and/or history in Africa, that writer is often discredited by European academic communities because of those criticisms. This, in turn, distracts from a scholarly exchange of ideas. The ultimate objective of this study, then, is to overcome the short-sightedness of cultural barriers and promote understanding between people, African and European, by providing background information and a glimpse at the insight of Ngugi wa Thiong'o.
COLONIAL EDUCATION AND AFRICAN LITERATURE

The educational systems of different countries vary in their techniques and emphasis, as well as in the information they disseminate. Educational systems are used to spread ideas and information; they are, thus, systems of propaganda (positive and/or negative). In relation to the dissemination of ideas and information, propaganda is defined as: "the spreading of ideas, information, or rumor for the purpose of helping or injuring an institution, a cause, or a person;" and to educate is simply, "to provide schooling for." Propaganda is usually given a negative connotation but, according to this definition, it applies to any system that relays and deciphers specific information to subsequent generations. This applies also to educational systems used in the colonial process in Africa. Europeans used their schools to transmit specific information to the Africans in order to maintain European control. This was a subtle method of control and major instrument of cultural imperialism. Frantz Fanon claimed that the intention was:

...to convince the natives that colonialism came to lighten their darkness... to drive into the natives' heads the idea that if the settlers were to leave they would at once fall back into barbarism, degradation, and bestiality.

Colonial education systems used teaching methods and literature from Europe. This literature depicts a European view of the world and also represents the culture transmitted to the young generations in the colonial schools. In an article on literature, Ngugi states that "education is 'a mirror unto' a people's social being," but
colonial education distorted the image of the African social being: "The price we pay for these Eurocentric studies of ourselves is the total distortion and misplacement of values of national liberation, making us continue to be slaves to imperialism." Ngugi further elaborates that,

...in books by liberal Europeans, the African character held for admiration and presented as worthy of emulation is the non-violent spineless type, the type who turns the other cheek, the right cheek once the left cheek has been hit by a racist colonialist....

Through colonial institutions, education being only one, a colonial mentality is produced. Therefore, in the process of liberation from colonial rule, it becomes necessary to "decolonize" all facets of colonialism in order to release its control.

Independence in African countries brought an onslaught of decolonization programs. In many instances, though, educational systems overlooked the decolonization of their literature. Contemporary evidence, from Ngugi and others, indicates that the nature of colonial penetration into the psyche of the colonized necessitates the decolonization of all aspects of education. Literature, according to Ngugi, is more than a reflection of social reality, it shapes our attitudes to life, nature, the community and to the self:

It follows then that because of its social character, literature as a creative process and also as an end is conditioned by historical social forces and pressures: it cannot elect to stand above or to transcend economics, politics, class, race, or what Achebe calls "the burning issues of the day" because those very burning issues with which it deals take place within an
economical, political, class and race context. Again because of its social involvement, because of its thoroughly social character, literature is partisan: literature takes sides, and more so in a class society.

Therefore, the literature from Europe is partisan to Europe and reflects its class societies. In the decolonization of Africa, then, it follows that its literature should reflect African cultures, whether they are or are not class societies.

As stated earlier, in most cases the colonizers had no intention of relinquishing their hold over Africa. The results of this commitment, to maintaining European influence, are witnessed in the continued African dependency on the former colonizers, i.e. economic aid, military advisors, political and educational institutions, etc. In addition, colonial propaganda or education systems were not an advantage to the people of Africa, because they emphasized European values and experiences, not African. This is one colonial legacy with which African writers, such as Ngugi, are angry. David Cook and Michael Okenimkpe note an intense rejection of colonial suppression is reflected in Ngugi's works. They maintain this shows a desire to escape from:

...mental indoctrination, a process of conditioning, subduing or conquering the mind and, therefore, of altering the personality, of which colonial education was guilty: "The worst colonialism was a colonialism of the mind, a colonialism that undermined one's dignity and confidence." 12

Ngugi's assertion is that in order to effectively remove the colonial mentality from Africa the colonial institutions must also be removed. One method of this is through the "decolonization of
African literature" as proposed by Chinweizu, et al. They claim that African culture must liberate itself from foreign domination in order to destroy the "colonial mentality" and build a new base toward African modernity.\(^\text{13}\) A new base of education would be founded in the interest of Africans not Europeans, through the negation of imperialist culture. Furthermore, in their view, contemporary colonial control continues through cultural imperialism which in turn serves "neo-colonialism," a new form of colonialism disguised by independence. The continuation of European literature in African schools promotes European culture in African children and also is one indirect method of neo-colonial control.

As noted earlier, educational systems choose the information they want the following generations to believe; this information, in turn, reflects specific values and assumptions. Each society relays these values and assumptions in terms which are coherent and logical, given the assumptions of that society. Due to European ethnocentrism the validity of pre-existing African educational systems was rejected or not acknowledged at all. The colonial systems' underlying assumption was African traditions were "primitive" and "inferior," therefore, they sought to train Africans to serve the colonial powers and to inculcate non-African values. According to Mwalimu Nyerere, President of Tanzania:

It [colonialism] emphasized and encouraged the individualistic instincts of mankind, instead of his co-operative instincts. It led to the possession of individual material wealth being the major criterion of social merit and worth. This meant that colonial education induced
attitudes of human inequality and in practice underpinned the domination of the weak by the strong, especially in the economic field.

Thus, a major goal was to replace the traditional values of one society with those from another. This was a deliberate policy on the part of the colonizers which was not eradicated after their colonies became independent. The Africans were told they were "uncivilized," and this assertion was internalized by Europeans as well, but since African independence Europeans have not adopted policies to decolonize their perspective and assumptions as many Africans have done. Therefore, there is no sufficient evidence to indicate that European policies or attitudes toward Africans have or will change, simply because Africans are independent. The former colonial systems still require their own material wealth and power and continue to reflect this objective in their transactions. Historical experiences help formulate priorities and determine the prevailing message or dominant views that are relayed to the next generation. It is, therefore, important for the student of politics and history to scrutinize all available data with a critical eye, i.e. is the analysis a critique or a defense?

After independence, then, the responsibility for conditions in African countries appears to lie with Africans themselves. Leadership, government and people must face the responsibility of whether or not to permit the perpetuation of colonial policies. A similar example is that, if such decisions were left only to the masters then slavery, too, would still exist. It is not a matter of who is to blame (past atrocities are historical facts), but the
challenge is to accept responsibility and control in order to avoid the mistakes of the past, while building for the future. Ngugi believes,

...the African novelist, the African writer, can help in this struggle. But he must be committed on the side of the majority (as indeed he was during the anti-colonial struggle)....

He proposes "committed" writing because literature is just one aspect of the structure that organizes society. Each person is affected by the way society is organized, and a writer portrays that social reality. Literature does not develop in a vacuum, nor does the writer, but is shaped by the social, political, and economic realities of a particular society. Therefore, the committed writer has the responsibility, from Ngugi's perspective, to help in liberation from colonial oppression as long as it exists. He views the writer as a politician because of potential influence on the lives of others. David Cook further extrapolates on Ngugi's theme:

The committed artist lives by his vision of order, of design, of pattern. The socially conscious writer does not set to work in a vacuum, but urges his society from what it is towards what it might be.

The following analysis examines Ngugi's novels in an attempt to understand why he is protesting. This examination includes: an investigation of his first three novels: Weep Not, Child, The River Between, and A Grain of Wheat; an analysis of some Marxian views found in Petals of Blood; a brief sketch of a collection of short stories and four plays; and, finally, a discussion of two accounts
from prison, a diary and a novel: Detained and Devil on the Cross. Incorporated into the discussion are commentaries by various literary critics on aspects of Ngugi's style, thematic approach, plot formation, et. Ngugi's writings depict the realities of colonialism in Kenya, and allow the non-Kenyan student to relate to and better understand his message. In the process, the student re-evaluates his or her interpretation of history and moves toward liberation from preconceived cultural notions. Ngugi exposes colonialism and European traditions as alien and, in many instances, negative to Africa. The student of Ngugi's writings should not be intimidated by his style or his complaints, but bother to read his works in an effort to correct any misconceptions about Kenyan or colonial history, European presence in Africa, European attitudes toward Africans, etc. Elimination of ignorance will itself promote better understanding between people.
EARLY PROTEST AGAINST COLONIALISM

An examination of Ngugi's writings is a two-fold progression through history. One side, it depicts various phases of colonialism, while at the same time it reveals progressive stages of development in Ngugi's own political thought and writing style. As pointed out by G.D. Killam, Ngugi's novels overlap with three phases of imperialism in Africa: slavery, colonialism, and neo-colonialism. Beginning with his early works, Ngugi traces the impact of these periods in Kenya. In the process, the stories reflect a gradual clarity of focus in his perspective as to the extent of colonial intrusion. The later works reveal refinement as well as experimentation in writing and technique. Cook and Okenimkpe also analyze the growth of Ngugi's philosophy as occurring in three phases:

1) An early period, stretching to about the end of Makerere in 1964, when he evinces an essentially moralist-humanist outlook on human affairs, characterized by a firm hope for a better future.

2) An intermediate phase, embracing Leeds and his early teaching career, which is a period of maturing vision in which interests are narrowing down to... Mau Mau, capitalism, socialism, nationalism, etc.

3) The present time, marked by a corrosive disillusionment with the emerging social faces of independent Africa, particularly of his native country Kenya, and a bitter revulsion against an emerging African middle class.

Further investigation shows the relationship of these phases to the evolution of colonialism into the present era of neo-colonialism.
The early writings of Ngugi depict parallels between various themes that recur in the first three novels and the actual story of Kenya's history. *Weep Not, Child*, *The River Between*, and *A Grain of Wheat* all express protest against colonial rule in Kenya. They describe various stages in the struggle against colonialism. People are forced to comprehend the realities of European control: their land has been stolen, their traditions and values are being replaced with Europe's, and a sense of oneness with their environment is vanishing. The family and community can no longer function as in the past, because of outside intrusion. In these three narratives, colonial intervention is the cause, of the disintegration of society which leads to issues and reactions that are repeated in Ngugi's later works. This study concentrates on four major themes that reappear throughout the novels: land, unity, control, and hope.

There is a struggle to regain land, as the younger generations realize the extent of colonial theft. There is the theme of unity, people come together determined to fight to maintain their cultural traditions and land. And yet, colonialism is determined to maintain its control. Since it has established itself throughout society, its power remains even after it is physically expelled. It has instilled its religion and culture and even created hostility toward those who resist "Europeanization," which is generally equated with "civilization" or "modernization." Finally, in spite of such insurmountable odds, Ngugi offers hope for the future even though it is apparent recuperation from colonial control will not be easy.
These three stories repeat the struggle for "uhuru" (independence). They are a trilogy of Kenya's colonial experience. Weep Not, Child begins with the Mau Mau insurgency and subsequent "state of emergency" declared by the British. The River Between deals with confusion and mental anguish from two different cultures existing in the same space. Ime Ikiddeh refers to this as a story about the African's dilemma of being a "man of two worlds." Although The River Between was published after Weep Not, Child, it was actually written before it. Cook and Okenimkpe state that The River Between "centres on the struggle to free men's minds from the constraints of colonialism in preparation for the assertion of national integrity and individual human identity." Weep Not, Child then depicts the physical struggle against colonial control and for independence. A Grain of Wheat continues in the colonial story of Kenya but this novel deals with the conditions after the Mau Mau revolt and after independence from British rule. The experience is one of frustration and dissolutionment. During the revolution people's expectations rose with the hope of a better day, but A Grain of Wheat tells the story of frustration in their rising expectations. Colonialism is replaced by neo-colonialism as the new African elite betrays the struggle.

Before investigating Ngugi's specific references to the issues of land, unity, control, and hope, a brief synopsis of each story is outlined, in order to familiarize the reader with their basic plots. The first sequence in this trilogy begins with the conflicts that
develop in the contacts between two different cultural realities, as found in *The River Between*. The setting is a rural area in Gikuyu country where two mountain ridges are separated by a river. Joshua and other Christian converts live on one ridge, while Chege and the remaining adherants to Gikuyu traditions live on the other. Chege's son, Waiyaki, is a central character to the story; he provides insight to the novice student of colonial history. That is: "To understand Waiyaki better is to understand East Africa and its problems better."^22^ The story focuses on Waiyaki's mission: the salvation of traditions and the community. Chege believed that Waiyaki would be the people's "saviour," and relayed this to him in the form of a sacred duty for which he was responsible. Waiyaki's role is not fulfilled, though, because of his encounters with an opposition force, i.e. Christianity. Villagers who converted to the colonial religion oppose his attempts to unite the community when they discover his intentions to marry an uncircumcised woman, Nyambura. She and Muthoni are the daughters of Joshua. Due to his Christian beliefs, he forbids them to participate in the Gikuyu tradition of circumcision. This is also the main reason for dissent among the community, that is, the Christian converts scorn and deny their past traditions. Both sisters reject their father's wishes. Muthoni participates in the circumcision ceremony but dies as a result. Nyambura denies her father by loving Waiyaki, a non-Christian. The younger generation tries to incorporate Christianity into traditional beliefs but the older generation, i.e. Joshua, views the two systems as incompatible. The river continues
to flow between the two ridges, but a barrier still separates the
two communities.

The next episode in Ngugi's early writing era, and in Kenya's
colonial history, deals with the struggle for independence from
colonial rule. **Weep Not, Child** illustrates the day-to-day tragedies
of one family struggling to stay alive in a "state of emergency,"
declared during the fight for independence. Njoroge goes to school
to become educated like the son of the rich farmer, Jacobo. He and
his family see education as the key to the future. He wants to
escape the conditions of his father. Ngotho, Njoroge's father,
works for Mr. Howlands, a British settler, and both men possess a
powerful love for the land they have both farmed. Njoroge's life
runs smoothly at school until the arrest of Jomo Kenyatta. Then,
the Mau Mau struggle for independence takes on a different mood and
one day Ngotho is arrested and tortured. Njoroge's brothers leave
to go to the big city or to join the freedom fighters in the forest.
Gradually all the family is affected by the war and life becomes a
day-to-day struggle that remains unresolved at the end of the story.

In the final account of his early series of writings, Ngugi
writes about Kenya on the verge of independence, Kenyans and British
settlers both pause to re-examine their lives. **A Grain of Wheat**
captures the emotions and struggles of various individuals who are,
in one way or another, part of a wider struggle. Mugo and Gikonyo
were released from detention and return to their village as the
country enters a new era - independence. Their lives continue in
disarray for different reasons even under Kenyan rule. In this way,
Ngugi portrays the operations of neo-colonialism, which he elaborates in greater detail in his subsequent works. Mugo's life is confused because he carries the guilt of having betrayed a freedom fighter and friend, Kihika. This haunts him until the end of the story when he releases his burden and confesses his crime to the whole village. Gikonyo and his wife, Mumbi, are burdened with other problems. Mumbi had another man's child while Gikonyo was in prison and he cannot adjust to or accept it. She was seduced by a childhood friend, Karanja, even though she had waited six years for Gikonyo to return. Karanja depicts the Kenyan elite who replace the British in official positions. He is dishonest and corrupt, insensitive to the masses and their needs. He exerts his power over Kenyans, in the tradition of the colonialists but cowers in the presence of Europeans, such as John Thompson. Finally, Gikonyo and Mumbi reach a mutual understanding and their marriage is saved. There is a spark of hope for the future as Gikonyo's anger turns to love and he envisions Mumbi pregnant with his child. Future generations will continue the struggle of their parents.

In *Weep Not, Child*, the frustration and futility of struggling to regain ancestral lands, stolen by the British, is expressed in these words by Njeri, Njoroge's mother:

The white man makes a law or a rule. Through that rule or law or what you may call it, he takes away the land and then imposes many laws on the people concerning that land and many other things, all without people agreeing first as in the old days of the tribe. Now a man rises and opposes that law which made right the taking away of land. Now that man is taken by the same people who made the laws against which
that man was fighting. He is tried under those alien rules.

Njoroge and Boro are brothers, and Boro has been involved with the freedom fighters. A young friend of Boro, and fellow freedom fighter, explains how their land was stolen with the aid of religion and violence: "Yes, that how your land was taken away. The Bible paved the way for the sword." This same explanation occurs later in *A Grain of Wheat*, as more people are converted to the foreign religion and turn away from their own and even mock their traditions. The elders protested, but behind the missionary they saw: "a long line of other red strangers who carried, not the Bible, but the sword." In all three novels the realization that they must reclaim their land motivates the young people to organize and fight for uhuru. This occurred to Boro in *Weep Not, Child* when he asked his father: "How can you continue working for a man who has taken your land? How can you go on serving him?" Ngotho, Boro and Njoroge's father, works on his family's ancestral land for Mr. Howlands, the present colonial owner. Ngotho's tradition is one of living in harmony with the land, he has a sense of oneness with it. Howlands' tradition is one of possession, he has a sense of conquering it. The colonial government rationalizes the settlement of foreign lands as their natural right because none of the local farmers, like Ngotho, could produce documents of "legal" ownership. Kihika, the people's hero in *A Grain of Wheat*, experiences similar frustration and anger to that of Boro. Before leaving his village to join those in the forest fighting for freedom, he realizes: "It is not politics, it is life. Is he a man who lets another take away
his land and freedom? Has a slave life? These young men feel their dignity, as well as their lives, are threatened.

The freedom fighters are seen as the answer to restoration of Kenya's land and humanity, which leads to an increasing sense of unity. Waiyaki's quest in *The River Between* inspired his realization of a "oneness" with the land:

> All at once he felt more forcefully than he had ever felt before the shame of a people's land being taken away, the shame of being forced to work on those lands, the humiliation of paying taxes for a government that you knew nothing about.

Their experiences and questions bring people together in order to devise plans for the struggle against the colonizers. Since childhood, Waiyaki had been designated by his father as one destined to save the people. It was not until adulthood, though, that he realizes the totality of his responsibility as a prophet and saviour. Ikiddeh emphasizes this as the main theme in the novel, which is a "prophetic message" of a Messiah coming to save the people. Cook and Okenimkpe recall that the first draft of *The River Between* was entitled *The Black Messiah*, verifying the importance of Waiyaki's mission.

