

Eros and Politics: Love and its Discontents in the Fiction of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o

Felicia Annin (Mrs)

**A dissertation submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of English,
University of the Western Cape.**



Supervisor: Associate Professor F. Fiona Moolla

DECLARATION

I declare that “Eros and Politics: Love and its Discontents in the Fiction of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o” is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university, and that all sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Name: Felicia Annin (Mrs)

Student number: 3674118

Signature:



Date: 17th September 2019



ABSTRACT

In this study I focus on how Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's fiction portrays his socio-political vision through the prevalence of the intimate relationships it displays. The study critically analyses the significant role romantic love and friendship play in the novels *The River Between* (1965), *Weep Not, Child* (1964), *A Grain of Wheat* (1967), *Petals of Blood* (1977), *Devil on the Cross* (1982), *Matigari* (1987) and *Wizard of the Crow* (2006) against the backdrop of Ngũgĩ's other fiction, plays and non-fiction. Ngũgĩ identifies himself as a Marxist, anti-colonialist/imperialist, and anti-capitalist writer, for whom there is no contradiction between aesthetic and political missions. The aesthetic and political projects take form through the representation, very importantly, of romantic love in his fiction. The significance of eros, which is clear in the fiction, is not, however, present in Ngũgĩ's theoretical reflections on his writing as formulated in his essays. In Ngũgĩ's early novels, we see love attempting to break the boundaries of religion and class in the creation of a modern nation-state. But there are obstacles to these attempts at national unity through love, the only relationship apart from friendship that is self-made, and not determined by kinship relations. In the fiction from the middle of Ngũgĩ's career, we see romantic love consummated in marriage. The achievement of unity is, however, undercut by betrayal, which is a repeated theme in all the novels. The "betrayal" of the ideal of romantic love by materialism is the most significant threat to love. Friendship emerges in one of the later novels as a kind of "excursus" to romantic love that foregrounds, by default, the ways in which Ngũgĩ's political vision seeks be consolidated through the personal relationship of romantic love. In Ngũgĩ's final novel, we see his personal and political visions coming together in a utopian erotic union for first time. Because of the nature of the exploration, which aims at opening up the wider significance of eros, the study is not framed by a dominant theory, most of which would lead to understanding eros through gender and power

relations. Instead, the study has been framed through concepts and debates on romantic love that emerge in sociology, anthropology, philosophy and literary history.

KEYWORDS: Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, postcolonial literature, African literature, romantic love, politics, marriage, monogamy, polygamy, adultery, exploitation, friendship, sexuality.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To God be the glory, great things He has done. It is by God's grace and mercy that brought me this far to pursue this PhD programme.

I am indebted to my supervisor, Associate Professor Fiona Moolla, whose immense support and encouragement saw me through. She has been an inspiration to me throughout my study. Even when it became tough, you were patient and understanding. You taught me how to write and organise my ideas. I have really learnt a lot from you and I am grateful for your interest in my topic. You will forever have a place in my heart. To all the lecturers in the English department, I thank you all for your support. I am also grateful to Mrs. Sandra James, librarian of Faculty of Arts and inter-library loans staff, especially Helena, who made sure that I got all the books and articles I needed for my study.

I am appreciative of my family, especially my mother, Maame Poomaa, who stood in for me as both a mother and grandmother to my children. Antie, I thank God for the gift of you. May God replenish all that you have lost on me. To my husband, Mr. Eric Annin, I say God bless you for holding the fort while I was away. And to all my lovely children, Panyin Afriyie Annin, Kakra Afriyie Annin, Kofi Karikari Annin and Adwoa Aborasika Annin who were able to cope with an absentee mother and understood the fact that I had to add value to myself, I am extremely grateful to you all. My sincere thanks go to my sisters, Maa Harri and Maa Awura, for your prayers, advice and support. Finally, to all my friends, Professor Irene Boateng, Dr. Cecilia Addei, Dr. Frimpong Kodie, Mr. Akuffo, Kwabena Agyekum, Bassi Madu and Evans Sekyi, thanks for your prayers and encouragement.

I am also grateful to my institution, Valley View University, Ghana, for their financial support and the permission granted me to travel to and from Cape Town, South Africa, to pursue

my study. I am especially grateful to my Vice Chancellor, Professor Daniel Bediako, and the former Vice Chancellor, Professor Daniel Buor, for their confidence in me. May God bless Valley View University and make it great and strong.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Tracking Ngũgĩ Through Scholarship: The Overlooked Debate on Romantic Love	10
• Explorations of Love in Africa	28
• Love in African Literature, Orature and Popular Culture	36
• Overview	44
Chapter One	
Boundary-Breaking Love and The Modern Nation-State: Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's <i>The River Between and Weep Not, Child</i>	46
• A Nation Divided: Ngũgĩ's "Things Fall A part" in the Early Novels	50
• What's Love Got to Do with Education?	71
• Bridging Divides: Romantic Love and Education	75
Chapter Two	
The Personal Is Political: Love, Betrayal and Adultery in Ngũgĩ's <i>A Grain of Wheat and Devil on the Cross</i>	77
• For Better or for Worse: Marriage and Adultery in <i>A Grain of Wheat</i>	83
• Gerontocratic Betrayals: "Sugar Daddies" in <i>Devil on the Cross</i>	105
Chapter Three	
Love and Money: Erotic Materialism in <i>Petals of Blood</i>	123
• The Harlot's Curse and the Death of Marriage	131
• Paradoxes of Prostitution in <i>Petals of Blood</i>	149
Chapter Four	
Excursus: Friendship in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's <i>Matigari</i>	157
• The Politics of Love and Friendship	167
Chapter Five	
Love in The Time of Dictatorship: The Reconciliation of Love and Politics in <i>Wizard of the Crow</i>	185
• The Dictatorship of Love: Relationships Under Authoritarianism	194
• The Dictatorship of Love and Love Overcoming Dictatorship	204
Conclusion	219

Works Consulted

224



INTRODUCTION

The Kenyan writer Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o has been one of the strongest voices in post-independence Africa in his demand for an African aesthetics that projects the images and concerns of the African continent. His reputation is such that he has been described as the best-known African writer who emerged in the period of African independence during the late 1950s and early 1960s (Lovesey 1). Ngũgĩ fascinates me because of his passionate commitment to African development, explicitly addressed through his active focus on political and economic issues in his novels. But Ngũgĩ fascinates me also since, almost without exception, he expresses political, economic, social and cultural issues through a range of romantic relationships presented in his plays, short stories and novels. Heterosexual romantic love appears to be the human relationship in which Ngũgĩ invests the most importance, followed by the relationship with the mother.

As we shall see, Ngũgĩ’s work is shaped by his life; for this reason it is necessary briefly to consider his biography. Ngũgĩ was born in Kamiriithu Village near Limuru in the Kiambu District of Kenya on the 5th of January 1938 to Thiong’o wa Nducu and Wanjiku wa Ngũgĩ. Ngũgĩ reflects positively in his autobiographical works on growing up in a polygynous household but, interestingly, the question of polygyny hardly ever comes up in his fiction, where intimate relationships and monogamous marriage are frequently represented. His father, Thiong’o wa Nducu, married four wives and Ngũgĩ’s mother was the third wife. He had more than twenty siblings (Sicherman 3, Lovesey 12) and Ngũgĩ was the fifth child of his mother’s six children: three sisters and three brothers. In spite of the peaceful coexistence between the father and his wives, Ngũgĩ was emotionally affected as the child of a broken home as a result of the separation that ensued between his parents. In his memoir, *Dreams in Times of War* (2010), we read that

Ngũgĩ and his younger brother were ejected from their father's compound. Ngũgĩ attended the mission-run Kamaandura School and Independent Schools (Narang 5) and continued his secondary education at Alliance High School (1955–1959) and Makerere University College in Kampala, Uganda (1959–1964), where he studied English Literature.

In an interview with Amooti wa Irumba, Ngũgĩ discusses his personal life experience from primary school to university and elaborates on the suffering of his mother after the separation:

My father and mother separated in 1946 or 1947, and thereafter my mother was the one who took care of us; ... She virtually shouldered every responsibility of our struggle for food, shelter, clothing, and education. It was my mother who initially suggested that I go to school. I remember those nights when I would come back home from school, and not knowing that she could not read or write, I would tell her everything that I had learnt in school or read to her something, and she would listen very keenly and give me a word of advice here and there.

(99)

It is unsurprising, therefore, that, as a result of the separation, the hardship of his mother's life and her encouragement of education, Ngũgĩ grew very attached to his mother. I will return in later discussions to the question of maternal love since maternal love is the relationship that in the early novels sometimes seems to trump romantic love as a key personal relationship with social and political impact.

Ngũgĩ's political activism first came to the fore at Alliance High School, where he participated in a debate, expressing the idea that Western education was harmful to African students. He began to build his writing career while still a student at Alliance High School. Ngũgĩ has shed light on the writers and texts that made a significant impression on his life and work. These include Peter Abrahams' *Tell Freedom* (1954), D. H. Lawrence's *The Rainbow* (1915), Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1986), Cyprian Ekwensi's *People of the City* (1954) and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902), (Ngũgĩ 9). From the significance of romantic relationships in almost all the narratives that constitute Ngũgĩ's formative readings, it becomes apparent that romantic love would form an important parallel in his own works. In Lawrence's *The Rainbow*, there is a focus on love and sexuality through several romantic relationships which are depicted as complex, but ultimately unfulfilling. Likewise, Ngũgĩ depicts love and its discontentment in almost all of his works. For example, in *Petals of Blood*, there is the representation of several romantic relationships but all of them result in heartbreak and suffering. Cyprian Ekwensi's *People of the City* is also about love, but, in addition, about the tension and power relations between the main characters, Amusa Sango and Aina. Similar portrayals of love and oppressive relations emerge in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. In this canonical novel, Achebe presents the polygynous marriage relationships between Okonkwo, the hero, and his three wives. We find that Okonkwo's marriage is characterised by his own authoritative and violent understanding of his role as a man. Achebe's narrative influenced Ngũgĩ's early novels, especially, *Weep Not, Child*, where Ngũgĩ's representation of the polygynous relationship between Ngotho and his wives parallels the authoritarianism of Achebe's portrayal of Okonkwo's marriage relationships. Likewise, Ngũgĩ's reading of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* during his formative years influenced his writing. In *Heart of Darkness*, the erotic relationship between Kurtz

and his mistress, a beautiful, but powerful and treacherous African woman, who capitalises on love to exert an excessive influence over Kurtz, is replicated in a number of Ngũgĩ's own female characters, in particular the heroine, Mumbi, in *A Grain of Wheat*.

At Makerere College, Ngũgĩ succeeded writer and scholar, Peter Nazareth, as editor of *Penpoint*, a literary magazine of the Department of English. In 1961 Nazareth's play *Brave New Cosmos* had won a prize, with Ngũgĩ's one act-play, *The Rebels*, coming second in the Inter-halls Competition (Nazareth 1). In *The Rebels*, written at Makerere College, we see Ngũgĩ's romantic love interest taking centre-stage again in the presentation of protagonists in the form of two star-crossed lovers, both Makerere students, from different backgrounds. The male lover is from Kenya and the female beloved is a local Ugandan. Their boundary-breaking love and intended marriage become abortive because of the obstacles presented by their individual cultural backgrounds. Thus we see that Ngũgĩ is influenced by the representations of romantic love in his formative reading, and that he extends ideas around romantic love in different ways.