In unifying their fight for uhuru, there were various ways in which the people were brought together. The organization of a political party was one aspect of their unity, it was a rallying point for action. By the "Eve of Uhuru" in *A Grain of Wheat*, the party seems to have always existed as the focus of their struggle. This changes, though, as the elders recall stories of earlier
freedom fighters, and the younger ones slowly realize the real struggle is for their land, not for the party:

...looking back we can see that Waiyaki's blood contained within it a seed, a grain, which gave birth to a political party whose main strength thereafter sprang from a bond with the soil. 31

The inspiration from knowing his connection to the land, gave Kihika the strength and courage to continue even in the face of insurmountable odds: "Because a people united in faith are stronger than the bomb. They shall not tremble or run away before the sword." 32 He admits to Mugo, his old friend, that he is afraid but he feels he is right in fighting. In their analysis of A Grain of Wheat, Cook and Okenimkpe assert that the intense characterization in the book makes it:

...not simply a social document but a social force. This is Ngugi's aim. It is this aim that justifies the complex patterning of time sequences and the juxtaposition of different scenes, with the intention of bringing home to us the connection between cause and effect, action and responsibility. With such a purpose in view, Ngugi felt understandably disappointed that barriers of language here restricted his potential audience so drastically. 33

The story was written in English and, thus, unable to reach the masses who could best identify with its message.

Colonial religion, i.e. Christianity, is also incorporated into the struggle for independence. For example, the actions of the British were contradictory to what they preached in their churches, but many African converts believed the true meaning behind the Bible was truth and hope. The African Christians, in Ngugi's books,
assume the settlers do not know how to extend "goodwill" to others; religion to them is something that they only talk about, not practice. Cook and Okenimkpe contend that Mugo and Kihika in _A Grain of Wheat_ interpret their role as messianic and endorsed by Christianity. The use of Biblical phrases and terms serves a different purpose in each novel. In _The River Between_, there is an acceptance of Christianity without its European bigotry. _Weep Not, Child_ deals with scepticism and rejection of Christianity, but in _A Grain of Wheat_ the Christian message is transformed into a political message for liberation.³⁴ Kihika compares the sacrifices of the freedom fighters to Jesus' crucifixion in the Bible:

> I've seen men piss on themselves and others laugh with madness at the prospect of a fight. And the animal groan of dying men is a terrible sound to hear. But a few shall die that the many shall live. That's what crucifixion means today.

Mugo, though, never understands the full meaning of the fight for freedom until the end of the story. He, then, confesses his betrayal of Kihika, the hero, and thus the reason for Kihika's death. The guilt of his action had haunted Mugo during his stay in prison and after his release, for he realized he had not only betrayed Kihika but himself and all the people of Kenya. His confession becomes an inspiration for self-reflection to others: "If Mugo leads us to contemplate the terrible possibilities within ourselves, then the novel will have effected change in us and will be an active ingredient in the struggle which Ngugi espouses."³⁶
Bu-Buakei Jabbi believes that there is clear evidence of "plot-thematic influences" from Joseph Conrad in Ngugi's *A Grain of Wheat*. He claims that it is the betrayal theme of Kihika by Mugo that reveals the greatest influence (from *Under Western Eyes*). In each story, the betrayer lacks parental love as a child and later leads a lonely adult life. This causes him to shrink from political and social responsibilities and focus primarily on personal success. It is the guilt of his betrayal that burdens Mugo throughout his life and prevents his success. In the end, the confession of his betrayal relieves him of the burden of non-commitment. This type of "humanism" dominates the novel Killam claims, rather than politics. Perhaps, this is due in part to another influence in Ngugi's past: "When I am reading D.H. Lawrence, I feel the spirituality of things very near to me as if I am touching the very spirit of things."

In order to maintain the theme of unity, there is in Ngugi's writings a message from the elders that seeks to remind the young of their union with their ancestors and their own indigenous customs. Chege, a well-known elder in *The River Between*, passes this advice to his son, Waiyaki, in a sacred grove away from their village:

> Go to the Mission place. Learn all the wisdom and all the secrets of the white man. But do not follow his vices. Be true to your people and the ancient rites.

Waiyaki learns, though, that it is not easy to learn foreign ways and maintain his own traditions at the same time. In fact, throughout Ngugi's stories it is difficult for the people to maintain traditional ways, as efforts by the colonizers work against unity.
For instance, the stability of society is undermined by disintegration of the family structure. This occurs in *Weep Not, Child* to Ngotho who becomes weaker and weaker as he is confronted day and night with humiliation. Also the father of Njoroge and Boro, he has experienced the theft of his land and the insult of having to work on that same land for a foreign owner, Howlands. In Njoroge's culture, many people believed "if you have a stable center, then the family will hold." But the colonizers also knew this, so they did all they could to destroy or destabilize that center in order to increase their power and control. Howlands, finally, becomes obsessed with the idea of killing Ngotho in order to obtain full possession of his land, and thereby undermine the security of Ngotho's family at the same time.

Waiyaki is another figure, like Kihika and Boro, who also struggles to understand the totality of their dilemma and the importance of tradition in unifying the people. In *The River Between*, he learns that traditions, such as circumcision, can be an element of union as well as separation. For Waiyaki and Muthoni, two lovers, circumcision is not an issue in their love for one another, but it is for the community and for Muthoni's Christian father, Jacobo. He had forbidden his daughters to participate in the "rites-of-passage" held in their village. Muthoni chooses circumcision, though, as an expression of her womanhood and in spite of her father's orders. Following the ceremony, her incision becomes infected and she dies which her father interprets as the will of his Christian god, because in his eyes she had turned to the
devil. Chege, a follower of tradition, sees the example of Muthoni as proof to stay with tradition. Muthoni herself as she is dying, asks Waiyaki to tell her sister, Nyambura: "I see Jesus. And I am a woman beautiful in the tribe...."

She felt she could incorporate her traditions with her Christian beliefs. Waiyaki's community later rejects him when they learn of his intentions to marry an uncircumcised woman, Nyambura. His efforts to unite the people are destroyed by their adherance to tradition.

Lloyd Williams claims that Muthoni experienced a revelation through her circumcision: "Muthoni said she had seen Jesus. She had done so by going back to the tribe, by marrying the rituals of the tribe with Christ." He further notes that, Muthoni needs religion although she realizes that Christianity must come to her through her people's customs and way of life. The Honia River is symbolic in this act of uniting the two religions, "and it is itself the symbol of that unity," i.e. a river flowing between and yet uniting the people and land around it. On the other hand, though, it is also representative of a barrier between the people. The river separates two ridges. On one side (Makuyu), live Joshua and other Christians, and on the other ridge (Kamen), live Chege and followers of Gikuyu traditions. The river, then, can be seen as a force that also keeps the two sides from uniting. In another discussion, Ikiddeh adds that Ngugi uses the symbol of both Christian and Gikuyu myths in order to unite the people: "There is a close similarity between the myths of Gikuyu and Mumbi, and Adam and Eve (or Abraham and Sarah)." In spite of the efforts at
unity, many people are confused and remain alienated from each other while society continues to be in transition and turmoil.

In his writings, Ngugi analyzes the efforts by the colonizers to control Africa. Administrators, educators and missionaries attempted to transform the British colonies into one empire. They imposed their culture in order to alter existing political, social, and cultural environments. The results of this are seen in Africa today, with the adoption of many European values and customs, political institutions, languages, Christianity, etc. The earlier dependency relationship has not been broken. The settlers in Ngugi's books further rationalize their domination with erroneous claims of African inferiority and the common colonial practice of equating "African" with such terms as "uncivilized," "primitive," "savage," etc. As they continue to exert their control, the settlers seem to gain a sort of internal satisfaction in watching African societies fall apart. All the colonial administrators in Ngugi's stories express the same arrogance as Howlands in _Weep Not, Child_. He engineers plans to maintain his control because even the Africans that he works closely with, he secretly hates. For instance,

...[he] despised Jacobo because he was a savage. But he would use him. The very ability to set these people fighting among themselves instead of fighting with the white men gave him an amused satisfaction.

From Howlands' perspective, if Africans fight each other, they are distracted from the colonialists. This is indicative of the extremes in colonial manipulation to maintain control.
Ikiddeh contends that *A Grain of Wheat* is a reaction to the colonial grip on Kenya and a call for social justice. It is an appeal for unity to end colonial control:

More than just a horrifying story of suffering in the fight for independence, *A Grain of Wheat* is a protest against what many fighters see as the lack of reward in independent Kenya. Their claim lies in their suffering.\(^{46}\)

W.J. Howard criticizes Ngugi's depiction of Howlands as sensationalistic and exaggerated:

Even if certain men are capable of the cruelty described, pincers and all, that "the red beard and grey eyes laughed derisively" when Howlands walked out after torturing Njoroge seems bordering on grade B Hollywood theatrics, and is unworthy of Ngugi. It is the gesture of a villain of melodrama and should have been edited.\(^{47}\)

Howard seems to misinterpret Ngugi's characterization of Howlands. Furthermore, he misses the point of Howlands' nature: "The character who had formerly been presented quite simply as loving the land and worried about the strike has become a childbeater and castrator...."\(^{48}\) Howard's reaction is short-sighted because Howlands might have loved the land but he did not love the people on it. He never loved the Kenyans who worked for him, he tolerated them but did not treat them as equals. Howard's defensive reaction to Ngugi's negative picture of colonial settlers is characteristic of a European who cannot accept criticism. Further investigation of the colonial era supports Ngugi's depiction of European behaviour in Kenya. The Howlands did exist, and many Kenyans can testify to similar examples. In spite of their "love" for the land, the
colonialists inflicted many Howlands-like atrocities on Kenyans. Chinweizu, et al., assert that Howard's discomfort with Howlands shows the success of Ngugi's technique:

"It is, perhaps, because, according to one strand of imperialist mythology, Africans are expected to be "noble savages" - all forgiving patient, all-enduring, and loving of our enemies? The insolence of these Europeans seems to know no limit! They not only steal our Land and Liberty, but they also expect us to love them!"

The introduction of Christianity was very important in the colonial process and is observable in the continuing effects of Christianity on Kenyan traditions. For as Mr. Thompson, a colonial agent in *A Grain of Wheat*, declares: "To administer a people is to administer a soul."§0 Jacobo's actions and comments in *The River Between* are also an example of the collaboration of Christianity with colonialism. He is a converted Christian who preaches salvation to his fellow Kenyans, and even tells his circumcised wife, "I wish you had not gone through this rite[!]."§1 He wishes she had not been part of their traditional culture even though they were both circumcised before they became Christians. Ngugi believes the difficulties in Kenya stem, in part, from the contradictions inherent in colonial and Christian institutions. The Christian doctrine of love and equality supported and helped build a system of "inequality and hatred between men and the consequent subjugation of the black race by the white race."§2 Contradictions were noticeable in the inseparability of Christian values from European customs:

The evidence that you were saved was not whether you were a believer in and follower of Christ, and accepted all men as equal: the measure of
your Christian love and charity was in preserving the outer signs and symbols of a European way of life; whether you dressed as Europeans did, whether you had acquired European good manners, liked European hymns and tunes, and of course whether you had refused to have your daughter circumcised.

Govind Sharma, contrary to the above argument by Jabbi, claims that the real theme in *A Grain of Wheat* is rebirth and regeneration not betrayal. He views the Christian myth as the basic framework of this story, but adds that Ngugi "offers his own interpretation of Christianity."\(^{54}\) In addition, its incorporation into African culture is seen elsewhere in Ngugi's novels. In some instances, it is an attempt to adapt the religion to African experiences and values, not in the form presented by the colonialists. In Sharma's view, the Christian myth dominates Ngugi's use of image and symbol throughout *A Grain of Wheat*. He believes that repeated Biblical references and analogies are an example of the strong Christian impact in Kenya. The main Biblical passage and theme for the entire story is cited:

> The seed you sow does not come to life unless it first died; and what you sow is not the body that shall be, but a naked grain, perhaps of wheat, or of some other kind.... [Corinthians 15:35-36]

Sharma also adds that Christianity is not contradictory in the colonial context because it does not condemn the use of violence. He quotes Ngugi in this regard: "if Christ had lived in Kenya in 1952... he would have been crucified as a Mau Mau terrorist."\(^{55}\) There are many examples of violence in the Bible especially the Old
Testament. Perhaps, this is indicative of an element in the Christian culture which propagated European hostility to others. The Bible documents instances of people forced from their homes and their culture destroyed, similar to the colonial experiences in Africa:

You shall therefore keep all my statutes and ordinances, and do them; that the land where I am bringing you to dwell may not vomit you out. And you shall not walk in the customs of the nation which I am casting out before you; for they did all these things, and therefore I abhorred them. But I have said to you, "You shall inherit their land, and I will give it to you to possess, a land flowing with milk and honey." I am the Lord your God, who have separated you from the peoples. You shall therefore make a distinction between the clean beast and the unclean.... A man or a woman who is a medium or a wizard shall be put to death; they shall be stoned with stones, their blood shall be upon them. [Leviticus 20:22-27]

According to Mina Davis Caulfield, the violent element in European culture is related to the ideologies of "white supremacy" and "cultural superiority." She maintains these are cultural expressions: "parts of a cultural value system and important items in the cultural self-identification of West Europeans and North Americans."\(^56\) Her thesis stems from an anthropological perspective which views colonialism as part of "the underlying form of exploitation under imperialism," not "of class over class, but rather culture over culture." European culture operated through various instruments of control, i.e. religion, education, political institutions, "colonialism was literally at times an act of social surgery."\(^57\)
Further infiltration of colonial control is seen in the gradual replacement of African values for those from Europe. The young people complain in *Weep Not, Child* that the old people "have no learning" because they do not know English. And even these same old people feel a sense of pride when they hear their children speaking English, instead of their own indigenous language. At one point, there is a feeling of sadness, a sense of future doom, in Njoroge's first realization that he is ashamed of his native clothes:

> For a time, he was irresolute and hated himself for feeling as he did about the clothes he had on. Before he started school... he would never thought that he would ever be ashamed of the calico, the only dress he had ever known since birth.

All of these subtleties combined, worked to strip the Africans of their traditional identity and replaced it with European perceptions. Thus, many young Africans were taught and internalized notions of their "inferiority." It was, according to Ngugi, a deliberate and calculated plan for permanent control. Similar situations occur in *The River Between* with Waiyaki's education. His father doubts the wisdom of sending him to Siriana school after Muthoni's death, maybe he too will be punished for not following tradition. Waiyaki also senses his own alienation from tradition at an initiation ceremony. After being away at school, he is not familiar with the dances and songs as the others are. Education as an instrument of enlightenment is questioned. Chege wonders if his son will be corrupted by Siriana because they are teaching him European ways not Gikuyu.
Another thread that runs through these three novels by Ngugi, is the theme of hope. It is not always prevalent, though, because of the gloom and despair that permeates the lives of the characters. The aim of the revolution is not always clear, but through the efforts of a few dedicated leaders, the heroes and heroines of the stories, the goal is periodically clarified: to end injustice, suffering and exploitation inflicted on the masses. In Weep Not, Child, Njoroge loses the visions from his childhood dreams as he learns the reality of destruction, murder and theft directed at Kenyans. During the years of the Mau Mau war anyone could be accused, tortured and/or murdered at any time, by the British or the freedom fighters (who searched for Kenyan traitors who cooperated with the British). How can one hope in tomorrow when today is hell? In the case of Njoroge, he loses his father, his brothers, his sweetheart, the land, and almost his own life, but his mother saves him from committing suicide. She, like many of the women in Ngugi's novels, represents hope for the future.

In The River Between, a similar situation occurs. Hope in the future is slowly shattered not only by the continued presence of the British, but also by ethnic and traditional values that clash among Kenyans themselves. In this story, Waiyaki's mission as the people's saviour is halted by ethnicity. His father, Chege, tells him he will fulfill this prophecy by acquiring foreign education and later becoming the local teacher. Only after his father's death does Waiyaki realize the meaning of the prophecy, and so, he attempts to fulfill his father's wishes. He speaks to the people of
unity and the return of their land and traditions. He was their saviour, their guiding light, until they discovered his love for an uncircumcised woman, Nyambura. Their beliefs (on circumcision) blind them, and they label him a traitor (for loving outside their ethnic scope). They reject their saviour and, thus, turn their backs on hope. That hope is revived, though, in *A Grain of Wheat*. After release from detention on "Uhuru day," the men return and grapple with readjustment. It is difficult for Mugo to lead a normal life, he is haunted by the memories of prison and the guilt of betraying Kihika. This is a story of struggle to find hope in the future when the past has been destroyed, the present is in disarray, and the future precarious. Gikonyo's life is also in turmoil. He married Mumbi before he was taken to prison, and when he returns to the village six years later he discovers that she has given birth to another man's child. Her pain and suffering is compounded by Gikonyo's refusal to listen to how and why it happened. Finally, though, the story ends with Gikonyo and Mumbi working toward a reconciliation. The future resolution of problems is offered in their plans to strengthen their love by having children. Hope is restored through future generations and there is a sense of renewal in the struggle for uhuru. The ending of *A Grain of Wheat* shows: "Communal and private love and effort are fused in the coming generation." All three novels recount the colonial story and incorporate various thematic-plots about land, unity, control, and hope. These early novels set the stage for Ngugi's next novel which further depicts anti-colonial objections.
MARXIAN PROTEST AGAINST COLONIALISM

Ngugi's *Petals of Blood* is a culmination of ideas from his earlier works and a continuation of the same themes. It is an assemblage of his political thought and reflects his philosophical growth. In this novel, he again depicts further opposition to the colonial conditions in Kenya. His political message is the major theme of the story which, according to Cook an Okenimkpe, reflects a "weakness" in the novel and results in less intensity of characterization than was found in *A Grain of Wheat*.60 Since the main focus of *Petals of Blood* is politics, their criticism does not seem applicable. The development of his statements against colonialism is more important than the development of characters. The confinements of their own literary analysis could have placed restrictions on Cook and Okenimkpe's critique. Ngugi himself reflects:

This was what I was trying to show in *Petals of Blood*: that imperialism can never develop our country or develop us, Kenyans. In doing so, I was only trying to be faithful to what Kenyan workers and peasants have always realised as shown by their historical struggles since 1895.

He adds that, "Hopefully out of *Petals of Blood* we might gather petals of revolutionary love."