It is noteworthy that after his initial forays into theatre Ngũgĩ again addresses the theme of romantic love in his early ventures into the genre of the novel. The plots of both *The River Between* (1965) and *Weep Not, Child* (1964) are built around romantic relationships. In terms of progression, *Weep Not, Child* was published earlier than *The River Between*, although the latter was written first. The two novels recount historical developments in Kenya; *Weep Not, Child* is presented as the continuation of *The River Between* in terms of Kenyan history. In both novels, Ngũgĩ presents complex love affairs between the heroes and heroines that are obstructed by both internal and external factors. As the study will elaborate in Chapter One, the narrative in *The River Between* relates the story of the hero, Waiyaki, who falls in love with Nyambura, the daughter of his enemy. Waiyaki and Nyambura belong to different backgrounds, but seek to break the

boundaries set by religion and tribe; however, their love fails as a result of the tensions between Christianity and Gikũyũ beliefs that prove insurmountable. Again in *Weep Not, Child*, Ngũgĩ's representation of love attempts to break the boundaries of class, politics and religion. Love seeks to unite the feuding families of the protagonists, but in this second novel love also fails. In the subsequent novels, Ngũgĩ continues his exploration of romantic relationships, which takes diverse forms. In *A Grain of Wheat*, Ngũgĩ explores romantic love between the main characters, Gikonyo and Mumbi, which ends in betrayal. Likewise, the theme of love and betrayal cuts across some of the other novels. In both *Petals of Blood* and *Devil on the Cross*, relationships between older, powerful and wealthy men and younger girls are presented. But here too relationships are marked by betrayal of the young women by the older men, and the betrayal of the numerous promises of love. Surprisingly, Ngũgĩ sidesteps the presentation of romantic love in *Matigari* to represent friendship instead. Although initially, the relationship between the hero and the heroine follows the same form as depicted in *Petals of Blood* and *Devil on the Cross*, it finally ends in a strong bond between friends, rather than in a union of lovers. Finally, in the last novel, *Wizard of the Crow*, Ngũgĩ writes an epic story that recaps all the angles on the love relationships he explores in his earlier work, and finally identifies an ideal relationship where love fulfills each of the partners, and the union endures. It is noteworthy that the love that endures in *Wizard of the Crow* is a love that for the first time successfully combines politics and love.

To some extent, Ngũgĩ's narratives are autobiographical and draw on life experience. Ngũgĩ married his wife, Minneh Nyambura, who had been his childhood sweetheart, while a student at Makerere:

I am three years older than she, but Nyambura and I grew up within a mile or so

of each other; we had the same childhood friends; went to the same schools, Kamandura and then Kinyogori. I continued into high school; she did not. But the more our paths parted, the more rapidly our hearts drifted towards each other, and by the time I went to Makerere in 1959, we had entered into a soul pact and always knew what was coming. (93)

Ngũgĩ's intimacy with Nyambura is revealed in *The River Between* with Nyambura, his wife's namesake, as an important character in the novel. In *Detained: A Writer's Prison Diary* (1981), Ngũgĩ reminisces about Kamiriithu, where he first met his wife "and thought her the most beautiful woman [he] had ever seen, and vowed there and there that she would one day be my wife" (72). In *Birth of A Dream Weaver: A Writer's Awakening* (2016), Ngũgĩ recounts his love relationship with Nyambura and describes her "smiling eyes" that "make [his] heart beat so loudly" (17). Ngũgĩ acknowledges Nyambura as the love of his life in his autobiographies and his love for Nyambura is fictionalised in the relationship between Waiyaki and the character of Nyambura in ways that are inspired by his lived emotions for his beloved. Ngũgĩ's novels are fictions, however, and there is no simple one-to-one relationship between the characters and the people in Ngũgĩ's life. But it is important to note the centrality of romantic love in both the life and the fiction of the author.

The close link between Ngũgĩ's life and commitments and their expression in his fiction extend beyond the focus on love. Having completed his undergraduate degree at Makerere, Ngũgĩ secured employment as a journalist with the *Daily Nation* in Nairobi (Gachukia 1). Subsequently, having received a scholarship, he was able to enrol at Leeds University for an MA degree.

According to David Cook & Okenimkpe, Ngũgĩ's life at Leeds exposed him to radical students with whom he shared discussions on politics and literature. In Leeds, he began to think deeply about political, social, cultural and academic issues as they impacted on Africa (Cook & Okenimkpe 6–7). This is also the point where Ngũgĩ's approach to writing changed from a general Christian humanism to a more leftist orientation as a result of his exposure to Marxism and the writings of Frantz Fanon, which influenced almost all his works from *A Grain of Wheat* (1967) onwards. Although Ngũgĩ submitted the first draft of his dissertation on Caribbean literature, he finally abandoned his degree at Leeds to concentrate on the writing of *A Grain of Wheat* (Cook & Okenimkpe 7). He returned to Kenya in the year 1967 to take up employment in the Department of English at Nairobi University, where he made provocative suggestions with respect to the transformation of the English literature syllabus (Narang 6).

Ngũgĩ subsequently resigned from Nairobi University following the rejection of his suggestions to decolonise the literature syllabus. Decolonisation for Ngũgĩ significantly involved the introduction to the syllabus of African literature, especially African orature, which would impress upon students the value of African culture. Thereafter, he travelled to the United States of America, where he taught at Northwestern University, Yale University, New York University, and the University of California, Irvine. At Northwestern University, he was promoted to the rank of Associate Professor (Gachukia 1). Among the awards he has received are the Nonino International Prize (2001) and the Medal of the Presidency of the Italian Cabinet (2002). Three of Ngũgĩ's plays were published by the East African Literature Bureau in 1971 under the title *This Time Tomorrow* (Gachukia 1). Ngũgĩ's biography reveals a deep commitment to African culture as holding the keys to a prosperous, peaceful and just postcolonial dispensation. He also does not shy away from presenting political struggles and encouraging activism. For example, he confirms in an interview

with Dennis Duerden that the reason for writing *The River Between*, originally entitled “The Black Messiah”, was “to show the effects of Mau Mau war on the ordinary man and woman who were left in the villages” (1). Both love and politics, therefore intertwine and play an important role in Ngũgĩ’s life and fiction.

In the context of the focus on love and marriage in Ngũgĩ’s work, mention must be made of the significance of religion in the author’s life. Christianity has played a complex role in Ngũgĩ’s approach to literature and life, as a number of scholars have observed. Cook & Okenimkpe explain the basis of Ngũgĩ’s rejection of Christianity as part of his rejection of imperialism: “imported religious organizations were a great fraud, for, as a powerful arm of colonialism, the European churches operated with a single-minded determination to discredit and undermine African culture and drive it underground” (20). Ngũgĩ accused European colonisers of destroying African culture and also forcefully imposing a foreign culture on indigenous people. “and having destroyed the indigenous culture of the people whom they had ostensibly come to save, imposed on them ‘European civilization ... European scale of values and [European] customs’, rejecting traditional modes of behaviour as evil” (20). In Simon Gikandi’s monograph on Ngũgĩ, he explores the influence and imposition of European Christianity on Gikuyu tradition and asserts that one of the most important themes in Ngũgĩ’s works is “an attempt by the *athomi* [literate] to hallow out a new separate identity between colonial Christianity and Gikuyu tradition, to differentiate culture from colonialism and Christianity from Eurocentricism” (22). Gikandi interrogates whether or not the primary goal of cultural nationalism is autonomy and then questions “why did they [the cultural purists] not just renounce Christianity and colonialism altogether instead of trying to construct parallel Gikuyu institutions” (23). G. D. Killam too writes about Ngũgĩ’s statements on the Christian Church and its influence and relationship to colonial government and education and

identifies the importance of Christian teaching to Ngũgĩ's novels and how they are "shaped by the presence of Christianity" (7–8). Killam outlines the reasons why Ngũgĩ abandoned his Christian faith, as expressed in his essay "Church, Culture and Politics". He notes that the "consequences of the teaching of the Christian missionaries meant that African customs were rejected outright" (Killam 8). From the overviews of other scholars on the impact of Christianity in Ngũgĩ's work, it is clear that the relationship between Christianity, colonialism and local culture is deep, tense and sometimes contradictory. This is especially the case on the question of love and marriage as we shall see.

Even though Ngũgĩ finally renounced Christianity he, nevertheless apparently without question, accepts one of the cornerstones of Christian faith and colonial culture, namely, the superiority of the monogamous love marriage. Because of the pernicious ways in which Christianity as the handmaiden of colonisation collapses African culture, Ngũgĩ explicitly rejects the Christianity of his upbringing, in favour of a celebration of African culture and language. In an interview with fellow students at Leeds University, Alan Marcuson, Mike Gonzalez and Dave Williams, which focused on Ngũgĩ's personal life, Ngũgĩ explained the rationale behind denouncing his Christian belief: "I gave up my Christian faith at the university. But it was not that I woke up one day and decided that I was no longer a Christian. It just gradually lost its appeal to me as I began to see what it stood for" (28). In this period of his life, when the oppression and subjugation inherent in imperial language, culture and religion became apparent to Ngũgĩ, he changed his name in March 1970 from James Ngũgĩ to his Kikuyu name Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (Killam 1). With the change in name, Ngũgĩ also resolved henceforth to write in the Gĩkũyũ language in order to get the attention of ordinary people, and to develop the African language and African culture. This renunciation of colonial culture did not, however, extend to intimate

relationships since Ngũgĩ has implicitly valorised the Christian ideal of monogamous companionate love-marriage in all of his works.

Miriam Koktvedgaard Zeitsen's *Polygamy: A Cross-Cultural Analysis* (2008) examines how missionary Christianity attempted to lure Africans into "giving up polygamy." This was one of the "important elements" of adjusting to European civilization. European administrators and missionaries made polygamy one of the main issues with which to force their way of life upon their new subjects (Zeitsen 34). Polygamy was considered a "social evil" linked with the "economic serfdom" of women and children, which "hinder[ed] the economic and intellectual advancement of the country" (145). These attitudes were supported by missionary Christianity, which Zeitsen characterises as launching a "crusade" against polygamy by foregrounding the salvation of women, as in the following declaration: "It is only by the law of the Gospel, incorporated in social life, that the Black woman will be delivered from the shame and slavery of polygamy and attain to the liberty of the children of God and to the high dignity of the Christian wife and mother" (Van Wing qtd. in Zeitsen 147). As the analysis of the novels will show, even though colonial culture and Christianity are critiqued in Ngũgĩ's work, the monogamous, heterosexual love-marriage is adopted as the ideal form of relationship without reflection.