The time frame of the story is the 1970s, 20 years after the Mau Mau period. The Mau Mau war was, as stated earlier, a war for uhuru in which thousands of Kenyans lost their lives as Britain tried to hold on to its permanent, settlement area. In Eustace
Palmer's commentary on *Petals of Blood*, he argues that Ngugi "incorporates all the major preoccupations of the African novel from its beginning to the present day." He describes an "historical process" which the African novel traces and which is reflected in Ngugi's writings. This process occurs in three phases. The first phase is the period of imperialist conquest and disruption of traditional society as revealed in *The River Between*. The next phase involves the Mau Mau struggle for liberation from colonialism, as depicted in *Weep Not, Child*. The third phase analyzes the post-independence era as portrayed in *Petals of Blood*: "the most comprehensive analysis so far of the evils perpetuated in independent African society by black imperialists." Palmer views this as an example of the "decolonization" of African literature. It exposes "the corruption and incompetence which is so widespread in African political and governmental circles." According to Chinweizu, et al., Palmer's perspective is " eurocentric" and blinds him to the actual meaning of decolonization. He sees a change in subject and theme and the shift from Euro-African to intra-African problems as decolonization, this insinuates he is less troubled with discussions of "black imperialists" than European colonialists. As discussed elsewhere, decolonization is more than the rooting out of colonialist attitudes, "it is also a matter of replacing them with others that are conducive to African dignity and autonomy in the world."

The political focus in *Petals of Blood* is reflective of Cook and Okenimkpe's "intermediate phase" in Ngugi's development. The
story is one of frustration and despair with the realization that revolution did not significantly change the living conditions of most people. Leadership passes to a Kenyan elite who continue colonial policies that perpetuate social injustice. Ngugi illustrates, through various characters in the book, the aftermath of the revolution and depicts independence as a transition from colonialism to neo-colonialism. After independence from colonial rule, the process of African self-rule does not necessarily break the control and influence from the former colonial power. Nkrumah, who was a freedom fighter and first president in Ghana, discussed neo-colonialism in great detail and described it as "the last stage of imperialism:"

Neo-colonialism is based upon the principle of breaking up former large united colonial territories into a number of small non-viable States which are incapable of independent development and must rely upon the former imperial power for defence and even internal security. Their economic and financial systems are linked, as in colonial days, with those of the former colonial ruler.

In Ngugi's words:

Neo-colonialism then means the continued economic exploitation of Africa's total resources and of Africa's labour power by international monopoly capitalism through continued creation and encouragement of subservient weak capitalistic economic structures, captained or overseered by a native ruling class.

Ngugi's anti colonial arguments and his discontent with neo-colonialism, are reflective of an African interpretation of history rooted in African political philosophy. That is, his
perspective does not draw on European culture and history for its illustrations and orientation. He analyzes the problems in Kenya by opposing the use of European values where they are not indigenous. Gikuyu and other Kenyan traditions are recognized as more valid for Kenyans in order to recover and reclaim the rightful place of those indigenous values because European values are alien and unnecessary. Europeans historically tend to ignore and downgrade an "African" perspective. Furthermore, Western literature credits Europe with the origin of political thought, i.e. Plato, Socrates, Aristotle, etc. This leads to the point that literature, politics, etc., does not develop in a vacuum, it is shaped by the "social, political and economic forces in a particular society."\(^68\) and political thought is not the product or property of Europe alone. Colonial forces have affected the development of politics in Africa, but it remains influenced by centuries of an earlier African heritage as well. It is actually a misnomer to use the term "African" to refer to the thousands of cultures and traditions on the African continent. And in reference to Ngugi's interpretation of history it is used to denote a viewpoint that does not, nor need to, rely on European cultures for its identity.

Ngugi does acknowledge, though, the influence of others' works on his own. For instance, he compares the stages of colonialism in George Lamming's *Castle of My Skin* to those in his own novels, thus, connecting the liberation struggles in Caribbean countries to those in Africa.\(^69\) Cook and Okenimkpe describe Ngugi's radical socialist perspective as influenced by Karl Marx, Frantz
Fanon and Amilcar Cabral. They note that even his earlier writings adopt a "tenor" of characteristics from socialist literature. Many phrases and terms found in Ngugi's works espouse an "anti-capitalist revolutionary doctrine" which indicates a Marxian development in his beliefs. Killam argues that A Grain of Wheat and Petals of Blood show two predominate influences: Marx and especially Fanon. He contends, Marx helps formulate Ngugi's economic and political philosophy but Fanon places that thinking in a African context.

This section in the study of Ngugi traces the progression of his political development by comparing his analyses in Petals of Blood to those of Marx. The examination suggests Ngugi's internalization of a Marxian perspective on history along with his own unique, African interpretation. A synthesis of these political views is reflected in this novel. A comparison of their political essays supports the argument of Marxian influence, but it is not intended to suggest that Ngugi's views are a mere duplicate of Marx's political thinking. The aim is simply to acknowledge one aspect of influence on the development of his political orientation. In a discussion on the influence of other views on a writer, Jabbi states:

One might say, for instance, that in pointing to the influences upon a work or body of literature one is merely defining some of those forces and factors that seem to have helped in shaping the character of that work or canon as we have it in extant.
It does not prove another origin or source to the work being studied, only influences upon it. *Petals of Blood* is a statement of an unsuccessful revolution, in spite of an organized resistance movement. It describes the aftermath of Kenyan response to colonial theft of the land, a familiar theme in Ngugi's other works.

The process of dispossessing Kenyans is similar to the colonial story told elsewhere. It is a story of the missionary, the settler and the colonial administrator working together to subjugate the African, if not physically, then, at least mentally. After independence, the colonial culture remains and a new African elite replaces the Europeans. In *Petals of Blood*, three government officials represent this new elite: Chui, Mzigo and Kimeria. They help perpetuate greed, poverty, and many other hardships that existed under colonial rule. The masses continue to suffer under the rule of a few who are in control. A Marxian perspective interprets the situation of the few ruling the many as a result of capitalism. Since Kenya is a capitalist country, Marx's analyses explain for Ngugi the circumstances he finds in Kenya. Whether a coincidence or not, the explanations seem to have strongly influenced Ngugi in this era of his writing.

As an initial example of comparison, Ngugi agrees with Marx on the premise that to understand the present the past must be known. He writes:

> The writer as a human being is himself a product of history of time and place. As a member of society, he belongs to a certain class and he is inevitably a participant in the class struggle of his times... a writer's subject matter is
history.... The entire changing relations of production and hence the changing power relations consequent on mutable modes of production is a whole territory of a writer's literary concern. 73

These views coincide with those of Marx in Grundrisse, in which he argues against economists who ignore the historical process that has led to the present. These economists view the present as a starting point not as a result of history. 74 Later, in the same essay, Marx presents an outline known as his "materialist's conception of history:"

In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. 75

This conception appears to have influenced Ngugi's perspective of the writer as a product of history. The relationship between the above two passages is an essential aspect in correlating a link between Marx and Ngugi and supports later arguments in this section. Therefore, further elaboration of Marx's conceptualization of history and society follows, before dealing specifically with Ngugi's story.

There are three levels of relations or conditions that are basic to Marx's categorization of the social, political and economic conditions of society. These are described as determining or conditioning each other. According to the chart below, at the first level (1) the "material productive forces" determine the "relations of production," the second level (2). These two levels are the
"mode of production," and they determine or condition the third level (3), the "social consciousness" of society, i.e. political, social intellectual life.  

(3) social consciousness
   (determines/conditions)  (corresponds/influences)
   ↓
(2) relations of production
   ↓
mode of production
   ↓
(1) material productive forces

This study uses only a basic sketch of an otherwise detailed analysis presented by many Marxist economists. Using this sketch, though, similarities are observed in Ngugi's political philosophy:

...the social community expresses itself in terms of an economic arrangement, of certain economic alignments, with different groups standing in differing positions in the labour process. The community develops a political structure (the state, government, administration, etc.), corresponding to the economic structure...

A schema similar to Marx's results:

social/cultural environment
   (develops)  (corresponds)
   ↓
political structure
   ↓
mode of production
   ↓
economic structure
This illustrates affinity between the two philosophies. Both theories also include a dialectical process based on the conflict of opposing forces in a class society which stimulates the movement of society into another historical epoch, i.e. the change from feudalism to capitalism. At the same time, the various social, political and economic levels not only develop one another but, in turn, influence each other to produce the ever changing complexities in society.

The interaction of the above three levels assumes the development of society is influencened by or follows from a basic arrangement or intention of labour (found in the "material productive forces" or "economic structure"). That is, the manner in which one object is transformed into another object, of use to the individual, is interconnected with the economic, political and social relations of society, corresponding to the specific stage of that society's development in history. With the above flow chart, it is somewhat easier to follow the arguments and understand the extent of Marx's influence on Ngugi. According to Marx, to implement qualitative change (revolution) in society, it must be initiated at the first level, through the material productive forces. Ngugi's statements follow this reasoning also: the "power relations" (social consciousness) of society cannot change until the "relations of production" or the "mutable modes of production" change. Ngugi places the writer inside this model who, therefore, unavoidably writes from the context of these various relationships: "For the writer himself lives in, and is shaped by, history." The
initial phase in implementation of qualitative change in society stems from the social consciousness or awareness of a "vanguard" political group. In order to arouse the "consciousness" of the masses to overthrow the existing structure, this vanguard must first stimulate awareness for political mobilization. Ngugi's contribution to this endeavour is offered in his writings, and the similarities between his analyses and Marx's include their perspectives on capitalism, each is conscious of exploitation and inequality in his society. This type of consciousness is needed by the vanguard to initiate change. Furthermore, this study contends that both Marx and Ngugi are representative of such a vanguard, existing at different times and places in history.

In the context of *Petals of Blood*, Ngugi refers to the history of colonialism in Kenya as an avenue for understanding the current conditions. He condenses this history into a few sentences, relayed by a young revolutionary, Karega:

> Today, children, I am going to tell you about the history of Mr. Blackman in three sentences. In the beginning he had the land and the mind and the soul together. On the second day, they took the body away to barter it for silver coins. On the third day, seeing that he was still fighting back, they brought priests and educators to bind his mind and soul so that these foreigners could more easily take his land and its produce.

This passage shows the interrelationship of the colonial mechanisms of control and exploitation. These mechanisms cooperate with each other in the interest of maintaining an exploitative relationship. Although, the colonizer does not necessarily consider the
relationship as one of exploitation. This view resembles another commentary by Ngugi which is consistent with Karega's historical synopsis:

Here the missionary, the settler and the colonial governor came as three imperial massives [sic.] of western monopoly-capital. The settler grabbed the land and exploited African labour. The governor protected him with political oppression of Kenyans and with the gun. And the missionary stood guarding the door as a colonial spiritual policeman.

The insight Ngugi offers about Kenyan society reflects a consciousness, like Marx's, that is more analytical of the situation existing in society and politics than many other writers during his time. Many assumed and hoped Kenya would experience substantial change after independence. But, the reality of the political, economic and social situation was much different from what was anticipated. Ngugi demonstrates throughout Petals of Blood that the power structure was merely rearranged. In his analyses of change, Marx had warned of this type of revolution. Change is non-revolutionary, if one ruling elite is simply replaced by another with the same bourgeois values. To implement change, i.e. from capitalism to socialism, the entire mode of production must change. In Kenya this did not occur. Ngugi further notes that:

The turning of peasants into proletarians by alienating them from the land, is one of the most crucial social upheavals of the twentieth century one moreover fraught with pregnant possibilities for the future.

There are various ways in which this passage reflects a Marxian slant. For instance, in the Communist Manifesto Marx writes about
the history of societies and their separation into two, new classes
in the capitalist stage of their development:

The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted
from the ruins of feudal society has not done
away with class antagonisms. It has but
established new classes, new conditions of
oppression, new forms of struggle in the place
of old ones.

Here, Marx interprets the conditions under capitalism as a
rearrangement of previous conflicts. They evolve from past
antagonisms into a unique condition in bourgeois society:

Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie,
possesses, however, this distinctive feature:
it has simplified the class antagonisms.
Society as a whole is more and more splitting up
into two great hostile camps, into two great
classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie
and Proletariat.

Moreover, the hostility between these two classes was not only
created by the bourgeoisie but, also leads to its destruction:

...not only has the bourgeoisie forged the
weapons that bring death to itself; it has also
called into existence the men who are to wield
those weapons - the modern working class - the
proletarians.

Ngugi, like Marx 100 years earlier, persistently puts his faith in
the ordinary, working people. It is they who are the heroes and
heroines in his stories, for it is they who must forge the way for
their freedom.

Ngugi's political commentaries parallel those of Marx in other
respects as well. In his Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts,
Marx presents a detailed discussion on "alienated labour." The
conditions of the political economy in advanced capitalist (bourgeois) society develop to the extent that "the worker is degraded to the most miserable sort of commodity." Furthermore, "the worker relates to the product of his labour as to an alien object." The exploitative conditions of capitalism create the conditions whereas the worker owns nothing. In fact, she, the worker, becomes "alienated" not only from the product of her labour but from the actual labour that created it, i.e. herself. This alienated labour even alienates people from their human essence, nature, and, finally, they become alienated from each other. Alienation is one of the factors in capitalism that leads to confrontation. According to Marx, "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles." The exploitative nature of capitalism is one in which a small class of people, the bourgeoisie, owns the wealth of the country. This places the larger class, the majority of the people or the proletarians, at the mercy of the bourgeoisie. The exploitative system continues, according to Marx, until the proletarians overthrow the bourgeoisie and eliminate the whole class system. The "material productive forces" changes and transforms the "relations of production" so that the people realize, through a change in "social consciousness," their true social relationship - their labour. The "social consciousness" that Marx and Ngugi reveal in their writings is more advanced than that of many other writers of their time. In Kenya, it appears that Ngugi's awareness has not yet reached the masses, or else it is repressed whenever it emerges, as
occurred in 1982 with the arrest of Al Amin Mazrui and other faculty and students. Perhaps, their consciousness poses a threat to Kenya's class structure.

The story from the village of Ilmorog, in *Petals of Blood*, is about an unsuccessful revolution. The "mode of production" was only rearranged. The peasants of Ilmorog are alienated from the larger society. They were alienated during the direct colonial period and are alienated, still, in the present, neo-colonial era. They have not benefitted from uhuru because the politicians in the cities are only interested in their village at election time. They campaign for votes and offer gifts and promises, but afterwards they return to the cities without fulfilling any of their promises.

There is a big gap between country and city life, i.e. between Ilmorog and Nairobi. And, even in the city, it is only a few who are able to enjoy a comfortable life. Even after a pilgrimage by the villagers to the city to speak with the governor, the interest of the government officials in Ilmorog remains one of exploitation. New businesses are introduced to the village but they are owned by the politicians themselves, for their profit. Local business ventures collapse and the prior community work-effort disappears. In fact, Ilmorog returns to its earlier condition of disunity. In this way, the story of Ilmorog compares to the larger story of Kenya itself. Before the Mau Mau war, people suffered alone under the oppressive conditions of British rule. The appearance of a resistance struggle reflected a growing sense of unity, Kenyans had begun to organize and unite in order to overthrow their oppressors.
This sense of unity spread throughout the country, growing into a movement that was able to confront the British, just as the peasants in Ilmorog united to confront their elected representative in Nairobi. But after the confrontation, in both circumstances, the result was a return to previous conditions. A few benefitted from the subsequent changes, but those few were an elite group who were not concerned with the needs of others. This relationship is characteristic of capitalism, from the Marxist perspective: the rural communities support city life so that a few live in comfort while the masses suffer. The inequalities in capitalism as described by Marx are exemplified in Ngugi's writing. The similarities between them is most apparent in the manner Ngugi adapts Marx's critiques of capitalism into his stories, especially *Petals of Blood*.

As stated above, the African elite in *Petals of Blood* shows little concern for the peasants suffering in Ilmorog. Karega reflects on the greed and selfishness of this elite:

> How did it come about that 75 per cent of those that produce food and wealth were poor and that a small group - part of the non-producing part of the population - were wealthy? But how come that parasites... who did no useful work lived in comfort and those that worked for twenty-four hours went hungry and without clothes? How could there be unemployment in a country that needed every ounce of labour?

These questions arise during Karega's search for solutions to their problems. His disillusionment follows a brief encounter with history, political science and literature books. He thought they would address historical and political struggles, instead he found a
perpetuation of misconceptions and ignorance of African history. He then confronts a lawyer-friend who consoles him:

You had asked me for books written by Black Professors. I wanted you to judge for yourself. Educators, men of letters, intellectuals: these are only voices - not neutral, disembodied voices - but belonging to bodies of persons, of groups, of interests.... The voice merely rationalises the needs, whims, caprices, of its owner, the master. Better therefore to know the master in whose service the intellect is and you'll be able to properly evaluate the import and imagery of his utterances... there can be no neutral history and politics. If you would learn about you: choose your side.

Karega further notes the actions and nature of this new African elite that the system produced. For instance, Mzigo earns thousands more than a peasant through his work with a sugar business, "And this on top of his official government salary!" Besides economic exploitation, government officials turn their backs on previous humanitarian concerns: "he had watched the transformation of Chui from a popular hero into a tyrant who thought that his power came from God and foreigners." Corruption in the government after independence is one indicator of the failure of the revolution. Ngugi illustrates that it is not sufficient to simply replace Europeans in order to eliminate the basic problems of the country. The source of the problem is much deeper than nationality or skin colour. Palmer argues, this demonstrates Ngugi's insight:

Petals of Blood concentrates on the post-independence disillusionment which had only been hinted at at the end of A Grain of Wheat. It gives a more comprehensive picture of what the author sees as the evils pervasive in Kenya under black rule.
Although there are similarities between pre- and post-independent Kenya, Palmer's analysis also demonstrates his own shortsightedness. His comments imply the "evils pervasive in Kenya under black rule" are worse than those under colonial rule. In spite of corruption and/or lack of human rights, the Kenyan government has yet to inflict violence and cruelty to the extent that Europeans did.

The reader learns early in this story that Karega is a frustrated revolutionary. He wants to continue with the struggle that the freedom fighters started before independence, but cannot. Even though Africans are now in power, some visible reminders of the old bourgeoisie still remain, i.e. Inspector Godfrey. These remnants from the previous regime help maintain the colonial power structure. Karega writes about the failure of the revolution:

The people I knew, I had seen creating new worlds, are hazy images in my memory: and the seed we planted together with so much faith, hope, blood and tears: where is it now? I ask myself: where is the new force, what's the new force that will make the seed sprout and flower?99

According to Palmer:

It is Karega who confirms the impression that Ngugi has been gradually leaning over to socialism as the solution to Africa's problems. But through this spokesman Karega, he also seems to imply that socialism was a natural way of life in traditional African society.

Ngugi offers his political preferences as an indigenous method of organizing society and, therefore, not contradictory to Kenya's traditions.
The main themes in *Petals of Blood* are similar to those found in Ngugi's earlier works. Also, the main characters, Karega, Abdullah, Wanja, and Munira, symbolize Marxian analyses of history, society and change. Karega represents the frustration of the young revolutionaries. Abdullah's son, Joseph, represents a continuation of their struggle. He is younger than Karega, but also hope for the future after Karega is arrested. Even if Karega remains in prison, Joseph is insurance that the revolution will continue. Abdullah was one of the original freedom fighters. He was Karega's inspiration, and now Karega becomes Joseph's inspiration. They are the proletariat rising up in opposition to the new African bourgeoisie.

Nyakinyua and Wanja are the main women in the story. Both of them represent Africa. Nyakinyua is the oldest of the two and knows the history and traditions of Ilmorog before colonialism. She is traditional Africa. Wanja, on the other hand, is Africa after it has been raped by colonialists. She is the product of modern Africa. The system is so ruthless that she turns to prostitution in order to survive. All the unity and security that traditional life bestowed in Nyakinyu was drained from Wanja. She becomes cold and bitter: "You eat or you are eaten. You sit on somebody or somebody sits on you."\(^{97}\) She is part of the alienated reserve of exploited and unemployed workers.

Ngugi contends that relationships of greed and competition stem from a capitalist mode of production that Kenya continues to follow after independence. From a Marxian viewpoint, the types of relationships that develop between people in *Petals of Blood* are due
to the nature of capitalism. In Marx's words, in capitalism: "There is a definite social relation between men, that assumes in their eyes, the fantastic form of a relation between things." In this atmosphere, things are given a higher sense of value than are people. There appears to be a social relation between things (since they are the things that bring people together) and a material relation between people (since they only come together to exchange things). Wanja's response to being used and treated as a thing, "you eat or you are eaten," is a matter of survival. Her reaction is not unusual in a capitalist setting and Ngugi elaborates on her situation. In an argument with Munira, the village teacher, Karega comes to Wanja's defense and points out that in reality the entire country has been exploited:

We are all prostitutes, for in a world of grab and take, in a world built on a structure of inequality and injustice, in a world where some can eat while others can only toil, some can send their children to schools and others cannot, in a world where a prince, a monarch, a businessman can sit on billions while people starve or hit their heads against church walls for divine deliverance from hunger, yes, in a world where a man who has never set foot on this land can sit in a New York or London office and determine what I shall eat, read, think, do, only because he sits on a heap of billions taken from the world's poor, in such a world, we are all prostituted.

Munira, another major character in the novel, represents the confusion that many Kenyans experienced after independence. He had embraced the colonial religion, believing the missionaries were truly concerned with the African soul. As stated earlier, though, in most cases the missionaries worked closely with the colonizers to
subjugate the African. As a victim of change, Munira becomes a religious fanatic. He is blinded by the contradictory codes of the foreign religion. Elsewhere Ngugi criticizes these contradictions, for example: "The Church, in the past, justified slavery because the ruling classes of Europe needed slavery and the slave trade," it had nothing to do with "saving" the African soul. Munira's religion becomes a veil that blinds him to the conditions around him. It is a distraction in his ability to contribute to the real freedom of Kenya. Even his final act of burning Wanja's house is not for liberation from colonial oppression, but for the distorted liberation of Karega from Wanja's love. Munira is jealous because Wanja loves Karega instead of him. Karega, though, could not return Wanja's love because in a way he was "married" to the struggle, but Munira did not see this. Although the fire he starts destroys three main figures of oppression in Ilmorog, Munira is not guided by the noble values that Karega professes. He, too, is alienated from society and seeks refuge in religion, in spite of its contradictions. He does not see the hypocrisy of his behaviour, because he is blinded and alienated from society and his place in it.

Karega views the Christian religion as an enemy. In the liberation of Africa, he believed, "that religion, any religion, was a weapon against the workers!" Palmer notes this as a shift from Ngugi's earlier position:

Christianity, which in earlier novels was shown to exercise a firm hold over the lives of the people, is presented here as oppressive, unsympathetic, and hypocritical.
Ngugi reflects Marx's influence in his approach to religion. According to Marx, religion is a "blinding veil" that keeps the masses from seeing the real conditions of their enslavement:

Religious suffering is at the same time an expression of real suffering and protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the feeling of a heartless world, and the soul of soul-less circumstances. It is the opium of the people.

Marx describes the religious world as a reflex of the real world. The injustices that exist in the real world will be justified in the religious world. Therefore, Christianity "is the most fitting form of religion" for the perpetuation of class oppression and European bourgeois values. Corresponding to Marx's argument, Ngugi notes the contradiction of Christianity in African culture:

The evidence that you were saved was not whether you were a believer in and follower of Christ, and accepted all men as equal: the measure of your Christian love and charity was in preserving the outer signs and symbols of a European way of life....

By preserving European culture and its religion in the colonies, the colonizers were able to maintain influence and control even after independence.

In addition, Marx relates the concept of "fetishism" to a capitalist economy. The term is often connected to religion and Christians generally use it in reference to other, i.e. "primitive," religions. In an analysis of African religions, Benjamin Ray searches for the meaning and origin of the word fetish. He claims:

..."fetish" comes from the Portuguese word "fetico" which was used to refer to west African
images and charms. For de Brosses, "fetishism" referred more generally to the "primitive" phenomenon of endowing natural things (trees, mountains, waters, pieces of wood) with sacred and divine power.

He proposes, Charles de Brosses first developed the idea that religion began from a "fetish" phenomenon which later "advanced" into monotheistic religions, i.e. Christianity. His discussion of fetishism is not offered here to verify the origin of religion but, rather, acknowledges its existence in religion. An examination of the term, though, reveals prejudices encountered elsewhere in the literature, i.e. toward religions other than Christian. As in other contexts, "Europeanized" authors portray African religions on a lower stage of "civilization" and, therefore, "primitive" or "pagan." These attitudes, formulated during colonialism, reinforce a negative perspective and make objectivity difficult. Even the English dictionary, at times, makes understanding vague and ambiguous. For example, a "fetish" is defined as "a material object believed among primitive cultures to have magical power," but "fetishism" is "excessive attention to or attachment for something."\textsuperscript{107} In one instance, the idea is associated with a type of culture, in the other it can be found in any society.

In Marx's analysis, fetishism is like alienation and a natural occurrence in a capitalist society. Similar to religion, a particular political system may be perceived as ideal and gain power as it acquires more followers. The power that colonialism exerted in Africa can be attributed, in part, to capitalism and its "fetish" qualities. That is, it attaches godly or mystical characteristics
to the whole economic structure, money and things are valued more highly than are social relations of the family and community. The success of a person is determined by his worth not his actions or integrity. Fetishism protects capitalism and in the process maintains alienation. All that is alienated from the person now becomes fetishized. That is, the social and work relations of people take on religious qualities. All that was created by the worker appears to have power and control over him: "the greater his product the less he is himself." The same process occurs in religion: "the more man puts into God, the less he retains in himself." The "system" appears to have the ability to exist without people, and they feel insignificant and powerless, thus, giving the system power to control them. It continues to drain the workers until they refuse to cooperate with it.

In addition to religion, money is another symbol of fetishism in a capitalist society, also noted by Marx. The power of money, like religion, gives the illusion of an omnipotent, divine power. Money is somewhat different from religion, though, because it actually has the ability to do what it claims (it can change a dream into reality). It can buy what a person wants. What develops, then, is a "cult of money." Money, according to Marx, represents its holder. Everything I am I owe to money. I am interpreted by what I do with my money and how much of it I have:

What I have thanks to money, what I pay for, i.e. what money can buy, that is what I, the possessor of the money, am myself. My power is as great as the power of money.
In *Petals of Blood*, the new African elite are possessed by this cult of money. Reality is distorted for them, money dominates and dictates their lives. From a Marxian view, this is a success story for the colonizers because bourgeois culture remains as a major component in Kenya's political economy. Ngugi's novels show the transfer of value from people to money in Kenyan culture began much earlier than independence. Wanja recalls, when she was a child, her father arguing with her mother:

> I will tell you about the true secret of the white man's power: money. Money moves the world. Money is time. Money is beauty. Money is elegance. Money is power. Why, with money I can even buy the princess of England.... Money is freedom. With money I can buy freedom for all our people. 

Ngugi's description bears a close resemblance to Marx's. And, like Marx, Ngugi credits money with "the inversion and confusion of all human and natural qualities."\(^\text{113}\) It distorts human relationships. Nyakinyua, with the wisdom of her age, describes money as "the metal bug that split up homes and drove men to the city."\(^\text{114}\) It, too, causes those who do not have it to feel insignificant and powerless. The concept of fetishism is intertwined in Marx's political essays and incorporated into Ngugi's observations of the destructive capabilities of capitalism.

As shown above, there are parallels between Ngugi's and Marx's political writings. The purpose of this comparison, though, is not to label Ngugi a Marxist but, rather, to suggest the influence of Marx in *Petals of Blood*. Neither does this imply that Marx is the
cause of Ngugi's radical writing, the cause is in the society. Jabbi argues this point:

...a claim of influence is not an attribution of causation; for to claim that any work of literature is an outgrowth from an identified influence would appear to overstate the case beyond the issue of influence as such. 115

This novel is an expression of past, political interpretations of capitalism (Marx's), incorporated with those from a unique, African perspective (Ngugi's). Ngugi's aim in this narrative is to provide an understanding of the contemporary conditions in Kenya, and Africa in general. As Palmer states, "it is an epic, not just of the East African struggle, but of the entire African struggle." 116 Ngugi's observations in *Petals of Blood* reflect consistency and growth in his political thinking. He repeats themes and struggles found in *Weep Not, Child* because they still exist in Kenya. He helps those who did not live through colonial and Mau Mau terror to understand the severity of the problems in a society whose culture is in transition.
VARIATIONS IN PROTEST STYLE

Ngugi's repertoire of writings comprises more than novels. His shorter narratives include short stories and plays, as well as newspaper and journal articles. The themes are similar to those of the novels but show the wide range of his literary efforts. In addition, these shorter accounts help verify the consistency of his political commitment, they, too, protest against colonialism. The following discussion deals with one collection of his short stories, Secret Lives, and then examines Ngugi's efforts in drama. The plays to be scrutinized include: The Black Hermit, This Time Tomorrow, The Trial of Dedan Kimathi (co-authored with Micere Githae Mugo), and I Will Marry When I Want (co-authored with Ngugi wa Mirii). These writings reflect the variety of style and of political protest in Ngugi's works.

Short Stories

Ngugi describes Secret Lives as a sort of "creative autobiography." The stories were written over a period of 12 years and reflect the ideas and attitudes he grappled with during that time. He confesses:

"My writing is really an attempt to understand myself and my situation in society and in history. As I write I remember the nights of fighting... the fears, the betrayals... the moments of despair and love and kinship in struggle and I try to find the meaning of it all through my pen."

These short allegories deal with three different aspects of the effects of colonialism. They are separated into three sections:
"Of Mothers and Children," "Fighters and Martyrs," and "Secret Lives." Each section addresses different issues of turmoil during the various phases in colonial rule. The first stories are revised from earlier versions that appeared in *Penpoint* (a journal from the English Department at Makerere University) and *Origin East Africa* (an anthology, also from Makerere). Cook and Okenimkpe note, "This sequence provides valuable evidence of Ngugi's development as a writer," and "underscores the thematic and stylistic relationships between the novels and the stories." Their analysis of the three divisions of *Secret Lives* includes these comments:

a) Part I "relates to a more or less self-contained pattern of life still retaining most of its traditional features, and centres on dilemmas within the society;"

b) Part II deals also with village life "but now Siringa Secondary School and Makerere University College loom in the background. The new influences of Christianity, the colonial regime and the Mau Mau Emergency are at work and play an important part;" and

c) Part III is "set in corrupt, get-rich-quick, ruthless independent Kenya, where the unlucky and unsuccessful are forced to the wall.... Each of these stories is a protest against the disposition of the new sophisticated society."

The transition through these stories depicts the diversity and the intensity of Ngugi's reflections on his society during a decade of writing.

The first section in *Secret Lives*, "Of Mothers and Children," deals with three situations of motherly grief in traditional life, prior to colonial contamination. "Mugumo" is about a woman's
longing to have a child and her feelings of unfulfillment in not being able to conceive. She feels she has failed as a wife and as a woman. After an encounter in the forest, at the site of a sacred tree, though, she perceives that she is pregnant. The inner peace and joy she receives from her "vision" in the forest relays the incorporation of religion into daily life in the past. The society had built-in avenues for relief from pressure and tension, whether at a sacred grove or advice from a wise person, etc. Mukami's quest in the forest kept her from deserting her family and thus maintained the family structure and bond. In the second story, "And the Rain Came Down," another woman also grieves for the lack of a child. She, too, wanders through the forest in the rain, as Mukami did. Nyokabi's search leads her to discover and, thus, save a lost child. Her act of bravery not only saved the child's life but hers as well, emotionally and physically. Her strength also rekindled her and her husband's love. In both cases the women undergo a type of religious ordeal in the forest, similar to a "vision quest" or other enlightening experience. For instance, Christians might say they had seen the "light" or been "saved" by God. In any case, they discover some truth about themselves which helps them continue with life. The third mother, though, in "Gone with the Drought" does not obtain peace of mind until her death. Her only child died as a result of starvation during a drought and she suffers her entire life with the feeling of not having tried hard enough to save him. Only at the moment of her death does her sadness seem to disseminate with "a hovering spot of joy, or exultation, as if she had found something
long-lost, long-sought." Clifford Robson notes that these three stories,

...point in one direction - towards the unity of the people. Procreation, sympathy, humility, transfiguration, self and society are issues which permeate them and lead us to what Ngugi calls in *The River Between* the "blood warmth" of the people's laughter.

The following section, "Fighters and Martyrs," covers the arrival and departure of the European invaders. The first two stories deal with religious conflict, between Christian and traditional belief systems. "The Village Priest" presents a Kenyan man's confusion in adhering to the Christian faith at a time when tradition demands a community sacrifice. He needs to "make peace with his people's god" but feels to do so would violate his Christian duty. "The Black Bird," on the other hand, examines the power of traditional beliefs. A young, college student with great potential slowly deteriorates because of a curse which he believes has been placed on his family. It seems somewhat unbelievable in a "modern" environment but the curse haunts him and prevents him from succeeding in anything, leading eventually to his death. The story of "The Martyr" also ends in a man's death but not because of religious conflict. This man is the servant of a European woman and they secretly despise each other, but for different reasons. Her reasons are rooted in racist myths she has internalized about African "inferiority," and his stem from the cruel and humiliating treatment he has received from Europeans. With rising turmoil during the Mau Mau rebellion, Europeans become the target of
assassination in response to British violence against Kenyans. At any rate, the European woman's paranoia causes her to murder her servant who has come to warn her of just such a plot to assassinate her.

The irony found in the story of the martyr continues in the remaining stories of "Fighters and Martyrs." "The Return" and "A Meeting in the Dark" are stories of love. But, in both cases the love is never realized but, rather, lost. In "The Return," a young man returns from detention to discover his wife has left and married another man. She was told he had died in prison. The pain of learning this and the news that she has had a child is unbearable, and reminiscent of Gikonyo's suffering in A Grain of Wheat. "A Meeting in the Dark" also is a tale of suffering due to an encounter with love. In this situation, love is ruined because of the intrusion of colonial values, not colonial detention as in "The Return." Two young people who are in love do not marry because of confused values. John feels his career will be ruined if he marries Wamuhu because he would betray his father's wishes. His father wants him to attend college immediately and marry a Christian woman, Wamuhu is not Christian. Although she is pregnant, John cannot confront his father with this reality. His feelings of guilt and fear are overwhelming. In confusion and desperation, he murders Wamuhu: "Soon everyone will know that he has created and then killed." The outcome of the story is intensified by its stark contrast to traditional values and responsibility, which Wamuhu represents.
"Goodbye Africa" also describes a love affair but with a different plot. This is an affair between a European woman and her Kenyan house-servant. It is the year of independence and this woman and her husband, along with many other Europeans, are preparing to leave Kenya. It is difficult for both of them because they feel they have contributed to "civilizing" the Africans. In an effort to start a new life in England, they both experience periods of self-reflection. He ponders his cruelty toward Africans. She confesses to her husband her past love affair with the servant. The pain of leaving and the feeling that she has insulted him prevent any reconciliation between them. He is hurt by her infidelity but especially humiliated that she slept with an African: "How then could this woman, his wife, bring herself to sleep with that man, that creature? How make herself so cheap, drag his thousand year-old name to mud, and such mud?"123

The last section of short stories, "Secret Lives," presents a picture of the distorted values in Kenya after uhuru. By doing this, Robson claims: "Ngugi takes us to one of the main purposes of his writing: not simply to articulate but to provide the basis for a revolutionary struggle."124 These stories focus on the behaviour of the new African elite. "Minutes of Glory" portrays the exploitation of the employed over the unemployed, the "haves" against the "have nots." In this anecdote, women are forced into prostitution for survival, and suffer from the additional insult of having to please an uncaring and greedy clientele. "Wedding on the Cross" is an extreme example of behaviour among the African elite. A
successful businessman slowly loses his traditional values and beliefs and becomes self-centered and arrogant. He even changes his name from Wariuki to Livingstone. In an attempt to embrace European culture fully, he plans an elaborate Christian wedding for him and his wife who have been married many years. He feels this wedding will prove his success to the entire community. But his wife humiliates him at the end of the ceremony by refusing to "marry" him:

No, I cannot... I cannot marry Livingstone... because... because... I have been married before. I am married to... to... Wariuki... and he is dead.\footnote{125}

"A Mercedes Funeral" is another bizarre account of the African elite using colonial values to demonstrate success. It further depicts the distortion of traditional beliefs and values, as a result of the colonial experience. A funeral is the focus of the story, and involves competition between politicians, each wants to prove his concern for the masses is greater than that of the others. They agree to pay for the funeral of a poor woman's dead husband and each attempts to out spend the others in his contribution to the funeral arrangements. In the end, a coffin in the shape of a Mercedes arrives and exposes the grotesqueness of their behaviour. The people who have gathered for the funeral demonstration stare in disbelief: "It was like an elaborate joke that had suddenly misfired. Or as if we had all been witnesses of an indecent act on a public place."\footnote{126} The hypocrisy in the politicians' values is grossly apparent.
And, finally, "The MuBenzi Tribesmen" is another parable about confused and distorted values. The central man in this story is slowly forced to abandon traditional values and customs in order to please his wife: "He joined a new tribe and certain standards were expected of him and other members. He bought a Mercedes S220." The purchase of a Mercedes makes him one of the "Mubenzi Tribesmen" but he is forced into embezzlement in order to meet the standards of this social club to which he now belongs. After spending some time in prison, he returns to his wife to try to put his life back together, but he is rejected. She is entertaining guests when he arrives at the door to their home. She threatens to call the police if he does not leave and slams the door in his face. She is enthralled by the "Mubenzi" life and refuses a husband who cannot provide her with that lifestyle. This story and the others in "Secret Lives" reflect Ngugi's disappointment with Kenya after uhuru. All that the revolution sought to eliminate is exemplified in the new African bourgeoisie. Ngugi is now pessimistic about Kenya's future.