Tracking Ngũgĩ Through Scholarship: The Overlooked Debate on Romantic Love

In a career spanning more than fifty years, Ngũgĩ has not been a stranger to controversy. Starting from a position much like Chinua Achebe's that rebuts stereotypes of Africa, Ngũgĩ rose to the challenge of Karen Blixen's *Out of Africa*, a "classic" of Kenyan colonialism, which he describes as completely racist in its portrayal of Africa. Ngũgĩ says that Blixen attempts to "define

the colonized world for the European colonizer” (“Ngũgĩ on Karen Blixen” 16). Ngũgĩ describes Blixen as “a refined lady of some discrimination and learning” (19), whose work on Africa insults and demeans the African to the ranks below animals and below the land (18). In an interview with Jurgen Maurtini, Anna Rutherford, Kirsten Holst Peterson and others, Ngũgĩ clarifies his views about Karen Blixen’s writing on Africa: “... [Blixen] illustrates some attitudes by a certain type of European or Western mind towards Africa, and so when I’m illustrating these attitudes towards Africa by certain racist writers I try to use examples from her... I find her sinister in the sense that her racism is passed off as an act of love... her declared love for the African is really the same kind of love which you exhibit towards an animal ...” (*Ngũgĩ* 115–16). Thus Ngũgĩ stands in the same relationship to Blixen’s attitudes towards Africa and Africans as Achebe does to Conrad’s assumptions about Africa.

Courting controversy in a different way, Ngũgĩ has been taken to task by colleagues, most notably, Ugandan writer and intellectual Taban lo Liyong, with whom he taught at the University of Nairobi. Lo Liyong criticises Ngũgĩ’s style of promoting ethnocentric Gikũyũ nationalism in his novels, and he has further described Ngũgĩ as opportunistic and dishonest in his representation of Gikũyũ nationalism (1–42).

Through the unrelenting exposure of colonialism, neo-colonialism and the inequalities created and perpetuated by globalisation, Ngũgĩ, especially in his critique of cultural imperialism in higher education, has also recently come into the spotlight through South African Rhodes Must Fall student activists’ calls for a decolonised curriculum. In discussing the decolonising of the university, Achille Mbembe’s study on “Decolonizing Knowledge and the Question of the Archive” looks at the “de-privatization and rehabilitation of the public space” (5) as the starting point for the “decolonization of buildings and of public spaces” (5). Mbembe attempts to

distinguish between the terms “Africanization and decolonization” and explains them from Ngũgĩ’s point of view: “to ‘Africanize’ is part of a larger politics — not the politics of racketeering and looting, but the politics of language — or as he himself puts it, of ‘the mother tongue’... Ngũgĩ uses the term ‘decolonizing’— by which he means not an event that happens once for all at a given time and place, but an ongoing process of ‘seeing ourselves clearly’; emerging out of a state of either blindness or dizziness” (Mbembe 15). For Mbembe, Ngũgĩ advocates for Africans to see themselves clearly and not see “other selves” (15) that are reflections of colonial ideas of who they are. Although Ngũgĩ advocates for Africans to decolonise their minds and imbibe African culture, he projects for the most part European conventions of love and marriage in his works.

In what follows, I am going to present an overview of the most important scholarship on Ngũgĩ’s work, picking up on key debates. There is a very large number of articles on Ngũgĩ’s work and a number of significant monographs. While all the monographs will be referred to, only what for me are the interesting and significant articles and book chapters will be overviewed. Looking back over Ngũgĩ’s career, it is clear that he has been a controversial figure to all parties in the Kenyan literary and political scenes throughout his life. Picking up on Ngũgĩ’s “writing back” to Blixen discussed in the previous paragraph, Errol Trzebinski in “The Karen Blixen Debate: ‘Ngũgĩ’s Racist Attitudes’” (1981) sharply critiques Ngũgĩ. Trzebinski indicts Ngũgĩ’s personality and describes him as a racist and immature (21–23). Trzebinski responds to Ngũgĩ’s criticism on Blixen’s description of her characters by the employment of animal imagery. In his view, Ngũgĩ criticises the way in which Blixen “protests her love for natives and animals in the same breath [...]. In all her descriptions of African characters she resorts to animal imagery. The African was really part of the woods and animals, part of Hegel’s unconscious nature.” (17-18) Ngũgĩ’s representation of Kenyan history also came in for critique early on in his career by fellow Kenyans.

Atieno Odhiambo's article "Rebutting Theory with Correct Theory: A Comment on *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*" (1977) accuses Ngũgĩ and Micere-Mugo for misrepresenting Kenyan history in *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*, where they present Mau Mau as a Pan-Africanist and peasant movement (385–88). The strong correlations between Ngũgĩ's fiction and plays with Gikuyu culture have also produced a number of studies. For example, the *Kikuyu-English Dictionary* edited by T. G. Benson highlights the impact Ngũgĩ's work has had on the expansion of both the Gikuyu and English languages. The strong exposition of Gikuyu culture in Ngũgĩ's work is also clear from Derek R. Peterson's *Creative Writing: Translation, Bookkeeping, and the Work of Imagination in Colonial Kenya*. Ngũgĩ's work has also been read and appreciated across the postcolonial world for the parallels in social and political experience it reveals, as the volume *The Writer as Activist: South Asian Perspectives on Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o* edited by Bernth Lindfors and Bala Kothandaraman shows. The volume is an anthology of essays by teachers, activists and critics from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka describing their engagement with Ngũgĩ's works. As the aforementioned volume suggests, there has also been considerable interest in how to teach Ngũgĩ's novels and also what they teach. Another collection of twenty-three essays on how to teach the various aspects of Ngũgĩ's writing is provided in *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o* edited by Oliver Lovesey.

Clifford B. Robson's *Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o* (1979) was the first scholarly monograph on the work of the most well-known Kenyan writer. With regard to Ngũgĩ's position in the literary development of East Africa, Clifford writes that no novelist in East Africa writing in English has matched Ngũgĩ's output. Clifford compares the reception of works written among Ngũgĩ and contemporaries, such as Grace Ogot and Okot p'Bitek and concludes that Ngũgĩ is the most impressive novelist who awaits new talents to challenge him (137-39). Clifford also analyses

Ngũgĩ's fiction and reckons that Ngũgĩ's fiction is an effort at connecting with his people and their struggle. He emphasises Ngũgĩ's use of historical realism as the foundation of the credibility of his narrations (123-27). G. D. Killam's *An Introduction to the Writing of Ngũgĩ* (1980) was the next major study of Ngũgĩ's work. It posits that Ngũgĩ's purpose in writing was simply to highlight the consequences of public and political events that affected the lives of his people. He identifies Ngũgĩ's principal theme as the concern for "the legitimate aspirations of the peasantry, from which stock all Kenyans come" (14). David Cook & Michael Okenimkpe's monograph *Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o: An Exploration of his Writings* (1997) is another major point of departure for Ngũgĩ's scholarship. In their book, they systematically discuss Ngũgĩ's background, and link his biographical context to his writing. They emphasise Ngũgĩ's commitment to societal issues, especially liberation and the reinvigoration of African society, claiming that the fiction is strongly influenced by the author's childhood and adolescent experience (3–14). Patrick Williams' monograph *Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o* (1999) is a full-length overview of Ngũgĩ's writings that explores similar issues to the book by Cook and Okenimkpe, but from a more strongly theoretical standpoint, drawing on postcolonial theory, Bakhtin and other approaches (10–22). James Ogude's *Ngũgĩ's Novels and African History: Narrating the Nation* (1991) attempts to foreground the importance of Ngũgĩ's work in a national context. This is very similar to the approach of a book that appeared a decade later, namely Simon Gikandi's *Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o* (2000). Gikandi explores how Ngũgĩ's works represent Kenya's complicated history and brings readers to a new understanding of Ngũgĩ's significance in the Kenyan context. In Gikandi's view, Ngũgĩ's literary works are ideally read as entailing the search for a narrative form that might best show the complex culture of postcolonial Africa and the way these are represented in its aesthetic forms (25–38). Both Ogude's and Gikandi's monographs will be referred to in other sections of the thesis since

they both foreground Ngũgĩ's preoccupation with romantic love relationships. Another monograph, written by Lovesey, is also titled *Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o*. This book argues that Ngũgĩ's work may be divided into two modes of writing: the first three novels are written in a realistic mode and the next three written in an allegorical mode. Lovesey perceives Ngũgĩ's art as a reaction to the deprivation of property and, consequently, the struggle for justice and restoration of property (1–4). As a consequence of the canonisation of Ngũgĩ's work both in continental African literature syllabuses and in international world literature courses, a number of study guides and companions to Ngũgĩ's work have been published, most importantly Carol Sicherman's *Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o: A Bibliography of Primary and Secondary Sources, 1957–1987* and *Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o: The Making of a Rebel: A Sourcebook in Kenyan Literature and Resistance* (1990).

The major works above suggest a number of main concerns in Ngũgĩ scholarship, which are explored further in the shorter works on Ngũgĩ's oeuvre. If one expands the survey to include the many other scholarly considerations of Ngũgĩ's oeuvre, then four broad themes or approaches emerge. These are, firstly, the consideration of questions of gender, secondly, the significance of education in Ngũgĩ's fictional project, thirdly, the ways in which history is presented, and finally a consideration of the literary techniques which are the hallmarks of Ngũgĩ's craft. Given the sheer volume of scholarship, only the most significant works and the works most relevant to the topic of this study will be considered here. Probably the most well-known critique of the representation of women in Ngũgĩ's fiction is the work of Florence Stratton. In the chapter "Gender on the Agenda", from the well-known book *Contemporary African Literature and the Politics of Gender*, Florence Stratton explores the novels of Ngũgĩ and Achebe of the 1980s, and argues that there seems to be a departure in the novelists' work of the period that Stratton writes which reveals a transformation of women's status from that of "object to that of subject" (158). Stratton discusses gender as a

metaphor for class in the first section of *Devil on the Cross*. For her, the fact that the central character, Warĩinga, is sexually abused and exploited by men of the new class symbolises the degraded state of neo-colonial Kenya (160–61). However, looking askance at *Devil on the Cross*, she asserts that Ngũgĩ’s depiction of Warĩinga’s transformation nevertheless reveals a preservation of patriarchal relations that traps the character as a sexual object in the lives of men (160). This is quite a common critique in feminist readings of Ngũgĩ’s work, as we shall see further. Well-known postcolonial critic and novelist, Elleke Boehmer, has been similarly critical. Boehmer examines the representation of Ngũgĩ’s female characters in his works and finds that they are a depiction of male figures in female bodies: “Instead of questioning processes of objectification, he places a male weapon in the hands of his women characters and sets them on pedestals as glorified revolutionaries, inspiring symbols for a male struggle” (195). Furthermore, in discussing the role of female characters in the novels, Boehmer stresses that their subjectivity is not fully explored and argues that Ngũgĩ uses his female characters as “allegorical figures representing all that is resilient and strong in the Kenyan people” (189). By so doing, Ngũgĩ subordinates gender to class by setting class above gender distinctions, whatever claim he makes for women’s liberation (191). Brendon Nicholls, who engages both Stratton’s and Boehmer’s critiques, discusses women’s roles and highlights, in particular, representations of clitoridectomy in the novels. Through the symbolism of clitoridectomy, Nicholls argues that gender oppression is deeply implicated in the formation of and the construction of Kenyan postcolonial manhood, which is replicated in Ngũgĩ’s patriarchal discourse (3). Evan Maina Mwangi’s study “Gender, Unreliable Oral Narration, and the Untranslated Preface in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s *Devil on the Cross*” examines Ngũgĩ’s narrative and theatre that support the struggles of women and other downgraded members of the society in their attempts to overcome the harsh realities in which they dwell (30). He cites Warĩinga as both

a victim of marginalisation, exploitation, and abuse of women in African societies, and a figure of “the possibilities of their liberation and eventual leadership roles in destroying exploitative Western capitalism and its local agents” (30). Mwangi asserts that although the novel supports fairness in terms of class, gender and ethnicity (31), there nevertheless is evidence of “exploitation and repression as masculine acts of lack of self-respect, and exposes the reader to the victimization of women in society” (35). Mwangi claims that women in Ngũgĩ’s novel are blind to the exploitation visited upon them by the male exploiter and the wife of the elite class is a symbol of “self-aggrandizement who is ready to use her wealth to achieve what the poor cannot get in this economically and socially hierarchized neocolony” (39).

But not all scholars have been so critical of Ngũgĩ’s brand of feminism. Kerz Okafor, for example, examines the portrayal of Ngũgĩ’s female characters from *Weep Not, Child* (1964) to *Devil on the Cross* (1984). Okafor, by contrast to the earlier critics, suggests that the representation and empowerment of women in Ngũgĩ is part of a more general resistance to all forms of oppression, especially after Ngũgĩ’s adoption of Marxism as an explanatory tool (131–43). Similarly, Eddah Gachukia discusses the essential role women play in the novels and describes them thus: they “act as pillars to their men, often guiding them [men] from illusion to reality” (Gachukia 30). Evan Maina Mwangi’s “Gender and the Erotics of Nationalism in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s Drama” explores Ngũgĩ’s depiction of female characters in an overview of Ngũgĩ’s drama and poetry where he highlights the masculinist subtexts in Ngũgĩ’s plays. In his view, Ngũgĩ’s female characters are featured as weaker because they represent oppressive colonial structures (90–112). Sigrid Peicke broadens the focus by offering a discussion of characters such as Muthoni, Mumbi, and Wanja, comparing them with historical Kenyan women leaders such as Eddah Gachukia.

Education is also an important question in Ngũgĩ criticism going back to the earliest novels. In some ways, education is held to play a similar role to romantic love since it has the potential to transform people for the better, and thus usher in an unoppressive society. Thus education and romantic love in Ngũgĩ's oeuvre are important catalysts for the transformations required on an individual and a social level to create an ideal body politic. But where the focus on romantic love endures across almost all of Ngũgĩ's fiction, the potential held by education in various ways is shown to be problematic. Leading scholar of Ngũgĩ, Simon Gikandi, mentioned above, discusses the theme of education in the monograph chapter titled "Educating Colonial Subjects: The 'Emergency Stories' and *Weep Not, Child*". He looks at the years 1952 to 1962 where a state of emergency was declared in Kenya and suggests that these years are the "most difficult and traumatic in [Kenyan] history" (71). These were also Ngũgĩ's formative years. This period was characterised by the violence of the British colonial administration, filtering also into Ngũgĩ's works. Gikandi discusses the effects of colonial education on the lives of the protagonists in the early short stories and novels, and highlights the ways a colonial identity represented by science and Christian enlightenment form the underpinnings of a modern identity adopted by Ngũgĩ as evidenced in his commitments to social advancement in a united Kenyan nation on the model of the European nation-states (75). Regarding *Weep Not, Child*, Gikandi claims that there is an explicit endorsement of Christianity and education in the novel, focalised through the hero, Njoroge: "Njoroge's desire is for education in the European sense; education is the key to bourgeois identity and civility, what is referred to as 'learning'" (88). He opines that the novel charts the conventions of the typical European narrative of education, educating both the hero and the reader (88). However, he presents education as "a form of social contract, a set of cultural promises centering on the idea of modernity and the desire for emancipation" (89). The novel also

reveals education as a unifier: “for Njoroje, school is posited as the instrument of understanding, social upliftment, and of overcoming the social divisions engendered by colonialism...” (89). Gikandi, furthermore, examines the figure of the mother, and how her influence in education is strongly highlighted by Ngũgĩ: “Indeed, maternity and education are intimately connected in the novel” (82). In Gikandi’s view, the importance of education in the novel is foregrounded through women and their aspirations. Thus, it is “by sending Njoroje to school that Nyokabi [Njoroje’s mother] hopes to compensate for the older son who died fighting for the British in World War II” (82). The problems with *The River Between* are similar. Here Gikandi suggests that “the school is the ‘magic’ that brings people together” (64). Waiyaki, the hero of this novel, is seen as the “black messiah” trained in a “white” school who must function as an “agent of modernity and modernization not tradition” (57). Thus Gikandi argues that Ngũgĩ’s early novels are quite uncritical of the colonial ideology that informs Western models of education.

By contrast, Carol Sicherman explores the way Ngũgĩ’s formal education also later allowed him critical insights into the power of colonial culture, expressed in his more mature works. Sicherman reveals the colonial enculturation effected upon Ngũgĩ and his fellow students by aspects of the higher-educational system in late-colonial East Africa. Sicherman examines the extent of the subversion and asserts that it became an indelible imprint on the victims, whom Ngũgĩ refers to as “neo-colonialists” (12). She analyses the positive and negative effects Ngũgĩ derived at each level of education. Primary education gave him an awareness “of colonialism as an oppressive force” and a pride in peasant culture; secondary education combined “flexible ethnic pluralism, rigid and proselytizing Christianity”; university education increased and encouraged him to write creatively, especially at Leeds, where he found in “Fanon and Marxist theory a

doctrine to replace the Christian imperial model that was inculcated at Alliance and assumed at Makerere” (12–13).

Considering Ngũgĩ’s personal experience with formal education and its impact on African people, he foregrounds the role of education in all his works, especially in his early fiction, as the discussion of Gikandi’s study above intimated. However, as already suggested by Gikandi, there are tensions in Ngũgĩ’s hopes for the possibilities presented by education. Other critics who focus on the representation of education in the early novels, *The River Between* and *Weep Not, Child*, have argued along similar lines that a lot is invested in education, but that social change based on education seems doomed to fail. David Cook and Michael Okenimkpe reveal that the novel, “*The River Between* poses a question which remains urgently relevant today as to what form of education is desirable in Africa — or elsewhere” (30). They write that education must embrace the social arts, and will involve above all a sensible training in political concepts, and so be a basis for making real choices. Robson underscores the role of education as a means of reconciliation: “[e]ducation is, to Waiyaki, not a way of driving out the settlers, but also of awakening and uniting the sleeping ridges” (13). For Robson, “Waiyaki’s school is a living symbol to the attempt to blend two cultures” (13). The idea of reconciliation is also highlighted by Elleke Boehmer, who describes Waiyaki’s vision of establishing schools as “‘self-help’ schools for the people to ‘build together’, to ‘champion’ their own cultural ways” (181). According to G.D. Killam, Ngũgĩ never resolves the question of what education can do in the context of antagonisms. He identifies Ngũgĩ’s interest in *The River Between* in three phases: “the divisive influence of the Europeans on the autonomy of the tribe and explores the possibility, first through a consideration of education, and ultimately in an advocacy of love, of reconciling opposite ideas and factions” (21). He asserts that Ngũgĩ’s employment of sacrificial love symbolising “an agent of reconciliation is equally unsatisfying”

(32). Likewise, Harish Narang's chapter "Education is Not All: *Weep Not, Child* and *The River Between*" explores the role of education in the midst of Kenyan culture. For him, the two novels recount events relating to the introduction of western education as well as Christianity. Waiyaki realises that "education for an oppressed people is not all," the new awareness also needs "expression at a political end" (51).

In his discussion of *Weep Not, Child*, Killam examines three separate themes: the appropriateness of a young Kenyan getting a western education, the influence of Christianity in the Kenyan context (since education is provided by a mission school), and the causes and prosecution of the independence struggle (36–37). Narang describes the novel as a depiction of a typical Gikuyu family, "a microcosm for the entire Kenyan society", which is destroyed when it tries to adapt itself to the ways of the West, particularly culture (57). Cook and Okenimkpe see *Weep Not, Child* as an epitome of a crucial and complex phase in Gikuyu experience (49). For Robson the novel identifies the central point of hope as education: "[t]he school is a meeting point for different tribes, Nandi, Luo, Wakamba and Giriama" (29) We see that in both novels, Ngũgĩ's intention to use education as a unifier fails because both protagonists, Waiyaki and Njoroge, terminate their schooling as a result of cultural conflicts. Romantic love emerges as a more important potential unifier instead of education.

In the intervening novels, education is lost sight of almost completely. Ngũgĩ no longer projects the theme of education as a unifier in his subsequent novels, for formal education loses its role as an important consideration in the struggle for independence. However, education is taken up again in the last novel, *Wizard of the Crow*, but, as Raphael Dalleo argues in a more sophisticated way, the novel itself models pedagogic approaches, rather than suggesting that formal (Western) schooling is the answer. Dalleo suggests that formal education is not presented

as a social solution, but the novel itself is shown to model different approaches to education. Dalleo argues that the novel features a variety of teachers and educational situations, and demonstrates that Ngũgĩ intensely advances the exploration of different philosophies of pedagogy: “*Wizard of the Crow* shows a postcolonial teaching style that embraces ambivalence, challenges patriarchy, and offers a new questioning teacherly project distinct from colonial, neocolonial, or anticolonial pedagogy” (147). Commenting on education from a completely different angle, William Slaymaker discusses the strategies to employ in *teaching* the novel *Wizard of the Crow* to undergraduate students, where Ngũgĩ’s presentation of the economic injustices of colonialism, neo/post-colonialism and globalisation may impact activism in the global North. Slaymaker opines that a variety of methods should be used to enable students to read this dense and long novel, including, for example, the creation of “cartoon pictographic narratives” to help students visualise and interpret key visual images and draw conclusions from the book covers (13). Most of these readings of education in Ngũgĩ’s oeuvre thus suggest the shortcomings, ambiguities and complexities of social transformation through Western models of education. The later studies, by contrast, are more positive since they highlight what education through a reading of Ngũgĩ’s novels may teach metropolitan students about postcolonial contexts.

The third general theme in scholarship on Ngũgĩ’s work is history. Ngũgĩ’s writing, in almost all his fiction and essays, tracks the history of Kenya from allusions to the precolonial period, to coloniality, neo/post-coloniality and globalisation. Alamin Mazrui and Lupenga Mphande explore Ngũgĩ’s novels, except *Wizard of the Crow*, in terms of how history has evolved in the fiction into a weapon in response to the increasing intimacy between his academic intellection and his political activism (51). They highlight, in particular, the depiction of Mau Mau in the novels. They suggest that Ngũgĩ employs the idea of Mau Mau “to resurrect the militant,

historical Mau Mau and employ it to confront present-day problems” (49). They write that Ngũgĩ’s depiction of Mau Mau history is “a symbol of resistance against oppression that has direct bearing on the present-day politics of Kenya” (Mazrui and Mphande 50). They further suggest that Ngũgĩ foregrounds six important issues concerning the Kenyan nation, namely, nationhood, class, gender, local concerns, ideology, and leadership issues (Mazrui and Mphande 52–56). The analysis of the importance of history in Ngũgĩ’s novels is taken further by W. O Maloba. Maloba explores the relevance of Ngũgĩ’s personal background to his interpretation of Kenya’s history. He asserts that Ngũgĩ’s creativity is a result of his “consciousness of economic hardship suffered by his people and of the political and cultural brutality levelled against them in the colonial and postcolonial periods” (61), a consciousness created by personal experience of hardship and injustice. For Maloba, Ngũgĩ, like other pioneering African writers, attempts to chronicle the injustices and economic exploitation meted out as a consequence of colonisation and its outcomes. He identifies Ngũgĩ’s main concern as “the exposure of the crimes of the comprador class in Kenya” (62) and how he identifies with the peasants and workers.