Protest in Drama

Ngugi's efforts as a playwright are not as suspenseful and adventurous as his other works but the same political themes emerge from the plots. As L.A. Mbughuni observes:

The most effective elements in his plays are his choice of subjects and themes, most of which centre on problems arising in East African or African societies in general."
The Black Hermit was first produced by the Makerere Students Dramatic Society at the Uganda National Theatre in 1962. It is said also to have been more powerful when originally performed on the stage in Gikuyu. The dancing and singing included in the script strengthen its emotion and foreshadow later productions, i.e. The Trial of Dedan Kimathi and I Will Marry When I Want.

The story in The Black Hermit assumes its readers have the historical background needed to understand the plot. And, perhaps, its mood and artistic quality would be better appreciated in the Gikuyu and Kiswahili versions rather than English. One reason for this may stem from the fact that the languages do not relay the same message because of differences in cultures and, therefore, the impact in translation does not carry the same weight. For instance, greetings, proverbs, age respect, family, etc., do not have the same meaning and traditions in English as they do in Kiswahili or Gikuyu. The customs of long greetings and explaining with proverbs are not common to the English language, therefore, they may be interpreted as awkward or clumsy in writing style when translated into English. On the other hand, even after careful scrutiny, i.e. of language, etc., the quality of a work still may be dull and disjointed due to the content or nature of its literary presentation. The content of Ngugi's works is not dull but there are obvious differences in his style as novelist vs. as playwright. Although, the early plays, as with the early novels, are not as detailed and refined as the later works. Cook and Okenimkpe note:

The plays that he wrote alone show constant strain. The characterization is rudimentary.
Key figures tend to become mouthpieces for preconceived attitudes, so that the themes seem forced. The outcome is an often clumsy didacticism.

Two of his later plays, which are co-authored, show more development in writing style and plot movement, the stories seem to progress smoother from scene to scene than occurs in The Black Hermit.

The Black Hermit centres around Remi, who leaves his village and slowly becomes a hermit in the city. He isolates himself from his village and lives with a European woman. This is another example of a man caught between two worlds, as happens with Waiyaki in The River Between and later with Charles in "This Time Tomorrow." Remi becomes more and more alienated from people, but the villagers wait for his return. Since he is a college graduate, they feel he can now represent them in politics in order to bring needed improvements to their lives. Remi is reluctant to return to the village because he will be expected to marry his dead brother's wife, a traditional obligation. A major part of his dilemma stems from the fact that he had hoped to marry her earlier in life before she accepted his brother's proposal. He does not know that Thoni loved him but did not know he was interested in her when his brother asked to marry her. After a visit from some village elders and a priest, Remi finally decides to leave his city life and return home. He hopes he will be able to help the people overcome traditional ways and lead them into the nation's politics. Upon his return, he refuses to meet Thoni and his rejection leads her to commit suicide. In a quick scene change, he learns that she has always loved him and now Remi is saddled with the burden of her death.
Ngugi uses short scenes and brief statements in this play. Details are not provided for full development of the characters' personalities. Their backgrounds and positions are only given in their blunt statements, the reader must create the plot in the gaps left between the words and performances of the actors. The language is abrupt and sometimes too formal or sentimental for realistic imagery and smooth transition from one speech or scene to another. As Mbughuni states, Remi is a "weak hero" and a failure as a leader.\textsuperscript{131} On the other hand, Remi's weakness depicts Ngugi's main message in the play: the failure of a revolution to alleviate cultural alienation and traditional or ethnic restrictions. The hopes of uhuru remain unfulfilled. Robson claims, though, that the sudden death of Thoni and quick repentance by Remi, "simplifies the complexities of the situation in a way rarely found in Ngugi's writings."\textsuperscript{132}

_This Time Tomorrow_ includes three short plays, all of which deal further with the ramifications of colonialism. "The Rebels" addresses the issue of colonial education; "The Wound in the Heart" consists of problems in the aftermath of independence; and _This Time Tomorrow_ depicts the greed and insensitivity of the new African elites who are in control of Kenya.

In "The Rebels" the villagers wait for Charles' return after four years at the university, similar to Remi's return in _The Black Hermit_. The elders wait for Charles' arrival but they do not anticipate any of the changes that he has undergone at the university. They even have chosen a wife for him, according to
their age-old traditions; "Even the white man's wisdom and learning must conform to this law." He is to marry the local chief's daughter. A stranger arrives before Charles, and tries to prepare the villagers for a different Charles. He explains that he knows the ways of European education:

I have met those young men stuffed with the white man's education. They get new notions. They go after strange gods. Then they come back to disturb the peace and the ordered life of many ridges. They are, mark my words, they are rebels.  

In spite of the warnings, they are still not prepared for Charles' rebellion against tradition. He arrives with another woman whom he has chosen to be his wife. The villagers are shocked and Charles' father is insulted by his son's behaviour, especially his choice of an uncircumcised woman. Charles is torn between two worlds and must decide which to follow - his heart or tradition. Mary, Charles' fiancée, pleads with him not to betray his heart because of an authoritarian father and biased traditions: "Who taught me, under that sun that caked our skins, that there was no tribe? We are one." Mary interprets his hesitation to choose her as lack of conviction and leaves him. In the meantime, the chief's daughter, Mumbi, hears of Charles' arrival with another bride and she, too, runs away. Later they discover she has drowned.

Charles is now left with the burden of his indecision. He blames Mumbi's death on all of them who have forgotten that "Africa is one" because of their "blind adherence to custom." He sadly realizes,
You wanted her to marry against her wishes. It is also my doing. I was not strong enough to stand by the light and truth of my conviction. It is the doing of all of us who forget that Africa is one and it is the home of one black race now bowed down by years of white misery and misshapen education.

The stranger prophesied at the beginning that there was a curse on the whole affair. The first omen was the hooting owl that cried all night and kept him awake. In addition, he knew of a curse that Charles father had lived with since his own father's death. He, too, had married contrary to tradition and, thus, this curse was passed to the next generation, resulting in Mumbi's death. According to the stranger, this event marks the passing away of the old ways and the coming of new, it is out of their control.

The elders in "The Wound in the Heart" play a significant role, as they did in "The Rebels." They represent traditions that sharply contrast with European customs but both continue to influence daily routines even in the rural areas. For example, the elders continue to include the community in decision-making and serve as a support mechanism while at the same time the colonialists impose their decisions and whims on the population. The play centres around the return of a village hero, Ruhiu, from detention. The themes are similar to those present in A Grain of Wheat which dealt with Gikonyo's return from prison after independence. Ruhiu was in prison for five years and was tortured, as were most other Mau Mau prisoners. The British wanted confessions and statements on the whereabouts of other freedom fighters and they tortured their prisoners to get any bit of information. Many prisoners made false
confessions simply to end their suffering and because they had nothing to confess. Ruhiu, though, withstood the pain and torment, and never gave the British any information.

The villagers proudly wait for their hero but with mixed emotions. Upon his return, Ruhiu discovers his wife has given birth to a child. She was faithful to him during his entire absence but she was raped by the British D.O. and became pregnant with his child. Ruhiu feels the pain of this news far worse than the physical pain he had endured in prison. He pleads to the elders:

Oh, you cursed elders. Why ever did I boast. I had beaten the white man? He has stabbed me in the heart. An yet -oh - couldn't someone prevent the white man, the cursed District Officer, from carrying [sic.] her? I would have borne all. But this! this! oh, a child by a white man, my enemy? God, you have in the past let him seize our property and now he takes away our women.

Ruhiu's wife also could not endure the pain and humiliation she felt from not having Ruhiu's child, and so, she runs away. After his initial response to his wife's pregnancy with feelings of rage, jealousy and betrayal, he realizes she was forced into the situation and remembers her affection:

Yes, she was a good woman. Her gentle eyes always saw the weariness within; and her hands smoothed away the care and the weariness so that at times I was almost happy. Mother, let her be found, quickly.

When she is found she is dead. The shock of her death is unbearable to Ruhiu and he suddenly falls dead on seeing her body. The tragedy of this story gives it a fatalistic tone, the younger generation is
dead and that leaves the older ones to care for the new generation, their grandchildren. Perhaps, the child is symbolic of the distorted culture that Kenya has inherited from an amalgamation of European and traditional values.

The last of these three short plays, "This Time Tomorrow," was first prepared for radio broadcast in 1967. It concentrates on the type of life the poor experience in the city. The focal point is Uhuru Market in Nairobi which is targeted for demolition in a "clean-the-city campaign." A journalist describes the setting in an article he is preparing for the Sunday newspaper:

The filthy mushrooms - inhabited by human beings - besieging our capital city, came tumbling down yesterday... the City Council warriors, with their sythes, sickles and batons, hacked left and right. Rotting tins flew high in the air. The cardboard walls and the dry mud squeaked, wobbled, and then crashed.

He notes several times "the disorderly rows and rows of shanty slums." These "disorderly rows" of houses seem to be a point of irritation to the journalist and the city council in Ngugi's story. The fiction of Uhuru Market is brought to life by another journalist's story which recently appeared in The New York Times and parallels Ngugi's.

The city council in Cape Town, South Africa uses methods similar to those described by Ngugi in "This Time Tomorrow" to eliminate slums in the city. For example, wrecking crews were recently sent to demolish a "shantytown" section of the city. The city's plan is to relocate the poor in a "settlement" area 20 miles from the city, even though the poor people who are being moved can
only find the money and jobs they need for survival in the city.
The journalist describes the new area:

The homes stand like a mustered regiment, 
displaying a symmetry no African village would 
match or strive for, any more than South African 
planners want the uncontrolled urban sprawl 
that characterizes much of black-ruled Africa.

According to this journalist and the one in Ngugi's play, a major 
reason for destroying the houses of the poor is their dissymmetry or 
disorderliness (at least from a European perspective). Neither 
reporter directly refers to the issues of racism, colonialism, 
inflation, unemployment, etc., as the root of the problem.

The journalist in Nairobi interviews various people who live in 
the area of Uhuru Market but his biases against the poor emerge from 
his reporting. He emphasizes the dirtiness he sees in the area and 
commends the city's decision to tear down the cardboard houses as 
the final solution to the problem of slum areas in the city. He is 
there when Inspector Kiongo arrives on the scene with a wrecking 
crew and announces:

I remind all those that dwell in these places 
that today was the date I gave your delegation. 
A month is now over. By twelve o'clock today 
these shacks must be demolished. They are a 
great shame on our city. Tourists from America, 
Britain, and West Germany are disgusted with the 
dirt that is slowly creeping into a city that 
used to be the pearl of Africa.

He later encourages the people to "show the Harambee spirit, and 
moves!" The Questions from the poor are not only _where_ but _why_ 
should they move?
Njango lives in Uhuru Market with her daughter and makes a meagre living selling soup to passers-by. They are both bitter about their lives. Njango directs her anger at her husband because he "foolishly" fought against the British with the other freedom fighters trying to get back their land. And now, after independence, she asks: "What has this Uhuru brought us? Brought to us, who lost our sons and husbands?" The Shoemaker in Uhuru Market was one of the freedom fighters who fought with her husband and survived, but now is forced to live in the slums. He also laments over their plight:

It is not that I don't want to move. But the government should give me a place to stay. After all, I deserve it. I was a member of the Party.... We were fighting for freedom.... I came home after the Emergency. The white man had not gone. No job for me, no land either. So I came to this city.... Why then should I move from here?"

Njango's daughter, Wanjiro, is also bitter, she is frustrated with their poverty. She complains, "I never asked to be born." She wants to have the clothes and other shiny things that she sees the wealthy buying in the city shops. She tells her mother, "Two days ago I saw a dress in the city. I wanted it, so much, I almost stole it." She desperately wants out of the slums and is easily persuaded by her lover to leave her mother alone to face imminent disaster. After all, he insists, she "is only an old woman who doesn't know the ways of the world, or the needs of a young woman." In the end, Njango is left standing alone as her daughter goes off to join her man and a bulldozer enters pushing down her house. She cries out in
despair: "They are herding us out like cattle. Where shall I go now, tonight? Where shall I be, this time tomorrow? If only we had stood up against them! If only we could stand together!" A cry for unity is heard once again in Ngugi's writing but the harsh reality of the new independent government suppresses any opposition. There is a fatalistic tone for the future of those in *This Time Tomorrow*.

Ngugi co-authored another play, *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*, with Micere Githae Mugo. This theatrical endeavour is written in the same mood as *Petals of Blood*, that is, it is an attempt to commemorate the real heroes of Kenya's independence and Mau Mau struggle. It is part of a broader goal aimed at documenting the history of Kenya and the Mau Mau years. The authors explain:

There was no single historical work written by a Kenyan telling of the grandeur of the heroic resistance of Kenyan people fighting foreign forces of exploitation and domination, a resistance movement whose history goes back to the 15th and 16th centuries when Kenyans and other East African people first took up arms against European colonial power....

Ngugi and Micere dramatize colonial injustice through the trial that Dedan Kimathi experienced in 1956. The language used in the play is at times similar to that in *The Black Hermit*, but has been developed to set the general mood of a political prisoner on trial, without the sometimes awkward transitions that occur in *The Black Hermit*. The trial of Dedan Kimathi is one of sadness and gloom, because the outcome is already known: the hero is murdered by the colonial court system. The play begins with the judge stating Kimathi's charge:
You were found in possession of a firearm, namely a revolver, without a licence, contrary to section 89 of the penal code, which under Special Emergency Regulations constitutes a criminal offence. Guilty or not guilty?

Kimathi refuses to answer guilty or not guilty, because he knows his fate is already determined. The events proceed through three "movements" and Kimathi uses the courtroom to present the meaning behind his fight for freedom from colonial domination.

The first movement presents the people's concern over Kimathi's arrest. Many are supportive of the freedom struggle but must hide their position from the "askari" (police). One woman is trying to smuggle a gun to Kimathi in a loaf of bread. Her attempts are, so far, fruitless, but, finally, she meets a young boy and convinces him to take the "bread" to Kimathi. He is excited about the honour of helping their hero and remembers the woman's words:

The day you'll ask yourself... what can I do so that another shall not die under such grisly circumstances... that day you'll become a man, my son.

The second movement in the play includes four, mock trials that take place in Kimathi's cell. During these trials, arguments for the freedom fighters against colonialism are presented. The trials proceed with visits in his cell from a colonial D.O., a banker, a priest and a judge; and in some long, poetic speeches Kimathi challenges colonial exploitation. Cook and Okenimkpe point to these "trials" as the "real heart" of the play: "But while Kimathi's trials are symbolic, they need not be thought of as visionary -
though no one could imagine them happening exactly like this in actuality." Ngugi and Micere acknowledge that their aim is not to reproduce actual trials but, rather, it is an "imaginative recreation and interpretation of the collective will of the Kenyan peasants...." The mood throughout Kimathi's ordeal is one of frustration because the colonialists do not and apparently will not comprehend what Kimathi is saying. In one of his responses to the judge, while still in the courtroom, Kimathi exclaims:

I despise your laws and your courts. What have they done for our people? What? Protected the oppressor. Licensed the murderers of the people: Our people, whipped when they did not pick your tea leaves your coffee beans Imprisoned when they refused to "ayah" your babies and "boy" your houses and gardens Murdered when they didn't rickshaw your ladies and your gentlemen. I recognize only one law, one court: the court and the law of those who fight against exploitation, The toilers armed to say We demand our freedom. That's the eternal law of the oppressed, of the humiliated, of the injured, the insulted! Fight Struggle Change.

At all times, he speaks for the masses and their resistance to exploitation, oppression and all other forms of enslavement. He gives them courage and urges them to continue the struggle for total liberation.

As noted elsewhere in Ngugi's works, he incorporates Christianity into his stories because of the confusion and conflict it causes many Africans. In his discussion with the priest, Kimathi
challenges the foreign religion and uses Biblical metaphors for emphasis:

I have spoken with the God of my ancestors in dreams and on the mountain and not once did he counsel me to barter for my soul. One day, looking at the mountains, listening to the murmurings from Gura River, thinking about the braves of our people - those who have always resisted - I thought I saw a glimpse of Kenya to come: workers joining hands from the Coast to the Lake, making rivers, volcanoes, thunderbolts in the sky, making all these powermonsters of nature administer to their needs and desires. Man slave of Nature? Nature slave of man. Making no man slave of any man. And voices welled up inside me. And I felt the granite power of Kenyan people....

In another speech, after hours of torture for refusing to sign a confession of guilt, Kimathi painfully speaks to the African soldiers who work with the settlers,

You... traitors to your people...
sellers of your own people... For what?
Your own stomachs. A seat at the master's table. A Bank account. A partnership in business. Partnership? To rob your people...
murder your people... for... medals and leftovers!...

For four hundred years we have risen and fought against oppression, against humiliation,
against enslavement of body
mind and soul
Our people will never surrender!