Sicherman tracks the way Ngũgĩ chronicles the history of Kenyan resistance explored within various political, cultural, and historiographical contexts. For Sicherman: “Ngũgĩ blurs the lines between history and literature and that, perhaps as a consequence of this blurring of the two genres, the distinction between Ngũgĩ and his narrators and certain characters also becomes blurred” (348). She asserts further that the novel *Petals of Blood* makes allusions to world black history and contains a number of references to history that fail to distinguish fact from fiction (351). The blurring of the lines between story and history is significant for Sicherman since it suggests the ways history may be rewritten and reinterpreted. Taking the idea of the subjectivity of history further, Kathy Kessler argues that Ngũgĩ’s novels are implicitly postmodern, but that

the interrogative nature of his work does not exclude his “commitment to Marxism” (77). For Kessler, Ngũgĩ develops his aesthetic and political project through a “dialectic of language, history, and power” (82). Patrick Williams’s “Ngũgĩ and Sembène: Teaching the Text of History” examines Ngũgĩ’s commitment to history in his texts and compares him with Sembène Ousmane. Williams opines that Ngũgĩ has more consistently argued for the political utility of historical knowledge in both his essays and his fiction than Sembène (78).

Probably the most comprehensive consideration of history in Ngũgĩ’s fiction is contained in James Ogude’s *Ngũgĩ’s Novels and African History: Narrating the Nation* (1991). Ogude highlights Ngũgĩ’s sense of history as crucially significant in the struggle for socio-political change in postcolonial Kenya. In his bid to write about the decolonisation of Kenya, Ngũgĩ criticises the African elites for capturing state power at independence “as mere watchdogs of Western capitalisation” and discusses the strategies for African revolution and the theme of cultural imperialism (Ogude 27). Ogude identifies the most significant asset in traditional African society as land ownership, which was perceived as belonging in common to all people. However, after European invasion and taking over of African lands, conflicts and suffering arose. He highlights that Ngũgĩ’s representation of the history of conflict in Africa is the history of colonisation (27–28). He describes the land as “both a metaphor for struggle and the physical space for political context in virtually all the writer’s works” (28). Ogude suggests further that Ngũgĩ criticises the postcolonial economy where Africans crave Western goods. For Ngũgĩ, the avaricious national bourgeoisie are “mere consumers helping to entrench trade imbalances between the poor and the rich Western countries, while perpetuating the poverty of their own people” (30). Ogude summarises Ngũgĩ’s sense of the history of postcolonial Kenya as one in which “the peasants and workers grow poorer, where women are exploited, [and] where the national cultures of the people

are trampled upon by powerless bourgeoisie” (32). As the study will show, there is a correlation between Ngũgĩ’s use of history to his depiction of romantic love in the sense that individual relationships have historical impact and are able to withstand history. Yet, in addition to foregrounding the history of Kenya, and the other themes identified above, Ngũgĩ’s works are also distinguished by a wide range of literary styles and techniques, which are the focus of various scholars, as we shall see.

Ngũgĩ’s oeuvre is marked by fairly radical transformations in stylistic approach that form the interest of a number of scholars. For example, Cook and Okenimkpe assert that Ngũgĩ has a unique style compared with his contemporaries. They discuss Ngũgĩ’s simplicity of language in the early novels as “neither elementary nor a reduction of language to bald outlines, but ... a distilling of all the main possibilities of a tongue so as to arrive at a clarity which has both subtlety and richness” (238). Ngũgĩ, they say, employs the full resources of English by making use of “each separate element in its most straightforward form” (239). He uses varied and highly concentrated structures in his sentences (238). Ogude’s monograph explores Ngũgĩ’s frequent use of allegorical techniques and the effects of allegory on his characterisation. Ogude argues that Ngũgĩ’s use of allegory leads to a deliberate construction of character types that act as the ultimate vehicles for his discourses on the postcolonial state in Kenya. He highlights the grotesque body and generic names that capture the essential in delineation of these character types (78). Other critics on style and techniques include Koku Amuzu, Emmanuel Ngara and Jack O. Ogembo. Amuzu explores tone and diction, narrative structure, epic qualities, and satire in *Petals of Blood* and *Devil on the Cross*. Ngara examines the use of tone, biblical allusion, and flashbacks to enhance characterisation in *A Grain of Wheat* (81–98), while Ogembo explores Ngũgĩ’s use of language in

Weep Not, Child and *The River Between* and compares the specifics of Ngũgĩ's language with that of a younger generation of writers (94–105).

More generally, Ngũgĩ's novels elicit debates and controversies regarding the “conflict” between tradition and modernity, the impact of western education, the theme of corruption and dictatorship, anticolonial politics, the role of women, orature and orality and the like. The full range of responses is too big to consider productively here, but specific scholars will be referred to as relevant in the chapters of the thesis. What should be clear from the brief overview provided is that the question of romantic love has not been addressed in Ngũgĩ's fiction in any comprehensive or considered way, even though it is an element that is constant throughout his work across virtually all genres in which he writes. Since there is a love story in almost every one of Ngũgĩ's novels, love relationships are alluded to in most of the studies cited and that will be cited, but these references are tangential to a focus on other concerns. Romantic love, in my view, is far more significant in Ngũgĩ's works and thought than the literature suggests. The theme of love is predominant in virtually all of Ngũgĩ's novels, plays and short stories, but the link between personal and political relations and the possible transformations in personal relations corresponding with the changing political views have not been considered.

The monographs by Gikandi and Ogude need to be mentioned in a discussion of romantic love since they highlight, to a certain extent, the importance of eros in Ngũgĩ's work. Gikandi, in a chapter in his book *Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o* titled “Narrative and Nationalist Desire: Early Short Stories and *The River Between*”, explores the importance of romance in the early fiction and notes that “romantic love is an imaginative mechanism for overcoming the divisions embedded in the polis” (66). He refers also to the instance in the short story “Mugumo” where a wife, Mukami, returns to the husband, co-wives and tribe as “Ngũgĩ's romantic identification with the desire of

Karing'a (Gikuyu cultural nationalism) against the authority of the *kirore* (the proponents of colonial modernity)” (45). Gikandi interrogates Ngũgĩ’s use of romance as a call for national unity using narrative techniques that are borrowed from the modern masters of English literature. He describes both “Mugumo” and another short story, “And the Rain Came Down,” as narratives of “self-reflection” moving to “romantic resolution” (46). Similarly, Ogude’s chapter “Allegory, Romance and the Nation: Women as Allegorical Figures in Ngũgĩ’s Novels” in *Ngũgĩ’s Novels and African History: Narrating the Nation* analyses romantic relationships in Ngũgĩ’s works as allegorical tropes. Ogude describes Ngũgĩ’s employment of romance between characters divided by tribe and class in *Weep Not, Child* as “Ngũgĩ’s vehicle for ideal nationhood” (111). He argues that Ngũgĩ employs romance as “a trope for achieving communal redemption” and that it represents the possibility for “unity and reconciliation” (111). One other study that focuses on romantic love specifically is Elias Bongmba’s article “On Love: Literary Images of a Phenomenology of Love in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s *The River Between*”. This article explores the love between Waiyaki and Nyambura as “an expression of eros which can be considered an alternative path for resolving conflicts imposed by the colonial experience” (388). He describes the narrator’s portrayal of love as a “complex feeling” and highlights that “although Nyambura and Waiyaki feel as one in a moment of passion, it is also a moment of pain, and such juxtaposition of contrasting emotions captures the concreteness of love and evokes the sympathy of the reader to the difficulties that lie ahead for them” (383). He discusses the theme of reconciliation because the narrative sets the love between Waiyaki and Nyambura as an alternative path of resistance to colonial Christianity and patriarchal modes of existence in what Ngũgĩ clearly portrays as the nightmare of life in a colonial society (375–76). He emphasises the liberation that comes through resolution and unification as the outcome of the love between Waiyaki and Nyambura: “There is

little doubt that Waiyaki's love for Nyambura, which solidifies as he drives ahead with the work of the school in which he sees the future of the community, is symbolic of this decision to pursue a path of reconciliation, primarily, between the two communities who struggle with each other but need a leader who will be the link between them and move them towards freedom" (376).

The observations of Gikandi, Ogude and Bongmba on the significance of love in Ngũgĩ's novels will be reiterated, but also extended further, in this thesis which identifies romantic love as the human relationship that endures across Ngũgĩ's entire writing career, and in which he invests the most as a catalyst for positive social transformation.

Explorations of Love in Africa

It is clear from the foregoing that despite the prominence of romantic relationships in Ngũgĩ's narratives, with a few exceptions, its importance has not been identified in Ngũgĩ scholarship. This is part of a bigger scholarly problem since scholarship on the emotion of romantic love is conspicuously absent in an African context. The study of romantic love or eros needs to be distinguished from the study of sexualities, which has received significant scholarly attention, especially in the twenty-first century across disciplines in the Arts and Humanities. Okafor Samuel Okechi's "Globalization and the Indigenous Concept of Sexuality in African Tradition: Charting a New Course for Sexual Right and Safe Society" examines trends in the perception of sex and sexual relationships in African societies in the face of cultural globalisation using the available ethnographic literatures (1-2). Marc Epprecht's "Sexuality, Africa, History" presents overviews of the history of writing about sexuality in Africa, the representation of Africa in global sexuality studies, and the "changing ways that sexuality has been treated in the historiography" (1260).

Signe Arnfred's chapter "African Sexuality/Sexuality in Africa: Tales and Silences" in *Rethinking Sexuality in Africa* (2004) categorises issues of sexuality in Africa into three parts: female victimisation leading to violence or death, conceptions of African AIDS, and discussions of sexuality in African feminists' work (59–60).

Most studies of sexuality, however, have focused on homosexuality in the African context. There are two schools of thought regarding the discussion of homosexuality in Africa. While one caucus, mainly represented in popular media and on the internet, asserts that homosexuality is un-African, the other group, mainly the formal scholarship of homosexuality, holds a contrary view and traces the African origins of African homosexuality. Epprecht's *Heterosexual Africa? The History of an Idea from the Age of Exploration to the Age of AIDS* considers the perception of homosexuality as a foreign idea in Africa. He argues that it was homophobia and racism, as opposed to homosexuality, that were introduced to Africa by European colonialists and attributes the spread of homophobia to AIDS (48). Busangokwakhe Dlamini's "Homosexuality in the African Context" explores the compatibility of homosexuality with African culture. As with Epprecht's view, the study reveals that "the colonialists did not introduce homosexuality to Africa, but rather intolerance of it and systems of surveillance and regulation for expressing" (135). Homosexuality can be found in Africa and it is compatible with African culture, cosmology and spirituality (135). Also Deborah P. Amory's "Homosexuality' in Africa: Issues and Debates" explores the study of "homosexuality" or same-sex erotics and identities in the new era of African studies. For Amory, the mantra that African politicians and others chant that "There Is No Homosexuality In Africa" is often accompanied by the deceptive accusation that "homosexuality is a 'western perversion' imposed upon or adopted by African populations" (5). These more general studies are supported by more localised studies. Scholarship on same-sex and lesbian

sexuality include Signe Arnfred's article "Sex, Food, and Female Power: Discussion of Data Material from Northern Mozambique" (2007), which explores how sexuality, food and cooking are perceived as avenues for women's subordination and suggests possible areas female can wield power over their husbands in post-colonial Africa society through these same duties (141–42). Gabriel R. du Plessis's Master's thesis on the topic "What Mugabe Said: Homosexuality in Africa and the Problem of Context" examines and problematises the term "homosexuality" as a means of articulating same-sex practices in Africa, especially in the Zimbabwean political context. In so doing, it potentially enables a more comprehensive understanding of the term, "homosexuality". Rahul Rao's "Re-membering Mwanga: Same-Sex Intimacy, Memory and Belonging in Postcolonial Uganda" explores the claim that same-sex intimacy is alien to Uganda. It focusses attention on "contemporary Ugandan remembering of the martyrdoms" and unravels the "genealogies of homophobia as well as possibilities for sexual dissidence that lurk within public culture" (1). Stella Nyanzi's "Dismantling Reified African Culture through Localised Homosexualities in Uganda" revisits the age-old polemical assertion that homosexuality is 'un-African' (953). Following on the findings of studies such as the above, Ezra Chitando and Pauline Mateveke's research identifies both the positive and negative outcomes of the Africanisation of homosexuality in African discourses. They conclude by highlighting the need for Africa to engage with the reality of homosexuality realistically, sensitively and progressively (137). The overview above represents just a small sample of the work on sexuality that exists in the context of African studies, but the study of romantic love as affect is rare.

One of the first difficulties that a study of love in Africa encounters is the culturally discriminatory idea that romantic love is a contribution of Western culture to the world, an idea encountered in sociology, anthropology, history, and philosophy. The most well-known study

whose findings disprove the idea that “romantic love is unique to Euro-American culture” (149) is William R. Jankowiak’s and Edward F. Fischer’s “A Cross-Cultural Perspective on Romantic Love” (1992). Defining the concept of romantic love as “any intense attraction that involves the idealization of the other, within an erotic context, with the expectation of enduring for some time into the future” (150), Jankowiak and Fischer do a cross-cultural survey for the presence of romantic love within individual cultures. They conclude that out of the sampled world cultures, 88.5% experience romantic love, which is contrary to “the popular idea that romantic love is essentially limited to or the product of Western culture” (154). What the study emphasises is that romantic love is an emotion that is disproportionately foregrounded in Euro-American culture through literature, films and other forms of popular culture. Despite the prevalence of representations of romantic love, Jankowiak and Fischer’s study shows that not everyone in Euro-American cultures experiences love (153). But the study underlines the fact that the emotion of romantic love is a cultural universal, so much so that in almost every culture, there are some individuals who, often in the face of severe negative sanctions, do fall in love. The problem occurs that in many cultures romantic love may be “muted, though never entirely repressed, by other cultural variables” (153). Thus romantic love is present in all cultures across historical periods, but for complex social reasons eros plays different functions in different societies, and is brought into relief to a greater or lesser extent depending on a host of interconnected factors.

It is thus quite surprising that, in spite of the universality of romantic love, African scholarship has not focused seriously on the concept of romantic love. One exception is the volume *Love in Africa*, (2009), edited by Lynn Thomas and Jennifer Cole. Thomas and Cole interrogate why there seems to be so little scholarship on love in Africa, even though love is integral to African culture as its orature and popular culture shows: “So why not love in Africa? Is it because scholars’

epistemological and analytic concerns have blinded them to the presence of love? Or it is because Africans have had powerful attachments that they do not formulate in terms of ‘love’? Or is it some combination of the two?” (1) By contrast with Jankowiak and Fischer, Thomas and Cole approach the concept of love as an “analytical problem rather than a universal category” (3). They explore how emotions are embedded in historical and cultural practices and how material conditions have enabled different kinds of relationships. Furthermore, they challenge scientific and emotional scholarship that has reduced African intimacy to sex. They assert that discussions on emotions and intimate relationships in Africa have been reduced and been replaced largely by analyses of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Africa, which emerges as a striking subject since the late 1980s. In these studies, “few have expressed how that behaviour is embedded in emotional frameworks” (3–4). They also attribute the reduction of the discussion of love to the question only of sex to the historical apparatus set up by colonial culture to dehumanise Africans and portray them as the “‘other’ of the European Enlightenment” (4). They argue that there is a need for anthropologists to pay critical attention to how “contemporary discourses, sentiments, and practices of love are the product of complex historical processes and intersections” (4).

All of the chapters in the volume *Love in Africa* are interesting, but just a few of the essays will be mentioned here since they allude to ideas that will be explored further in later chapters in the context of Ngũgĩ’s novels. Cole’s study “Love, Money, and Economies of Intimacy in Tamatave, Madagascar” draws attention to the ways in which money or material gifts may be part of the definition of love in African contexts, rather than being a debased form of economic exchange. Cole finds that among young Madagascan men and women money is so tied into the expression of romantic love, that it is impossible to separate the intimate relation out from economics. There is no *fitiavina* (love) without money being passed between lovers. Cole refers

to these “love exchanges” as a sexual economy (116), where love and material concerns are ideally fused (113). Thus, while romantic love is presented in a wholly idealised way in most western representations, the studies of love in Africa in the Thomas and Cole volume highlight how economic questions might be part of the relationship of love. Thus concerns outside of the pure abstract emotion of love are not held to devalue love, but are part of its expression. (In a later chapter, the repressed connection of love with economics in Anglo-American culture will be identified and discussed). For example, Daniel Jordan Smith’s chapter “Managing Men, Marriage, and Modern Love: Women’s Perspective on Intimacy and Male Infidelity in Southeastern Nigeria” highlights economics in the context of marriage. Smith asserts that intimacy and exchange represent “a more subtle reality in which the very expression of love involves gifts, economic support, and a range of material exchanges that both solidify and build on sexual and emotional dimensions of intimate relationships” (164). Megan Vaughan’s study “The History of Romantic Love in Sub-Sahara Africa: Between Interest and Emotion” sums up the findings of many other studies. Vaughan approaches romantic love through two avenues: first, the attempt to recreate emotional love under changing economic and political conditions; second, to trace the history of love to colonialism and recent globalisation (10). Vaughan argues that “African cultural productions around love reflect a realistic version of the love story, a more socially embedded love and one in which economics and emotion are closely related” (20).

Another idea key to the analysis of the role of love in Ngũgĩ’s novels is the relationship between love and marriage. The essays in the volume by Thomas and Cole also highlight the transformations in ideas about marriage in Africa as a consequence of missionary activity and colonial ordinances that impacted on family life, and currently media representations that form a part of the cultural reach of globalisation. As a consequence of these historical and cultural forces,

love has become a major condition or requirement for marriage in many contemporary African contexts where other concerns played a more important role in pre-colonial contexts. The research done by Jankowiak and Fischer shows that romantic love is a universal phenomenon. However, most sociological studies concur that love as a precondition for marriage is linked with European culture as Europe moved from feudalism to early capitalism. The most important work that looks at the development of the modern ideal of the love marriage is Lawrence Stone's *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500–1800*, (1977), which argues that over time, affection became more important in marriage than political or economic questions which were most important in the medieval period. This idea is reinforced by a range of other sociologists of personal relationships. Anthony Giddens, for example, asserts that pre-modern European marriages were contracted based on economic considerations; however, the basis for marriage in modernity is romantic love, “which began to make its presence felt from the late 18th century onwards” (39), incorporating “freedom and self-realization” (40). Modern romantic love, for Giddens, is part of a general democratisation that forms the basis of marriage, but also allows partners to the marriage the freedom to exit the marriage when the partnership no longer brings self-fulfillment (182). Similarly, Niklas Luhmann suggests that the institutionalisation of love “as a foundation of marriage is a modern achievement” (27) “which goes hand in hand with increasing societal complexity” (28). Ulrich Beck and Elizabeth Beck also explore love in the contemporary period and argue that “[p]eople marry for the sake of love and [ironically] get divorced for the sake of love” (11).

It is also possible to track this development in a literary context. Here romantic love as a privileged emotional sentiment is considered to emerge out of the courtly love tradition. Ann Swidler's *Talk of Love: How Culture Matters* (2001) traces the mythology of romantic love. In her chapter on “Love and Marriage”, she writes about the origins of romantic love in European cultural

history and refers to scholars who agree that “courtly love poetry, which emerged in Europe at the end of the eleventh century, created a fundamentally new vision of love, self, and society” (112). She defines love in courtly tradition as an expression of “a sudden and certain passion (‘love at first sight’) for an idealized lover”. This love could transform “the self, making a person virtuous; but it also separated individuals from society, leading them to defy social conventions in pursuit of a more personal destiny” (112). But while courtly love was expressed in adulterous liaisons, European historical and cultural developments led the supercharged emotion of romantic love to become a condition for marriage in subsequent centuries. The love marriage was spread as an ideal personal relationship through colonisation, imperialism and globalisation to the rest of the world.

This is the implication of many of the chapters in Thomas and Cole’s edited collection *Love in Africa*. The chapters in question include Lynn Thomas’ “Love, Sex, and the Modern Girl in 1930s Southern Africa,” Laura Fair’s “Making Love in the Indian Ocean: Hindi Films, Zanzibari Audiences and the Construction of Romance in the 1950 and 1960s,” Kenda Mutongi’s “ ‘Dear Dolly’s’ Advice: Representations of Youth, Courtship, and Sexualities in Africa 1960–1980,” Rachel Spronk’s “Media and the Therapeutic Ethos of Romantic Love in Middle-Class Nairobi,” and Adeline Masquelier’s “Lessons from Rubí: Love, Poverty, and the Educational Value of Televised Dramas in Niger”. The trend identified is that there is a move from the intimate relation that wholly supports social structures through marriages that are arranged, to increasing individualisation and the predominance of romantic love between two people leading to marriage in contemporary Africa. In exploring the global reach of the love marriage, Jennifer S. Hirsch and Holly Wardlow’s edited volume of *Modern Loves: The Anthropology of Romantic Courtship and Companionate Marriage* (2006) suggests that “the modern identity of love is about the cultivation of a more individuali[s]ed self — a self who has a particular style, particular tastes, particular

constellation of relationships not necessarily based on kinship, and, finally, a romantic relationship — in which each partner recogni[s]es the uniqueness of the other” (14–15).

The key ideas discussed above will be expanded in later chapters where I will also show the specific ways in which Ngũgĩ’s novels engage these questions.