In the final movement of this drama, the scene shifts from the prison to Nyandarua Forest, a "guerilla" camp, where Kimathi lived with other freedom fighters. He is interrogating several British soldiers who have been captured in one of their raids. He asks the soldiers if they are fighting for the working people of England, but they do not understand the question. Kimathi elaborates:
It's always the same story. Poor men sent to die so that parasites might live in paradise with ill-gotten wealth. Know that we are not fighting against the British people. We are fighting against British colonialism and imperialist robbers of our land, our factories, our wealth. Will you denounce British imperialism? 152

Of course, they answer no. The scene, then, returns to the courtroom where Kimathi refuses to denounce the revolution but instead denounces "the forces of imperialism:"

In the court of Imperialism!  
There has never and will never be  
Justice for the people  
Under imperialism.  
Justice is created  
through revolutionary struggle  
Against all the forces of imperialism.  
Our struggle must therefore continue.  
Don't walk into the mouth of guns  
Unless you have yours organized!!!  
But our people will never surrender  
Internal and external foes  
will be demolished  
And Kenya shall be free! 153

In his appraisal of The Trial of Dedan Kimathi, Robson argues:

As in The Black Hermit, the use of verse raises the problem of formal rhetoric in a naturalist play, and this has not been entirely overcome. 154

From a political perspective, though, the dramatic style of The Trial of Dedan Kimathi seems appropriate to the setting. It adds emphasis and dramatization to the position Ngugi and Micere believe Kimathi should have in the chronicles of Kenyan history. Although characterization falls behind in The Black Hermit, the political
messages in _The Trial of Dedan Kimathi_ help formulate the characters' roles. In addition, Cook and Okenimkpe note, "its purposefulness gives it a clear sense of direction" combined with the dramatic usage of "mime, symbolism, vision and realism." In a more critical vein, they observe that it "does not aspire to the attributes of the traditional 'well made play.'"155 It falls short of the European tradition in literature with its "stark" use of revolutionary slogans. Their contention is that the authors miss their mark by attempting to communicate with anyone who speaks English. One problem with this criticism is that the standards of judgment used are inappropriate to a work that does not aspire to English values nor desire comparison with English traditions for "anyone who speaks English."

The last play to be examined in this section on Ngugi's drama, is one that he co-authored with Ngugi wa Mirii. _I Will Marry When I Want_ was first published in Gikuyu (Ngaahika Ndeenda, 1980) and later translated in Kiswahili (Nitaolewa Nikipenda, 1982) and English. In the preface to the Kiswahili version, the authors outline their reasons for first writing the play in a Kenyan language. The main goal is to preserve Kenya's cultures. Their concern is that since Kenya's languages are being replaced with English, German and French then their cultures will also be replaced with foreign ones. They stress that this is happening in the schools, because Kenyan children are taught foreign cultures, history, literature, etc., instead of Kenya's history, etc. They also note that the culture and customs of a people are the heart of
a nation, i.e. their mirror to the past, present and future. When the British imperialists came to Kenya in 1895, they told the Kenyans their history was evil and their cultures and customs were uncivilized. Therefore, "Kuendelea kutumia lugha za wabeberu ni kuendelea kuwa watumwa wa utamaduni wa maisha yao:" to continue using their languages is to continue being slaves to their culture.  

I Will Marry When I Want became so controversial among Kenyan authorities after it was performed by Gikuyu actors in the town of Limuru that it was banned. Its performance and the publication of Petals of Blood in the same year, 1977, were probably the major reasons for Ngugi's arrest also that year. Even though he was detained for one year, he still continues with protest writing. In 1982, the two Ngugis wrote another play, Maitu Njugira (Mother, Sing for Me), for the same Gikuyu actors at Limuru, but the authorities dismantled the theatre there and refused to grant a license for its performance at the National Theatre in Nairobi, and suppressed its participation in an invitational tour by the Zimbabwe government to perform in that country.

The main plot of I Will Marry When I Want centres around a rich land owner depriving a poor farmer of his 1 1/2 acres of land. The land of Kiguunda's family had been stolen by the British and now, after independence, this acre and a half is all that is left. In this story, the plot of land provides an avenue for revealing the contradictions in independence and European values as well as an underlying theme of rejection of tradition. The young women ignore
custom by claiming they can marry when they want, that is, not in
the traditional manner, at an early age and to someone whom they and
their families approve. The older generation also insults tradition
by agreeing to re-marry in a Christian ceremony even though they
originally had been married according to their own customs. These
themes intertwine to depict the further effects of colonialism on
the people and cultures of Kenya.

Kiguunda is a poor farmer with the deed to 1 1/2 acres of land.
He hangs the deed on a conspicuous spot in his house. To him, that
small plot of land is worth more than the thousands that belong to
the rich landowner Kioi. The belief prevents him from being ashamed
or envious of what the rich own. He tells his wife:

Even if you see me in these tatters
I am not poor.
You should know
That a man without debts is not poor at all.
Aren't we the ones who make them rich?
Were it not for my blood and sweat
And the blood and sweat of all the other
workers,
Where would the likes of Kioi and his wife be?

A friend of Kiguunda, Gicaamba, reiterates these same sentiments as
he speaks of the plight of the poor:

Without workers,
There is no property, there is no wealth.
The labour of our hands is the real wealth of
the country.
The blood of the worker
Led by his skill and experience and knowledge
Is the true creator of the wealth of nations.

Religion also plays a major part in this drama. In an indirect
way, it links the various actors. Through different reasons, it
brings them together in a struggle over principles - the rich vs. the poor. The rich and some other confused members of the village are enthusiastic Christians and they diligently work to recruit new church members. One group travels door to door singing hymns and begging for contributions to their church. At Kiguunda's door they plead:

    We belong to the sect of the poor
    Those without land,
    Those without plots,
    Those without clothes.
    We want to put up our own church
    Give generously to the God of the poor.  161

Later, they receive another visit from a group of Christians, several rich land owners. They come to plead for Kiguunda and his wife to become Christians and stop "living in sin." They believe the only true marriage is in the church and traditional marriages are not acceptable in the eyes of God. Therefore, they come to persuade Kiguunda and Wangeci to be baptized and married in the church to legitimize their marriage. Furthermore, they believe God can help them be content with their poverty:

    If all people were to be saved,
    And accepted Jesus as their personal saviour,
    The conflicts you find in the land would all end.
    For everybody,
    Whether he does or does not have property,
    Whether an employee or an employer,
    Would be contented
    To remain in his place.  162

As long as the poor are appeased, the wealth of the rich Kioi-type is not threatened.
Initially, Kiguunda is angry at the insult of him and his wife "living in sin" all these years. He chases his wealthy guests out of his house while shouting:

This is mine wife,
Gathoni's mother,
I have properly married her
Having paid all the bridewealth
According to our national ways.\footnote{163}
And you dare call her a whore!\footnote{163}

Afterwards, Kiguunda and his wife ponder the reasons for a visit from the two wealthy couples and they conclude it is because of their children. Kiguunda's daughter, Gathoni, has been dating Kioi's son, so they assume his parents are contemplating a marriage between their children. First, though, they probably want Kiguunda and Wangeci to marry in the church so that their son marries into a Christian family. Eventually, though, they learn this was not the motive for the Kioi visit. In the meantime, their daughter is jilted because she is pregnant and Kiguunda loses his plot of land and his job due to the shrewd financial operations of Kioi.

Gicaamba tries to warn Kiguunda of the sly methods of the rich and that he is only being used, but Kiguunda does not heed the warning. Gicaamba cautions him:

...Leave these people alone.
they are just playing about with you,
In the same way a cat plays about with a mouse,
Knowing that the mouse will end up in the cat's belly!\footnote{164}

But, Kiguunda insists, "It's obvious that Kioi does not want his son to marry from mere pagans!" Religion, according to Gicaamba, is the
"alcohol" of the mind and soul, and he reminds Kiguunda that the British used religion to "soften our hearts" and "cripple our minds" while they took the land and built factories and businesses with Kenyan labour: "And they had the audacity to tell us that earthly things were useless!" These warnings do not dissuade Kiuunda and he mortgages his land to borrow enough money to pay for a wedding for him and Wangeci. The wedding plans show the hypocrisy of the Christian religion in Kenya, and parallel a similar situation, i.e. "Wedding on the Cross." The Kiois convince a poor man and his wife to have a Christian wedding but they must pay for it:

First is the fee for the officiating priest.  
And then the robes for the bride.  
And a suit for the bridegroom.  
And clothes for the bridesmaids and best man.  
And for the children who hold the train!  
Then you'll have to set aside a little sum of money  
For bread, milk, butter, jam,  
And of course for the wedding cake.  
Oh, yes, the cake!  
The cake is central to a Christian wedding!  

Kioi would not lend Kiguunda the money for the wedding so he mortgaged his land, under Kioi's persuasion.

The results of this drama are that the wedding never occurs, the lover deserts Kiguunda's pregnant daughter, the bank forecloses on Kiguunda's loan and Kioi buys his 1 1/2 acres. The advantage of the rich and their manipulation of the lives of the poor, are several points that the authors use to rally the villagers. There are similar issues in Ngugi's other works that unite the masses against exploitation. Once again a cry for unity is heard:
Let us unite against our enemies...
We cannot end poverty by erecting a hundred
churches in the village:
We cannot end poverty by erecting a hundred
beer-halls in the village;
Ending up with two alcoholics.
The alcoholic of hard liquor.
The alcoholic of the rosary.
Let's rather unite in patriotic love...
Development will come from our unity.
Unity is our strength and wealth.

The community-type structure of the last two dramas, The Trial
of Dedan Kimathi and I Will Marry When I Want, is a different mode
of expression for Ngugi's political views. The traditional
community effort is incorporated into the actual production of the
plays which starkly contrasts to the individualism and selfishness
of the elite with whom the community must contend. The use of
verse, song and dance contributes to the community spirit and helps
the plays move somewhat smoother from scene to scene that occurs in
The Black Hermit. In the words of several critics, the verse
structure of I Will Marry When I Want enhances "the speech rhythms
and patterns and thus make the text more intimate and easier to
read." The political success of this play and The Trial of Dedan
Kimathi is that they "focus attention on principles and concepts,
not on private dreams." And, finally, a major factor is their
contribution to Ngugi's campaign for liberation of the masses from
colonial and neo-colonial forces. Other communities, perhaps, may
be inspired to recreate their own hardships and frustrations into
similar dramas while at the same time uniting their communities and
sending a message to the authorities, as occurred in Limuru.
PROTEST AGAINST NEO-COLONIALISM

Ngugi's writings repeatedly stress the importance of gaining complete independence and restoring dignity and pride in African values and traditions. His efforts acquire still another level of protest in the perspective offered from prison. As stated earlier, he was arrested in December, 1977 and detained until December, 1978 for his political writings and the production of the controversial *I Will Marry When I Want*. While in prison Ngugi reflects on, and continues to write about, the situation in Kenya and becomes even more politicized and frustrated than he was before his confinement. This is revealed in two texts he compiled from that year of detention. These two works are also the last of Ngugi's writings to be examined in this study on his political protest; they are: *Detained: A Writer's Prison Diary* and *Devil on the Cross*. He wrote the latter in Gikuyu partially as means of therapy to cope with the long hours in solitary confinement, and *Detained* is a collection of notes from a diary he kept while in prison. Both books reflect the anger and frustration Ngugi feels toward Kenya's system of neo-colonialism. His anger is directed at the same forces and institutions of colonialism that appear in his earlier novels, but now are supported and enforced by a Kenyan elite.

The notes and diary assembled in *Detained* are comprised of brief reflections on the struggle for freedom in Kenya, freedom from oppression. If democracy is to be truly realized it cannot be obtained by force, by silencing opposition; if democracy truly
existed violence would not be needed to maintain it. Only peace not
violence (or silence) creates an atmosphere of peace. Ngugi
describes imprisonment as a "repressive weapon" that is used to
protect a small ruling elite and to insure their class privileges
over the rest of the (silent) majority. This weapon was introduced
by the colonizers and is still used as a means of subjugation:

In a neo-colonial country, the act of detaining
patriotic democrats, progressive intellectuals
and militant workers speaks of many things. It
is first an admission by the detaining
authorities that their official lies labelled as
a new philosophy, their pretensions often hidden
in three-piece suits and golden chains, their
propaganda packaged as religious truth, their
plastic smiles ordered from abroad, their
nationally televised charitable handouts and
breast-beating before the high altar, their
high-sounding phrases and ready-to-shed tears at
the sight of naked children fighting it out with
cats and dogs for the possession of a rubbish
heap, that these and more godfatherly acts of
benign benevolence have been seen by the people
for what they truly are: a calculated
sugar-coating of an immoral sale and mortgage of
a whole country and its people of Euro-American
and Japanese capital for a few million dollars
in Swiss banks and a few token shares in foreign
companies.  

This suggests that colonialism did not end with independence.
Ngugi's notes further compare life in prison to animals waiting to
be slaughtered:

Life in prison is not all endless confrontations
and "profound" meditations on history. It is
basically a cliche: dull, mundane, monotonous,
repetitious... it is the rhythm of animals
waiting for slaughter or escape from slaughter
at a date not of their own fixing.
Under colonial and neo-colonial conditions, prisons serve as a means to silence those that challenge the power structure. Muzzling the voices of truth makes the meaning of truth irrelevant, since corruption and betrayal of the people is not revealed. The sadness in Ngugi's messages from prison emphasizes the unfairness and injustice of his needless arrest and his frustration in not being able to defend himself or his political position. No one will listen because there is no such thing as a "fair" trial. His situation is oddly familiar to that of Dedan Kimathi. Ngugi's activities were seen as a threat to public security and he was forthwith declared "dangerous." The villagers of Limuru had performed the play, I Will Marry When I Want, through their collective efforts. It united the community in one common goal. For this performance of unity, Ngugi was detained for one year. The attempts to silence him, though, did not stifle his political protest.

Although despair grips Ngugi many times in prison, he does not surrender to it. He still clings to hope and the day when Kenyans can free themselves from their colonial burden. He recalls the words of one peasant and is inspired with the belief that others share in his hope: "Truth is like a mole. Try to cover it, and it will still reappear in another place!" Through the combined examination of history and search for truth, the observations in Detained seem to express more clarity and focus than found in some of his other writings. Capitalism is targeted as the main cause of the disintegration of society. Furthermore, Ngugi views capitalism
as the motivating force behind colonialism. For example, he states: "theft, robbery, corruption can never be wrong under capitalism because they are inherent in it."\textsuperscript{173} This political stance shows: "A more militant indignation against both the settler episode in Kenya and the inheritance of its values by the ruling Kenyan elite."\textsuperscript{174} Ngugi's criticism continues to be directed at the persistent adherence to colonial culture and values. As argued previously, he opposes the dominant role of European languages, culture, history, etc. in African educational systems. From Ngugi's perspective, this issue \textbf{must} be addressed for Kenyans to control their own destiny, because:

...foreign languages, no matter how highly developed, will never be Kenyan languages. Foreign theatre and foreign literature, no matter the weight of philosophy they may carry, will never be Kenyan theatre and literature. Foreign cultures, no matter how rich they are, will never be the national cultures of Kenya. And foreigners, no matter how brilliant and gifted and dedicated and selfless, can never, never develop our national languages, our national theatre and literature, and our national cultures for us.

The future Ngugi dreams of is built on hope and love but his intentions are sometimes misinterpreted, as occurred with the authorities who put him in jail. Another associated instance occurred when Ali Mazrui accused Ngugi of "Kikuyu-centrism" (or Gikuyu-centrism) and publicly supported claims by university officials of his partiality to Gikuyu scholars and Gikuyu culture. Mazrui stated that he himself had not examined the university's expulsion of Ngugi
while he was in prison. If he had examined the records and the syllabi of the department which Ngugi chaired before his arrest, he would have found the university's allegations to be false. Furthermore, Ngugi argues, he did not ignore Swahili heritage in order to give "greater prominence to the literary heritage of the Kikuyu," as Mazrui claimed. This is an example of the type of distraction and ethnic rivalry that plagues the academic and political atmosphere of Kenya. In spite of these problems, though, Ngugi persists in hoping for the abolition of colonial dependency:

I look forward to a time when no Kenyan shall lose his job for saying that Kenyan cultures must be free from foreign domination; a time when no Kenyan shall lose his job for demonstrating that Kenyan cultures that glorify the grandeur of our past struggles and achievements and that show the great possibilities open before us all, Kenyan people, can bloom in great dignity and beauty if given the chance!  

The style Ngugi uses in Devil on the Cross shows qualitative changes from his other publications. He ventures in a different direction even though the story itself reflects the same familiar themes of political protest. This endeavour is the result of a culmination of experiences. It is a product of his growing awareness of similar anti-colonial struggles around the world, and it is a reaction to his unreasonable arrest. In this novel, his political thought has developed beyond that presented in his earlier stories. According to Cook and Okenimkpe, Ngugi exercises "a new level of control" in his literary creation of Devil on the Cross:

...it crystallizes the viewpoints towards which he was finding his way in the first three novels
and which he embodied in a somewhat more complex and enigmatic manner in *Petals of Blood*.

In addition, it "is a startling new departure." With the use of satire throughout the story and the blending of various African and Asian literary and oral traditions, Ngugi creates a realistic yet ironic happening. This blend of traditions probably stems from the influences of Gikuyu culture, since he first wrote the story in Gikuyu, and influences from South Korean and South Vietnamese traditions. In various essays written before and after *Devil on the Cross*, i.e. *Writers in Politics* and *Barrel of a Pen*, Ngugi identifies the struggles in those countries as similar to the neo-colonial problems in Kenya.

Before his arrest in 1977, Ngugi had already been exposed to the people's struggles against colonialism in South Korea and South Vietnam. He studied and visited those countries in the early 1970s and linked the causes of their problems to those of Kenya. In a 1976 article, Ngugi writes:

> What the South Korean people are asking for is simple. They want an end to internal repression and murder; an end to foreign domination; the withdrawal of all foreign troops and nuclear weaponry....

His sympathies are particularly drawn to the ordeal of one South Korean, Kim Chi Ha. This poet was in prison for nearly half of his life because of his writings. Ngugi notes: "his crime was simply writing poems which Park [then President] did not like, but which were nevertheless enormously popular with the people."
hands of a repressive government, but it also expresses hope for the restoration of democracy and an end to exploitation. Ngugi admits he was deeply inspired by Kim Chi Ha:

...his poems speak not only to Koreans but to all struggling peoples in the world. He is in prison but his voice is an inspiration to us in South Africa and Zimbabwe, to us in Palestine, to us in all countries under neo-colonialism. 181

Elsewhere Ngugi points out that he had to make a concerted effort to learn about the struggles in other countries against colonialism, the information was not readily available in the national media. He explains:

I come from a country whose press is owned by foreigners and which always sides with imperialism. Thus it tells us little about the happenings and struggles in the oppressed countries. When it reports on such events it does so with the view of obscuring the truth or showing that imperialist domination is a good thing and that anti-imperialist struggles are bad. 182

After visiting Korea, he gained a different perspective on colonialism, that is, it was not an African phenomenon. Many people of the world share similar experiences, i.e. people of the Caribbean, Afro-Americans, Native North Americans, Central and South Americans, etc. Ngugi's arrest in 1977 was timely, considering his increasing interest in other political writers, like Kim Chi Ha and Thu Bon, a Vietnamese poet.