Love in African Literature, Orature and Popular Culture

A survey of most of the literature of twentieth-century Africa which has become canonised in African literature syllabuses in schools and in African literature courses at universities could not be described as love stories since they tend to foreground other issues that seemed more important in the contexts in which they were written. Romantic love has generally been considered to be feminine and frivolous. Twentieth-century male African writers focused on recuperating Africa from colonial representations of African society and then went on to write narratives about resistance to colonialism. In the period of independence, writers focused on the pitfalls of nationalism, including forms of neo-colonialism, and the corruption and greed of postcolonial elites. Twentieth-century female African writers have explored the concerns noted through a specifically female point of view, showing up various forms of patriarchy and the ways that indigenous social relations were negatively impacted by colonialism to the detriment of women. This very general summary hides the fact that if one studies these literary works very carefully, one finds love stories embedded in the narratives. But these love stories have rarely been regarded as defining the work, with the result that there has also been very little literary scholarship of romantic love in African literature.

One exception to this general pattern is the focus of the Ghanaian writer Ama Ata Aidoo. The majority of Aidoo's plays, novels and short stories are constructed around a love plot. Aidoo also edited an anthology of short stories about love, titled *African Love Stories*. (2006). In the introduction to the short story anthology, Aidoo notes many of the concerns observed here. She suggests that even though love has not been directly considered in many great works of African fiction, it is too powerful and significant a question for her to overlook:

It is indisputable that, apart from what nature endows humans and occasionally visits on us in the form of disasters and destruction, love is at the bottom of nearly all earthly happenings: great achievements as well as mischief, murder and mayhem. Indeed, what we may choose not to remember is that love is not only the most serious literature, but one of the only three human tales that are. The other two being our quest for and worship of the Creator, and politics. (vii)

Aidoo emphasises that despite the absence of a focused attention to love in African literature, it is there in the work of most of the writers like Ngũgĩ, Mariama Bâ, Lewis Nkosi, Buchi Emecheta, Grace Ogot, and, of course, her own work. Aidoo further highlights that “Africa, like all the other regions of this earth, has been, and is, full of great love stories” (viii). These have not, however, been widely disseminated since they exist locally in oral traditions that have not been fully explored and represented in modern print contexts. In other words, writers have not explicitly and fully delved into this dimension of oral cultures. Regarding African literature, Aidoo concludes with a discussion she had with an unnamed interlocutor:

The only problem ... is that in the modern African novel as a love story, the love story is *never* revealed as such [b]ecause it is completely subsumed under “the more important social and political issues” which the modern African writer (thinks she/he) has to deal with: incompetent leadership and their betrayal of their peoples, the antics of the “lumpen proletariat” ..., complete economic collapse, racial tensions, outmoded traditional thought and practices ...” This list too is endless. (xi)

It should be remarked upon, however, that even though Aidoo includes many male writers, including Ngũgĩ, in her list of writers who implicitly write about love, she does not include any male writers in the anthology of African short stories about love.

Aidoo’s observation about the prevalence of love stories in African oral and traditional cultures is borne out by many other scholars. Ruth Finnegan, for example, examines the theme of love among the Shi of the Eastern Congo, where marital relationships are the most common single subject in songs, with many of them concerned with marriage itself and the relationships that lead up to marriage. She refutes the notion that African cultures do not express love in their marriages by revealing that “[t]he number of love songs recorded is surprising — at least to those brought up to the idea that the concept of personal love is bound to be lacking in African cultures. Even the idea of courtly and romantic love is not always absent” (246). Finnegan concludes that “[l]ove and marriage are probably the commonest themes” (245) in African oral traditions.

Other studies have focussed on the representation of love in popular cultures in Africa. The focus of some of the work done should be clear from the references in the section above to chapter

titles in the Thomas and Cole edited volume. But a little more attention will be paid here to love in Kenyan popular cultures. Tom Odhiambo, for example, in his article “Specificities: Troubled Love and Marriage as Work in Kenyan Popular Fiction”, explores the depiction of love and marriage in Kenyan popular fiction of the 1970s. He argues that “the troubled and dysfunctional nature of love and marriage depicted in Kenyan popular fiction is a function of love and marriage taken to be ‘work’” (423). He identifies dissatisfaction with a marital partner as one of the social realities that characterises Kenyan popular fiction in the 1970s as “men and women go out in discreet and secret search for another person with whom to share their unsatisfying/dissatisfying life” (Odhiambo 425). Odhiambo explores the subject of unfaithful or adulterous husbands in David Maillu’s books specifically. The titles considered include *Unfit for Human Consumption* (1973), *My Dear Bottle* (1973), *The Kommon Man* (1975–76) and *No!* (1976). Odhiambo posits that one of the reasons why relationships presented in Maillu’s texts are described as always in trouble is because of the “confusion that surrounds love, sex, romance and marriage” (429). Odhiambo’s observation in the analysis of the material he considers is that love fails since marriage is considered in the narratives to be a form of work. The point that needs to be made here is that popular literature intended for local audiences actively and consciously explores what is presented as incidental in most canonised African literature of the twentieth century.

In a related study which also considers love through its failure, Catherine Muhomah’s “What Do Women Want?: Versions Of Masculinity In Kenyan Romantic Fiction”, Muhomah analyses masculinity in relation to romantic writing in two texts: Asenath Odaga’s *Between the Years* (1987) and *Riana* (1991). The essay argues that the two texts offer insights into the expectations and hopes of the female protagonists in their romantic relationships with men. She discusses the concept of romantic love and the expectations that go with it as “the springboard into

an analysis of how masculinity is constructed around issues of monogamy, fatherhood and wealth” (77). Gender tensions in love and marriage are explored by Muhomah through the lens of masculinity again in another study, “A Failed Romance: Reading Masculinity and Love in David Karanja’s *The Girl Was Mine*”. Here, a story described by Muhomah as a “typical romantic plot of man and woman meeting, falling in love and encountering several mishaps, after which they eventually get married and live happily ever after” (Muhomah 27) is shown to be untypical in that it links the female genre of romance with men, and highlights problematic urban masculinities linked to wealth accumulation. In the novels studied by Muhomah, unlike the sociological studies in Thomas and Cole’s *Love in Africa*, material exchange is not part of the expression of love. Instead, economics are linked to the definition of negative ideas of manhood. Again these novels, like the novels studied by Odhiambo, do not shy away from representing romantic love directly.

In the twenty-first century, African literature may have developed the confidence to recognise the importance of the theme of love in conjunction with “realpolitik” since love has become the explicit focus of many contemporary novels and short stories. A case in point is the success of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, whose novels, *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) and *Americanah* (2013), are shaped by questions of love and intimacy. There are a number of other contemporary works where the same trend is observed, for example, Aminatta Forna’s *The Memory of Love* (2010), which juxtaposes personal stories of love and loss within the wider context of the destruction of the Sierra Leone civil war. Zoë Norridge’s study on “Sex as Synecdoche: Intimate Languages of Violence in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun* and Aminatta Forna’s *The Memory of Love*” pinpoints the descriptions of sex, and in particular sexual pleasure, that have flourished in the works of African writers across the continent. Her main objective is to examine the correlation between “sex and conflict” in the two novels. (Norridge 19-29). Also, love and marriage are explored

in Taiye Selasi's novel *Ghana Must Go* (2013), which relates the story of love and family conflict in a transnational context. Other recent novels and short stories which explore the personal relationship of love as a central concern include Ben Okri's *Dangerous Love* (1996), Abubakar Adam Ibrahim's *Season of Crimson Blossoms* (2015), many of the novels and short stories of Sudanese-Scottish writer, Leila Aboulela, and a collection of short romance stories by seven leading African authors in the *Valentine's Day Anthology* (2015) published online by Ankara Press, an imprint of the Nigerian publishing house, Cassava Republic. The Ankara imprint consciously seeks to correct the skewed picture of African literature that ignores the centrality of romance. The authors and stories are as follows: Chuma Nwokolo's "Fish", Hawa Jande Golakai's "Candy Girl", the late Binyavanga Wainaina's "The Idea Is To Be Sealed In", Sarah Ladipo-Manyika's "Woman In The Orange Dress", Toni Kan's "Cotyledons", Edwige-Renée Dro's "Solitaire", and Abubakar Adam Ibrahim's "Painted Love". Many of the *Valentine's Day Anthology* short stories address homosexual relationships. The *Valentine's Day Anthology* gives one a sense of how romance in contemporary Africa is conceived. Hawa Jande Golakai's "Candy Girl" portrays the repugnant episode of an adulterous man who carelessly poisons his wife with candies meant for his mistress on a Valentine's Day. The wife chances on the candies, and she is made to believe the candies are the husband's gift on Valentine's Day. Innocently, she eats the candies and dies as a result of her food allergies (5–9). Binyavanga Wainaina's "The Idea is to be Sealed in" presents a same-sex romantic relationship in which George Waruriu Odero, a young boy, is sexually enticed by older men (11–13). Sarah Ladipo-Manyika's "Woman in the Orange Dress" relates the story of a man and a woman on crutches with no leg who go to a restaurant on a dinner date celebrating their love to the admiration of the narrator (18). Toni Kan's "Cotyledons" narrates the plight of a young married woman who is pushed into adultery by the husband, Izu

(22–23). Edwige-Renée Dro’s “Solitaire” tells the story of a young woman who is engaged but realises that she is in love with her ex-lover, who attempts to convince her to call off her arranged wedding (27–29). In Abubakar Adam Ibrahim’s “Painted Love”, Dr. Yaro falls in love with Inara and proposes marry to her; however, Inara refuses for fear of being “caged by commitments and conventions, romantic or otherwise” (33). After so many years of waiting, Yaro wins back Inara’s love and she eventually forgoes her commitments and returns to Yaro (33–35). There is presently a “boom” of African same-sex literary exploration that focuses on romantic love. It is interesting to note, however, that Ngũgĩ does not entertain the issue of homosexuality in his essays. Nor is the idea repressed in his fiction. Unlike Ngũgĩ, Wole Soyinka presents homosexuality (male) quite negatively as a colonial import in his novel, *The Interpreters* (1965), as lesbianism is in Ama Ata Aidoo’s *Our Sister Killjoy* (1977).