The work and life of Kim Chi Ha in some ways parallels that of Ngugi. Both are committed writers who have developed their own style of self-conscious creativity. Each is unique but at the same
time reflective of other trends. As was observed in this examination of Ngugi's writings, a journey through Kim Chi Ha's poetry is also a record of his own political life and growth. His early poems create a mood of sadness and lament but later they develop a tone of satire and anger. This same development can be traced from *Weep Not, Child* to *Devil on the Cross*. Furthermore, David McCann explains:

> In the long, satiric allegories..., Kim discovered the means to dramatize the plight of the common man in Korea, afflicted by the creatures of a political and corporate bureaucracy whose only apparent purpose is to crush him.

Kim Chi Ha's own words even seem to reflect similar sentiments to those Ngugi espouses:

> When a people have been brutally oppressed and exploited for a long time they lose their passion for justice and their affection for their fellow beings. Committed only to self-survival they sink into an individualistic materialism.... Our country's prisons are filled with lower-class criminals locked up there by a ruling elite that despises the poor and grows rich on social injustice. The prisoner's roster of crimes is diverse.... Yet their wretched fates have a common origin in frustration and social alienation.

The contact that Ngugi made with the Korean struggle is envisioned in Kim Chi Ha's aspirations for the future:

> We are not alone in this struggle. Men and women all over the world who are concerned with freedom will generously support our struggle. The age demands truth and passion to endure the suffering and to learn the truth.
"The Story of a Sound" is one of Kim Chi Ha's poems that conveys his anger with Korea's social-economic-political conditions, in the same satirical style Ngugi adopts in Devil on the Cross. Ngugi even quotes from this poem in several of his essays in Writers in Politics. It tells the story of a man struggling to get enough money to "stand on his own two feet" but is arrested for spreading "groundless rumors" about the government. The "sound" is his last means of protest. In jail, his body is mutilated and only his torso remains, but he hurls himself against his cell wall to show his continued resistance to injustice. Some long excerpts from that poem are quoted here to illustrate the possible influence on Ngugi's style in Devil on the Cross:

Ando worked like an ox,
but was timid as a mouse, simple
as a sheep - the harmless sort
who doesn't need laws to live right.
But some strange twist of fate...
made whatever he tried
go bad....

Get married?
- How could he? He couldn't find a girl friend.
Buy a house?
- Not a chance. He couldn't get the rent for a whole room.
He couldn't find money for food, and if it looked
like he might get a job, well....

He began to think of hanging himself,
but couldn't find a rafter.
Gas wouldn't do - the windows were full of holes.
He couldn't slip away
on a mixture of poison and wine -
there was no money for a cup....

Just once to have the guts
to stand up firm on his two feet
would have brought down a flood of accusations
for crimes never heard of before, never seen,
never imagined....
harried, exhausted, starving and sick, until crazed
one evening as the sun was going down
he planted his two feet down on the ground,
rolled his eyes back in his head and yelled
"Agh! What a dog's life this is!"

No sooner were the cords out of his mouth than
Clankety-clank, heavy handcuffs were snapped on his wrists
and Ando was dragged straight off to court.
Bang, Bang, Bang...
"State the charge."

"The crime, your honor, of standing on the ground with his
two feet
and spitting out groundless rumors."...

"The defendant, by standing on the ground and spitting out groundless
rumors, your honor, is guilty of
the impertinent use of feet without proper
authorization...
the crime of tranquilizing the mind without permit...
the impertinent neglect of our national policies for
INCREASED PRODUCTION
OF GOODS FOR EXPORT WITHOUT A
MOMENT'S REST...
the crime of INSUFFICIENT VENERATION FOR
THE FATHERLAND:
DENIGRATION OF THE MOTHER TONGUE;
comparing the fatherland to an animal....

Therefore, in accordance with the law, it is the
solemn
judgment of this court, that immediately upon
adjournment
one head be removed from the defendant
to prevent further thinking or pronouncing of such
groundless rumors;
two feet be cut off to forestall the
recurrence of inflammatory standing on the ground;
and to prevent the breeding of future
seditionous types such as the defendant, that one
reproductive organ and two testicles be removed;

And finally and furthermore, whereas there is the
clear and present danger that defendant may resist,
his two hands are to be bound behind his back; he is
to be wrapped in one water-soaked leather
straight-jacket; and the opening of his throat is to
be jammed shut with a hard, thick, and long-lasting
voice-blocking tool; after which he is to be put in
solitary confinement for five hundred years."...

No!
This can't be! It can't!
How can it be?
How can it?...

Roll, then,
roll your body,
beating with it

K'ung.

Again, and yet again
he slammed into the wall:

K'ung.
K'ung, K'ung...

The voice of the oppressed is still heard in the "K'ung" sound that cries out as a reminder of the thousands of bodies and minds rotting in prison. Kim Chi Ha's words magnetize the reader toward political action: "If we cannot hear that very sound in Kim's poems, if we cannot feel its power, and if we can feel it and yet do nothing at all - then we ourselves are past all help." 187

The connection that Ngugi found between Kenyan and East Asian liberation movements indicates a move in his politics that is even more radical than his connection with Marx in *Petals of Blood*. The transition to a satirical writing style implies complete intolerance to imperialism. It shows a final break with colonialism and a move to totally different standards, values and assumptions, thus, politicizing his views moreso than Marxism, which is founded in European political thought. Marx himself was a German and wrote in response to the growth of capitalism in Europe not Africa; he was afterall a product of European traditions and did not treat Africa as equal to Europe, although he wrote insightful analyses about
capitalism which are still applicable today. This period of experimentation in Ngugi's literature encourages a dialogue among literary and political critics to search for new solutions to old problems. There is more than satire, though, that makes Ngugi's and Kim Chi Ha's writing styles similar. Kim Chi Ha draws upon his own cultural background to develop his technique, which is strongly influenced by traditional-Korean oral literature. Ngugi's work also shows a strong traditional influence, especially in Devil on the Cross. This could result from first composing the story in Gikuyu. For instance, the Gikuyu traditions of story-telling and long, round-about explanations through the use of proverbs and riddles are highly prevalent in this novel.

In addition, the treatment of time in these two texts varies from the way it is handled in European literary traditions. The European concept of time is segmented and divided into separate units. In general, the progression of time or passing of minutes moves the plot from one segment to the next. This differs from Ngugi's and Kim Chi Ha's approach. For instance, in Devil on the Cross time exists as one continuum, an element of perception in Gikuyu and East Asian cultures. For Ngugi and Kim Chi Ha, time is not a reference point but rather the story or poem pivots on its political message. In fact, the main text of Devil on the Cross centres on a meeting which occurs in the time span of one day. The problems of the present merge into one time frame with those from the past and will be transferred to the future as long as the social-economic-political environment remains the same. From this
perspective, political issues cut across geographical boundaries. The problems of one country overlap in space and time with those of another in the struggle against colonialism.

Both these authors also demonstrate evidence of a blending of their traditions with elements of Christianity. Kim Chi Ha speaks of a synthesis of the teachings of Marx and Jesus into what he refers to as "the unity of heaven and revolution." Ngugi's interest and belief in the Bible gradually diminishes in his later works, so that in Devil on the Cross Christianity is the target of ridicule. Furthermore, it appears indirectly in various grammatical structures and stylistic or thematic principles, as evident in the title. And, finally, perhaps the two authors are also linked in style and ideology because of their experiences in prison. Both were confined for the crime of using their pens, thus, forcing them to use an even more exaggerated writing style in order to make a point. The pen becomes their weapon against neo-colonial oppression.

A rather bizarre situation transpires in Devil on the Cross wherein business and government officials meet to "celebrate" their corruption. They gather at an extravagant meeting planned to share and revitalize their tactics and schemes for profit-making in Kenya. In a long series of story-telling, they explain their success at theft and destruction. Their methods of economic "development" include the most sinister and predatory forms of control over the masses, for the protection of their wealth and elite positions. A competition ensues in which each man confesses his manner of
exploitation in order to determine who is most "successful." Their confessions place a higher value on things than people. The underlying message is that the path to uhuru has been distorted by "progress." His extreme use of satire highlights Ngugi's frustration and disappointment. The struggle of the earlier freedom fighters for independence and their hope for the future has been abandoned. This is further illustrated by a university graduate who justifies exploitation:

Believe me when I say that theft and robbery are the measure of a country's progress. Because in order for theft and robbery to flourish, there must be things to be stolen. And in order that the robbed may acquire possessions to be stolen and still be left with a few, they must work harder to produce wealth. History shows us that there has never been any civilization that was not built on the foundations of theft and robbery. Where would America be today without theft and robbery? What about England? France? Germany? Japan? It's theft and robbery that have made possible the development of the Western world. Let's not be fooled by socialist cant. To banish theft and robbery from a country is to stifle progress.

Although, perhaps, extreme in his blatant description, Ngugi bluntly depicts the severity of Kenya's social, economic, and political problems.

Other speeches elaborate on Kenya's problems at the "celebration of thieves and robbers," an international meeting of businessmen and government officials. Praise of the colonial, "money culture" prevails:

...kneel down before the god of money. Ignore the beautiful faces of your children, of your parents, of your brothers and sisters. Look
only on the splendid face of money, and you'll never, never go wrong.

In a series of long testimonies, each business tycoon present at the meeting attempts to out-do the others in an oratory contest of who has cheated and robbed the most to obtain his riches. The entire episode is a display of decadence. One fat businessman with a grotesquely protruding belly proclaims:

As for my address, my real home is here at the Golden Heights, Ilmorog. I call it my "real" home because it's where my wife and children live. It's like my HQ. But I've got many other houses in Nairobi, Nakuru and Mombasa. I'm never happy staying in hotels. When I am on a smuggling mission I like to spend the night in a house that bears the name of Gitutu wa Gataanguru. Of course, those are the houses know to the mother of my children. But I have a few other private lairs in Nairobi. Those are for me and my sugar girls.

He considers himself an entrepreneur and is constantly conniving new business ventures. He describes one such scheme:

The other idea I'd like to follow up is how we, the top-grade tycoons, can trap the air in the sky, put it in tins and sell it to peasants and workers, just as water and charcoal are now sold to them. Imagine the profit we would reap.... We could even import some air from abroad.... Or we could send our own air abroad to be packaged... because the technology of foreigners is very advanced! And then it would be sent back to us here labelled Made in USA; Made in Western Europe; Made in Japan....

The absurdity of these confessions continues as others relay their stories for the competition in "modern theft and robbery." Ngugi retells the predicament in restoring indigenous Kenyan values and cultures. This plight is further stressed in the words of
another man who verifies his success with his children's ignorance of any indigenous Kenyan language:

All of them speak English through the nose, exactly like people born and brought up in England. If you were to hear them speak Gikuyu or Kiswahili, you would laugh until you pissed yourself.... They speak the two languages as if they were Italian priests newly arrived from Rome....

This same man is also proud of a newspaper advertisement for his "modern-day nursery school:"

Modern-Day Nursery School.  
Experienced European Principal.  
Formerly for Europeans Only,  
Now Open to a Few Kenyans.  
Foreign Standards as Before.  
National Languages, National Songs, National Names Banned.  
Foreign Languages, Foreign Songs, Foreign Toys, etc., etc.  
English Medium of Instruction.  
Limited Places.  
Telephone or Call in Your Car.  
Colour is no Bar: Money is the Bar.  
Fees High.

The success of his school stemmed from his realization that profit in modern-day bourgeois Kenya is based on "ugeni juu, ukenya chini" (up with foreign ways, down with Kenyan).

The satirical style of Devil on the Cross emphasizes the meaning behind Ngugi's political protest. The long and lonely hours in prison allowed ample time to ponder the country's dilemma and enhanced his anger. For example, he recalls the manner in which Kenya was invaded:

He robbed people of the labour of their hands.
The symbolic rape of the country is similar to the actual rape that Wariinga, the main woman and heroine of the story, experiences in her life. She loves Gaturiria and they gradually dedicate themselves to each other and the liberation of Kenya from corruption. But, in the end their love is destroyed. They cannot marry because of Gaturiria's father. When Wariinga was younger he had corrupted her with fancy gifts and promises, in order to take her to bed. She became pregnant and he abandoned her, he was an old man even then and she an adolescent. It is years later, after Gaturiria and Wariinga fall in love, that she learns the father of her child is also her future husband's father. They cannot marry and her hopes and dreams are shattered with this discovery.

The degradation of values and morals is exposed when the old man, years after defiling Wariinga, experiences no guilt or remorse for his past actions and present destruction of her life:

The Rich Old Man was overwhelmed by Wariinga. Lust dominated him. Sweet words began to flow with effortless ease. He moved nearer her. He spoke like Boss Kihara. It was as if both had attended the same school of seduction or read the same book containing a hundred love letters from a father to his daughter.

Boss Kihara had been another of Wariinga's negative experiences with men. He fired her from her job because she refused his grotesque advances to get her to sleep with him. Hope for the future that was contained in Wariinga and Gaturiria's love is lost in confusion. The reality of the situation is that people's lives are falling apart and their future is in severe jeopardy. The stark reality Ngugi
conveys in the confusion of *Devil on the Cross* is reflective of the confusion in Kenyan society today.
CRITICISM OF THE AFRICAN NOVELIST

In order to discuss literature as a means of protest, education and culture are incorporated into the discussion. A writer is a product of society and its culture and its values are reflected in his works. Ngugi protests, in his novels and essays, against the perpetuation of colonial values in Africa because it is a subtle form of imperialism and dependency. In the current reality of neo-colonialism in Africa, cultural imperialism is one element of that control. Without the physical presence of the colonial power, influence is applied through other means, in order to keep Africa dependent on a foreign, capitalist economy. Literature, therefore, may support neo-colonial control or it may reject it. In the case of Ngugi, it is a statement against neo-colonialism. According to John Povey, the underlying premise in protest literature is for "moral justice." He states:

All African writers... seem to be asserting their inalienable rights: to a government that should be just, honest, and humane, and that should permit its people to exist with dignity and security.198

Ngugi is less theoretical in his observations: "literature of the exploited classes... is struggling against the stultifying present and it embodies values and sentiments that look to a future society."199 The literature Ngugi refers to does not reflect the values of colonial culture, indeed, it protests against it. This approach to writing has resulted in extensive criticism of African literature.
European critics tend to oppose literature that criticizes European traditions, and they object to the protest literature from Africa which opposes colonial traditions. The situation is conflictual. On one hand, Africans demand equality, respect and dignity from Europeans and, on the other hand, Europeans demand the continuation of their superior/colonial position. Each side believes the other is in error and short-sighted. This brings to mind a discussion by Caulfield about the effects of imperialist culture on those who are members of that culture. She argues that "self-aggrandizement" blinds those within that culture to their own alienation. This stems partly from the complications that have developed in the systems of imperialist exploitation:

How can one become conscious of alienation when one's cultural identity is the "best" in the world, when we are carrying the American Way of Life (or the British, or the French, or the "civilized" way of life) to the "backward nations"?

This attitude pervades criticism of African literature. Chinweizu, et al., proclaim:

And of course they do not want to hear or read "protest literature" since the protest is, and has to be, overwhelmingly against what the bourgeois order, which is managed from and in the primary interest of the West, is doing to the African.

That is, the European critic does not want to read African literature that points to the exploitation of Africans by the bourgeois elite of Kenya, in cooperation with the corporate rulers of Europe, U.S., Japan, etc. For some reason, the European tends to
interpret an attack on the European elite or colonialists as a personal attack on all Europeans. A distinction is not made and, thus, eliminates a common ground for discussion.

Some European critics claim African writers should "stop writing about colonialism, race, colour, exploitation, and simply write about human beings," and others call for "an urgent release from the fascination of the past." It is as if these critics would censure all literature critical of the colonial experience. Emmanuel Ngara compares the European/colonial critic with the colonial administrators who are patronizing and arrogant toward the African. They see the African writer "as a somewhat unfinished European who with patient guidance will grow up one day and write like every other European." These critics seem to be uncomfortable with literature that does not adhere to the European tradition, just as the colonizers who were unable to conceive of African independence. The conflict appears to be fundamental, one side is unable to conceive of another world view.

Many of the criticisms of African literature stem from a colonial mentality. The demands placed on it are European oriented and outdated. As noted throughout this essay, the legacy of colonialism lingers even after independence, in the psyche of the colonized as well as the colonizer. European critics operate within the myths of European "superiority," unable to conceive of Africans as their equals. Their vision remains blinded with images such as "primitive savage," "child-like," "inferior," etc. In many cases, African writers are compared with European writers in order to
classify them in literature. Chinweizu, et al., further note that even the word "novel" is used to refer to the Western novel and other area studies are classified accordingly, i.e. "African novel," "Chinese novel," etc.\textsuperscript{205} The European quandary with African literature is a historical problem. Chinweizu, et al., claim this problem is a result of some basic misconceptions about African literary traditions:

1) that there were no African novels prior to the European cultural invasion;

2) that there was nothing in Africa comparable to the novel out of which the African novel might evolve;

3) that whatever there was in African oral narrative tradition has had a negative influence on the African novel because of the limitations of the oral medium; and

4) they therefore insist that the only "legitimate" model for the African novel is and ought to be European.\textsuperscript{206}

On the other hand, European criticism tends to ignore some crucial facts about African literature:

a) that written literature has a long tradition in parts of Africa;

b) that Africa was not totally illiterate when Europeans arrived; and

c) that some parts of Africa had written literatures long before many parts of Western Europe.\textsuperscript{207}

Furthermore, these critics use standards from English, French, etc., to analyze the African novel. This confuses the issue even further because in many instances the African writer uses different literary
conventions from that of the European writer. Chinweizu, et al., assert that this type of criticism denies the existence of a genre of style in African literature. They also note that it ignores three other important facts about African literary traditions:

1) The African novel is a hybrid of the African oral tradition and the imported literary forms of Europe;

2) The African novel's primary constituency is different from that of the European or other regional novels;

3) The colonial situation imposes a different set of concerns and constraints upon the African novel from that of novels of the imperialist nations.

These facts are relevant to the criticism of African literature. The consensus of this examination is not to claim all African writing is of a quality that should not be criticized. The aim is toward legitimate criticism that judges a body of literature from its own traditions and conventions not those from a foreign culture. With the continued development of committed writing and criticism in African literature, European-based critique exposes itself as invalid because it ignores the legitimacy of African conventions and traditions.

Other disapproval of African writing deals with language. Whether the author writes in a colonial language, i.e. English, French, etc., or in an indigenous African language the criticism is strong. On one hand, since language is part of culture and many African educational systems reflect European values and culture, it is not surprising that foreign languages are used. On the other
hand, if protest literature is a rejection of European culture, then
the use of European languages should subside in favour of African
languages. There are arguments for and against both sides, which is
an interesting phenomenon. An African novel written in English
becomes part of English literature, even though it does not deal
with English traditions, and yet it is judged on English standards.
Furthermore, as Chinweizu, et al., point out, there is no reason
that it should be judged on foreign values. They give examples of
European countries that have multi-lingual national literatures,
"but it is elements of national ethos, not the languages, which
supply the decisive criteria used in evaluating them." 209 There is
also evidence that indicates African writers manipulate the English
language to express closely the different values in African
cultures. It is observed in the works of Chinua Achebe, Wole
Soyinka, Ngugi, etc. Cook and Okenimkpe note that Ngugi's style of
writing uses the full range of possibilities within the English
language:

It is given to only a few outstanding writers to
reach a simplicity which is neither elementary
nor a reduction of language to bald outlines,
but which is a distilling of all the main
possibilities of a tongue so as to arrive at a
clarity which has both subtlety and richness.
Blake is a supreme example. In a

210
different
context Ngugi is a notable instance.

In addition, Chinweizu, et al., acknowledge that "language does
embody and is a vehicle for expressing cultural values," but they
further argue, "it is not the crucial generator of those values and
cannot alone be relied upon to supply literary criteria." 211 Ngugi,
who writes in English, Kiswahili, and Gikuyu, offers another view:

To choose a language is to choose a world... the choice of a language already predetermines the answer to the most important question for producers of imaginative literature: For whom do I write? Who is my audience? If you write in a foreign language, French for instance, you can only reach a French-speaking audience; if in English, an English-speaking audience; in practice, foreigners and those of your people who know that foreign language. If a Kenyan writer writes in English - no matter how radical the content of that literature - he cannot possibly reach or directly talk to the peasants and workers of Kenya. 212

Another interesting point is the fact that there is a debate about African literature written in English, the same problem does not arise with other literature, i.e. Korean, Chinese, Japanese, etc., written in English. Povey states that, "English has become an international vehicle of protest." 213 Furthermore, he believes that African languages cannot express concepts, such as oppression, as freely as English can. Again, one is left with the impression that English is the superior language. Although, he states that the "deepest protest in Africa" are actually written in French, not English. Povey's assertions are made in spite of linguistic evidence that a language can express what its speakers want it to express. By implication, his statements seem to perpetuate the myth of African inferiority. For example, another writer even claims that "Swahili was ill-equipped to express any modern concepts." 214 Although the Swahili language is not as widely used as English, this does not prove that it cannot express "modern concepts." In fact, a language research council in Tanzania is working to maintain
Kiswahili as a functional tool of communication by up-dating the vocabulary and adapting it to compete in a changing world.

Achebe argues that English is a "universal" language and, although it was a colonial language, he contends that it is adequate as a national language. In his essay, the connection between universal and national is not clear. English is fast becoming an international language of the business world, but its concepts are certainly not universal. It is also interesting to note that in Achebe's later writing he follows the footsteps of Ngugi and he now writes in Igbo (in addition to English). European cultures are reflected in the English language. This implies that colonial concepts which are not universal, i.e. individualism, racism, etc., also are reflected in that language. As Ngugi states, "racism is expressed in the very structure of the English language, probably the most racist of all human languages." For example, the words "black" and "white" reflect cultural concepts not found in all languages. In English, black is viewed as negative and white as positive, and these same words are used as adjectives to describe people. The values attached to blackness are reflected in offensive terms, such "black day," "black sheep," "black market," "black mail," "black list," etc. On the other hand, whiteness is associated with God, angels, heaven, purity, etc., and Ngugi notes that even African Christian converts sing: "Wash me Redeemer that I shall be whiter than snow." English contrasts to traditional Kiswahili, for instance, in which colours are not used to describe people. A person is described by nationality or place of origin.
The opinion offered in this study, then, is that one language is not better equipped than another for expressing ideas. In relation to literature, language is a matter of preference and is often determined by the target audience.

Achebe further argues that European criticism of African writers reflects an inability to listen to the African viewpoint. Due to myths perpetuated for hundreds of years to dehumanize the African: "the white man has been talking and talking and never listening because he imagines he has been talking to a dumb beast."218 It, therefore, becomes difficult to imagine a "dumb beast" writing a novel in English, or any other language for that matter, in spite of evidence from centuries of African history, literature, etc. The neo-colonial mentality, though, searches for those African writers who perpetuate old myths about Africa. The African protest writer is discredited as not being a "real African:"

A real African lives in the bush... goes naked... and tells fairy stories.... The more primitive the more really African. But an African who... makes political speeches, or writes novels, no longer counts as a real African.219

On the other hand, there are those who claim the validity of literature as a piece of art and reflection of the author's life and ideas, regardless of the language in which it is written. The purpose of art is not to defend or justify its existence but, rather, it is an expression of existence. It may not reveal a picture the viewer expects or wants, but it is still a legitimate expression of one artist's conception of reality (or non-reality).
One responsibility of an artist is to be honest, in whatever product he or she creates. If a conscientious artist chooses to perpetuate attitudes that demoralize a certain group of people, then that artist has abandoned a basic commitment to honesty. That is, a sincere commitment to the elimination or exposure of injustice also has been abandoned.

Ngugi's literary works attest to his concern for the people of Kenya. He writes in protest against neo-colonialism which followed the recent struggle to eliminate colonialism (the Mau Mau war in the 1950s). He has devoted his writing to a fight against oppression and injustices in favour of non-exploitative conditions. Some of the criticism of Ngugi's works is due to his "communist" or Marxist terminology which labels him a radical or a subversive. In fact, he has recently left Kenya in order to avoid arrest. It is ironic that he went to England and is less threatened living in a former colonial country than in the country of his birth, an independent nation. Ngugi was 14 years old at the start of the period of "emergency" during the Mau Mau war. The impact of those years and the ramifications of colonialism are reflected in his writings. Felix Mnthali states that, "Ngugi's entirework is unified by the theme of struggles. The Mau Mau War is seen as a link in the struggle of black people everywhere." As stated earlier, Ngugi describes himself and other writers as writers in politics: "The only question is what and whose politics?"
SUMMARY

In conclusion, this study has attempted to show that reading Ngugi's books is a journey through history. The reader is forced to travel into the past in order to better understand the present. The examination began with a discussion of colonialism and its subtle methods of maintaining control through cultural imperialism. And, later it was noted that even though the colonized people may internalize the culturat, the major protest is against colonialism. These stories portray the devastating experiences as a people's land and dignity are stolen. The family structure, the foundation of society, falls apart as foreign values are introduced, but this is only part of why Ngugi protests. After independence the system of exploitation did not change, only its faces changed, i.e. a new African elite became the neo-colonial administrators. Ngugi's protest is now against neo-colonialism. In another novel, suffering is still rampant in Kenya. During the Mau Mau war, thousands died so that uhuru could be realized, but in Petals of Blood it seems as though those deaths were in vain. At any rate, the struggle continues and appears also in some shorter narrative forms. The accounts in Secret Lives address the confusion that remains in Kenya due to the intrusion of colonial values. Furthermore, this thesis' goal follows the suggestions of Ngugi, in regards to the role of Europeans in ending neo-colonialism:

...the European writer has a special responsibility. He must expose to his European audience the naked reality of the relationship between Europe and the third world. He has to show to his European reader that, to paraphrase Brecht, the water he drinks is often taken from
the mouths of the thirsty in the third world, and the food he eats is snatched from the mouths of the hungry in Asia, Africa and South America.

Ngugi diverts his style even further in his efforts as playwright. His first play, The Black Hermit, stresses the reality of a society caught between "two worlds." This Time Tomorrow consists of three short scenarios which deal with the aftermath of colonialism. Ngugi's poetic style is more effective with Micere Githae Mugo in The Trial of Dedan Kimathi in which Kimathi is eulogized as the true hero of Kenya's independence. Finally, with the assistance of Ngugi wa Mirii, I Will Marry When I Want shows a refinement of Ngugi's writing skills in drama. His political messages and development continue in Detained and Devil on the Cross. Writing from prison, he criticizes the unfairness of detaining people simply because they refuse to conform. Devil on the Cross depicts stylistic changes in Ngugi's writing that connect him to other struggles in the world.

Ngugi's style of writing is free flowing although heavy laden with emotion. He captures the situation of the larger society in the story of a small village and a few of the people who live there. His own life experiences are incorporated into his descriptions along with other influences, from indigenous Kenyan cultures and those of Europe and East Asia. For instance, his political commentaries parallel those of Marx, in some respects, and those of other writers, i.e. Kim Chi Ha (from South Korea) and Thu Bon (from South Vietnam).
Further examination into colonial history, from an African perspective, helps the European student re-evaluate negative attitudes toward Africa and people of African descent. In turn, this can play a larger role in helping the student, socialized in a racist society, overcome racist attitudes. In a discussion on some criticisms of African novelists, it is observed that while many Africans were busy absorbing foreign culture, Europeans were busy justifying their myths of the inferior, savage, primitive, uncivilized, etc., African. Many of these criticisms reflect short-sightedness or an "inverted perspective," according to Ray: "No matter how 'value-free' these concepts may be, they still characterize Africa as the opposite of the West and thus reinforce a negative perspective." Furthermore, this perspective seems to imply that Africans should glorify the days when Europeans "discovered" Africa, and even suggests the "benefits" of slavery and colonialism. The intensity of Ngugi's analyses stimulates the reader to search for alternatives to the dilemma of exploitation. The stark realities of modern greed and destruction are brought into focus. Echoes of the past vibrate in the present, as Kenya re-assumes responsibility for the future. In conclusion, this study ends, as it began, with Ngugi's words, on the writer's role in determining that future:

Our pens should be used to increase the anxieties of all oppressive regimes. At the very least the pen should be used to "murder their sleep" by constantly reminding them of their crimes against the people, and making them know that they are being seen. The pen may not
always be mightier than the sword, but used in the service of truth, it can be a mighty force. It's for the writers themselves to choose whether they will use their art in the service of the exploiting oppressing classes and nations articulating their world view or in the service of the masses engaged in a fierce struggle against human degradation and oppression. But I have indicated my preference: Let our pens be the voices of the people. Let our pens give voices to silence.
APPENDIX: A Chronological Biography of Ngugi wa Thiong'o*

1938
Born Limuru, Kenya.

1954-58
Attended Alliance High School.

1959
Entered Makerere University College, Uganda.

1961
Editor of Penpoint.
Marriage to Nyambura.

1962
The Black Hermit produced at Uganda National Theatre.
Attended Conference of African Writers in Makerere.
Graduated from Makerere.

1962-63
Journalist for Daily Nation article, "As I See It."

1964
Weep Not, Child published.
Journalist and Reporter for Daily Nation.

1964-67
Ngugi at Leeds University.

1965
Award from Dakar Festival of Negro Arts for Weep Not, Child.
The River Between published.

1966
Attended International PEN Conference.

1967
A Grain of Wheat published.
Attended African-Scandinavian Writers' Conference.
Radio Broadcast of "This Time Tomorrow" on B.B.C. African Service.

1968
The Black Hermit published.

1967-69
Special Lecturer in English Department, Nairobi University College (N.U.C.).

1969 (Jan.)
Resigned from N.U.C. following closure of the College.

1969-70
Resident Fellow in Creative Writing, Makerere University College.
1970

This Time Tomorrow published.
Changed name from James Ngugi to
Ngugi wa Thiong'o.
Mtawa Mweusi (Kiswahili, "Black Hermit")
published.

1970-71

Lecturer of Literature, Northwestern
University, Evanston, Illinois.

1971 (Sept.)

Rejoined N.U.C., English Department.

Thiong'o.
Mtawa Mweusi (Kiswahili, "Black Hermit")
published.

1970-71

Lecturer of Literature, Northwestern
University, Evanston, Illinois.

1971 (Sept.)

Rejoined N.U.C., English Department.

1972

Homecoming published.

1975

Secret Lives published.

1976

The Trial of Dedan Kimathi published
(co-authored with Micere Githae Mugo).
Kesho Wakati Kama Hoo (Kiswahili, "This Time
Tomorrow"), published.

(Oct.)
The Trial of Dedan Kimathi performed at Kenya
National Theatre, Nairobi.

1977

Petals of Blood published.
Appointed Associate Professor and Chairman of
Department of Literature, N.U.C.

(Oct.)
Ngaahika Ndeenda (Gikuyu, "I Will Marry When I
Want") performed in Limuru.

(Dec.)
Arrested.

1978 (Jan.)

Detained.
Terminated from position at N.U.C.

(Dec.)
Released from prison.
Mzalendo Kimathi (Kiswahili, "The Trial of
Kimathi"), published.

1979

Reapplied for position in Department of
Literature, N.U.C.

1980

Ngaahika Ndeenda (Gikuyu, "I Will Marry When I
Want"), and
Caitaani Mutharaba-ini (Gikuyu, "Devil on
the Cross") published.
1981

Detained: A Writer's Prison Diary and Writers in Politics published.

1982 (Mar.)

Kamiriithu Theatre banned in Limuru.

(July)


(Aug.)

Coup attempted in Kenya, entire Air Force arrested.

All universities closed, many faculty and students detained.

Ngugi's books secretly banned, removed from Kenyan school curricula.

Nitaolewa Nikipenda/I Will Marry When I Want (Kiswahili and English versions) published.

Shetani Msalabani/Devil on the Cross (Kiswahili and English versions) published.

Maitu Njugira (Gikuyu, "Mother Sing For Me"), co-authored with Ngugi wa Mirii, denied license for performance.

1983

Universities re-open, some faculty and students released from prison.


*Note: Compiled from information in Robson's Appendix in Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Ngugi's Appendix in Detained, plus newspaper articles and conversations with Kenyans familiar with Ngugi's life.
FOOTNOTES


2 Ibid., p. 12.


5 Ibid., p. 12.


9 Ngugi, Writers in Politics, p. 34.


11 Ngugi, Writers in Politics, p. 6.


15 Ngugi, Homecoming, p. 46.

16 Ngugi, Writers in Politics, p. 71.

17 Cook and Okenimkpe, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, p. 3.

19. Cook and Okenimkpe, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, p. 208.


21. Cook and Okenimkpe, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, p. 69.

22. Ibid., p. 33.


24. Ibid., p. 88.


30. Cook and Okenimkpe, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, pp. 46-47.


32. Ibid., p. 217.

33. Cook and Okenimkpe, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, p. 70.

34. Ibid., p. 84.


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38. Killam, An Introduction to the Writings of Ngugi, p. 16.


43 Ibid., p. 64.

44 Ikiddeh, "Ngugi as Novelist," p. 5.

45 Ngugi, Weep Not, Child, p. 115.


48 Ibid.

49 Chinweizu, Onwuchekwa Jemie, and Ihechukwu Madubuike, Toward the Decolonization, p. 126.

50 Ngugi, A Grain of Wheat, p. 64.

51 Ngugi, The River Between, p. 35.

52 Ngugi, Homecoming, p. 31.

53 Ibid., pp. 31-32.


55 Ibid., p. 170.


57 Ibid., p. 193.


59 Cook and Okenimkpe, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, p. 89.

60 Ibid., p. 106.

61 Ngugi, Writers in Politics, p. 97.


63 Ibid.
64 Chinweizu, Onwuchekwa Jemi, and Ihechukwu Madubuike, *Toward the Decolonization*, p. 144.

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69 Ibid., p. 110.

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71 Killam, *An Introduction to the Writings of Ngugi*, p. 11.


75 Ibid., p. 389.

76 Ibid.


78 Ngugi, *Homecoming*, p. 47.


81 Ibid., p. 94.

82 McLellan, *Karl Marx*, p. 22.

83 Ibid.

84 Ibid., p. 226.

85 Ibid. pp. 77-78.

86 Ibid., pp. 80-85.

87 Ibid., p. 222.
88 Ibid., p. 388.
91 Ibid., p. 200.
92 Ibid., p. 284.
93 Ibid., p. 198.
96 Palmer, "Ngugi's *Petals of Blood,*" p. 163.
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104 Marx, *Capital*, p. 79.
109 Ibid., p. 79.
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Mclellan, Karl Marx, p. 110.

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Ibid., pp. 141, 145, 149.


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Ibid., pp. 78-79.

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Ibid., p. 136.

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141 Ngugi, This Time Tomorrow, p. 41.
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143 Ibid., pp. 36, 37, 45, 50.
145 Ibid., p. 3.
146 Ibid., p. 22.
147 Cook and Okenimkpe, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, p. 165.
149 Ibid., pp. 26-27.
150 Ibid., pp. 49-50.
151 Ibid., pp. 57-58.
152 Ibid., p. 64.
153 Ibid., pp. 82-83.
154 Robosn, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, p. 122.
155 Cook and Okenimkpe, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, p. 167.
158 Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Barrel of a Pen, p. 44.
160 Ibid., pp. 37-38.
161 Ibid., p. 8.
162 Ibid., p. 44.
163 Ibid., p. 50.
164 Ibid., p. 55.
165 Ibid., p. 57.
166 Ibid., p. 84.
168 Cook and Okenimkpe, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, pp. 173-74.
169 Ngugi, Detained, p. xi.
171 Ibid., p. 116.
172 Ibid., p. 118.
173 Ibid., p. 135.
174 Cook and Okenimkpe, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, p. 222.
175 Ngugi, Detained, p. 194.
176 Ibid., p. xxiii.
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178 Cook and Okenimkpe, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, p. 121.
179 Ngugi, Writers in Politics, p. 113.
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193 Ibid., p. 107.
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196 Ibid., p. 102.
197 Ibid., p. 251.
199 Ngugi, Writers in Politics, pp. 10-11.
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202 Ngugi, Writers in Politics, p. 76.
203 Chinweizu, Onwuchekwa Jemie, and Ihechukwu Madubuike, Toward the Decolonization, p. 89.
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212 Ngugi, Writers in Politics, pp. 53-54.
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221 Ngugi, Barrel of a Pen, p. 74.
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