Returning to love in Ngũgĩ’s work, the thesis will show how virtually every one of the novels, and much of the short fiction and the plays, incorporate narratives about intimate relationships that are key to the author’s political vision. It will also be clear that the approach to romance in Ngũgĩ’s work is very different from the focuses and interests in romance of the authors of the *Valentine’s Day Anthology* and much other recent fiction. I would like to suggest also that Ngũgĩ’s investment in the romantic relationship is largely unconscious since he never reflects on the role of love in his many essays that theoretically expand on his practice. In the collection *Homecoming: Essays on African and Caribbean Literature, Culture and Politics* (1972), Ngũgĩ argues vigorously for the essence of preserving Africa’s original culture. In *Barrel of a Pen: Resistance to Repression in Neo-Colonial Kenya* (1983), Ngũgĩ examines the history of Kenya, especially the significance of the Mau Mau war. In *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in Africa* (1986), possibly the most well-known and well-quoted collection with

activism around decolonisation in recent years, Ngũgĩ explores indirect forms of cultural alienation through the adoption of colonial languages. With the essays in *Moving the Centre: The Struggles for Cultural Freedoms* (1993), Ngũgĩ makes a case for decentralisation of cultural authority from the West to its “outposts”. In *Something Torn and New: An African Renaissance* (2009), Ngũgĩ identifies the dismembering of Africa through slavery, but also the positive energies of the African diaspora that ensues. With the essays in *Globalectics: Theory and the Politics of Knowing* (2012), Ngũgĩ proposes that postcolonial literature may constitute the most important form of world literature because it carries within itself the idea of the world through the effects of colonisation and globalisation. In *Secure the Base* (2016), he discusses the rudiments of democratic power, the effects of tribal wars in Africa and the issue of slavery. For him, Africa is susceptible to wider geopolitics and he interrogates the fate of Africa: “Is there any reason to believe that Africa would not be drawn into yet another war, even if it started elsewhere?” (xi) With Ngũgĩ’s *In The Name of the Mother: Reflections on Writer and Empire* (2013), he describes the role of the colonisers’ “mother country” (20) and the colonised, and discusses decolonisation as a form of domination and imposition of European culture on Africa. The collection which comes closest to presenting Ngũgĩ’s literary aesthetic, however, is the collection of essays under the title *Penpoints, Gunpoints and Dreams: Toward a Critical Theory of the Arts and the State in Africa* (1998). Here Ngũgĩ examines the relationship between art and politics and asserts that art and politics are two sides of the same coin in the sense that art encompasses everything concerning society. Ngũgĩ suggests “I am not in art because of politics: I am in politics because of my artistic calling” (5). Despite, as this thesis will show, the centrality of romantic love to Ngũgĩ’s political vision, the author does not refer to intimate relations and marriage in any of his theoretical reflections on his literary practice and activism.

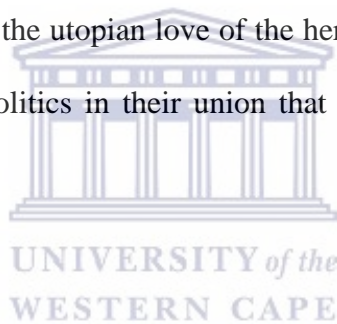
As the introduction to the discussion of romantic love in African literature and culture above suggest, the standard theories through which the topic may be considered would close the study off to its most original contributions. Marxist and feminist theory are employed at points in the thesis, but to frame the entire study through these lenses would tend towards a consideration of eros solely through the dynamics of class, patriarchy, gender relations and, perhaps, power relations. Instead the thesis has employed concepts and has entered debates on romantic love as they occur in sociology, anthropology, philosophy and literary history, especially the history of the novel, to open up ideas about romantic love in African literature generally, and in Ngũgĩ's work, in particular. The specificities of the study of romantic love may later lead to an alternative theory of eros.



Overview

Chapter One presents romantic love employed as bridging divides in the modern nation-state in Ngũgĩ's early fiction: *The River Between* and *Weep Not, Child*. In this chapter, romantic love is depicted as a tool for reconciliation and unification between the divisions created by the conflict between Christianity and African traditional religion. However, love fails to unite the feuding families and the nation as a whole in both of these early novels. Chapter Two discusses the representation of love as betrayal through adultery in *A Grain of Wheat* and *Devil on the Cross*. I discuss how political and personal betrayals take centre stage in *A Grain of Wheat* and *Devil on the Cross*. Love and marriage between the hero and the heroine in *A Grain of Wheat*, where the protagonists are symbolic of Gikũyũ and Mumbi, the Gikũyũ mythological father and mother of the land, nearly collapses because of the betrayal represented by adultery. Pure love is also sullied in *Devil on the Cross* by a whole range of betrayals. In Chapter Three, I look at how love is

presented as the exchange between sex and money in Ngũgĩ's *Petals of Blood*. The heroine is sexually exploited by the privileged class until she resolves to find revenge through "sex work". The chapter highlights how the link between love and economics is rejected in Ngũgĩ's idealised vision, where, in practice, in an African and other contexts, love is always interconnected with material concerns. In Chapter Four, which looks at *Matigari*, the relationship of friendship is discussed as a digression or a tangent to Ngũgĩ's project of romantic love that paradoxically underlines the potentialities of romantic love. Chapter Five considers love in an autocratic regime in *Wizard of the Crow*. The chapter presents the correlation between patriarchy and dictatorship and concludes that each depends on the other to operate effectively. We see that Ngũgĩ eventually in this final novel is able to depict the utopian love of the hero and heroine who are able, for the first time, to combine love and politics in their union that challenges patriarchal and national dictatorship.

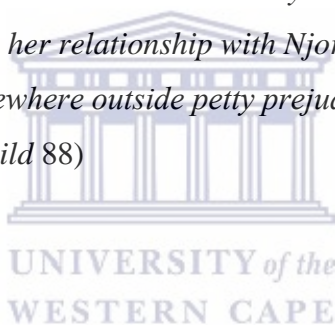


CHAPTER ONE

BOUNDARY-BREAKING LOVE AND THE MODERN NATION-STATE: NGŪGĪ WA THIONG'O'S *THE RIVER BETWEEN* AND *WEEP NOT, CHILD*

He too thought of the people and what they would say now if they saw them walking together... Nyambura was not circumcised. But this was not a crime. Something passed between them as two human beings, untainted with religion, social conventions or any tradition. (The River Between 76)

On the whole, she knew that her father must be right and Ngotho had behaved badly towards his benefactor. But she saw this only as a Jacobo-Ngotho affair that had nothing to do with her relationship with Njoroge. Her world and Njoroge's world stood somewhere outside petty prejudices, hatreds and class differences" (Weep Not, Child 88)



From the outset of his career, Ngũgĩ's narratives have included important romantic love subplots that have formed a major part of the main plots of his novels. The significance of romantic love is clearly indicated in the epigraphs to this chapter, which also highlight the political weight carried by romantic love in Ngũgĩ's fiction. Both epigraphs emphasise the ways in which romantic love, in particular, is tasked with bringing a divided people together. Throughout Ngũgĩ's novels, there is the depiction of social divisions in diverse forms. In the early novels, Ngũgĩ attempts to use education and romantic love to unite a divided people. With subsequent novels, Ngũgĩ explores love across different class lines in his bid to reconcile the nation. In *The River Between* (1965), the most significant division is between African traditional religion, particularly Gĩkũyũ beliefs, and Christianity. We read in the opening pages the pre-history to the story that will be told. We are

presented with a narrative about the deadlocked “peaceful” coexistence between the two ridges, Kameno and Makuyu, with the very highly symbolic Honia River running between them, dividing but also possibly bringing them together. Depending on one’s vantage point, the two ridges are either heaven-ascending parts of an idyllic landscape, or they are “sleeping lions” aroused: “They became antagonists. You could tell this, not by anything tangible but by the way they faced each other, like two rivals ready to come to blows in a life and death struggle for the leadership of this isolated region” (1). Waiyaki and Nyambura are brought together by love, and attempt to unite the division between their communities with their love. The differences between Gĩkũyũ tradition and Christianity come to be symbolised specifically by the ritual of circumcision, as the first epigraph suggests. In *Weep Not, Child* (1964), the main division that emerges is the division between different classes of Kenyans who, because of differences of status, act in contrary political ways, a factor indicated in the second epigraph. The story opens with the assured tone of the illuminated future of the protagonist, Njoroge, who enrolls in school while his brother, Kamau, opts for an apprenticeship as a carpenter. Njoroge’s elation is based on the assurance that he will be able to secure his father’s family land that is captured as a result of the white man’s invasion. The white settler, Mr Hawlands, acquires the lands from Ngotho’s family and employs Ngotho and others as labourers to work for the white settler. The most significant division that needs to be healed in the story is not the division between the indigenous people and the colonisers who occupy the land, but rather the differences between Kenyans of different classes and political persuasions. The ideas reflected in the epigraphs will be analysed in detail in the body of this chapter. Although *Weep Not, Child* was published one year before *The River Between*, as was mentioned in the introductory chapter, in terms of the order of composition and the timeline of Kenyan history, *The River*

Between was the “first” novel by Ngũgĩ. This chapter will follow the latter order, analysing *The River Between* before *Weep Not, Child*.

In both these early novels, we see that the narratives have more invested in the romantic love relationships presented compared with other relationships of love, for example, the love for parents or the love for siblings. However, it must be noted that in *Weep Not, Child*, the relationship with the mother(s) prove(s) stronger than the romantic relationship, a fact that will be discussed further later in the chapter. Despite this, it is clear that a major part of the tension in both novels is created by the romantic love subplot. Subsequently, romantic love is shown in these novels to play a very similar nation-building role to the one described by Doris Sommer’s seminal work *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America* (1991), the importance of which will now be outlined.

Sommer’s study of the Latin-American romances of the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth century suggests that romance novels played a very important role in consolidating an idea of modern Latin-American nationhood. Romantic love achieved this through the ways in which its representation in novels broke boundaries in the love relationships of “star-crossed lovers” across lines of “regions, races, parties, economic interests, and the like” (Sommer 5). In this way, eros challenged both colonialist and ethnic and/or religious practices. Sommer uses the word “romance” to suggest both a love story but also, in its earlier medieval sense, romance is used as a term for a genre “more boldly allegorical than the novel” (5). In Ngũgĩ’s novels also, we see this double sense of romance emerging where the romance plots also play a strongly allegorical role. Both James Ogude’s and Simon Gikandi’s monographs, referred to in the introductory chapter, highlight the powerful allegories of romance in Ngũgĩ’s novels. The many Latin-American love stories analysed by Sommer highlight the connection between the nation and the

family; in other words, domestic romances draw an analogy between the family and the nation, stressing unity and “fruitfulness” through growing the family in the next generation. Drawing on Foucault’s work on the history of sexuality and on Benedict Anderson’s study of the imagined community of the modern nation (32–40), Sommer’s study suggests that there is a relationship between modern ideas of love and patriotism. Erotic relationships that are freely chosen by individuals from backgrounds that are in opposition to each other are employed in the novels and novellas to transcend differences. In other words, they are used to facilitate a project of national coherence. Sommer argues that sex and nation are not inseparable, and that transformations in ideas about intimate relations are deeply tied up with transformations in ideas about social collectivities, especially the modern nation-state. Reconfigured love relationships thus form an “erotics of politics” (6) that show “how a variety of novel national ideals are all ostensibly grounded in ‘natural’ heterosexual love and in the marriages that provided a figure for apparently nonviolent consolidation during internecine conflicts” (6). We see romantic love playing a similar role in Ngũgĩ’s novels generally, but especially in the early novels of Ngũgĩ’s Christian humanist phase.

Although the nuances of Sommer’s analysis of the Latin-American novels are not applicable to the analysis of Ngũgĩ’s novels, nevertheless the main argument, as outlined above, is very relevant. For this reason, Sommer’s work is alluded to also by Simon Gikandi, but his exploration, in my view, does not proceed sufficiently deeply to explore all the nuances of the connections between romantic love and politics in the novels. In the early novels, as the close analysis below will show, Ngũgĩ’s narratives attempt to bring regions, religions, and classes together through passionate alliances. But, unlike the Latin-American novels, Ngũgĩ’s novels cannot be called “romances” since they do not reflect the wish-fulfilment of true romance novels

that end happily in the marriage of the protagonists. Ngũgĩ's early novels end with love unrequited, unconsummated, or blocked by other social forces. In other words, the novels' conclusions are complexly open-ended as far as the main plots are concerned, but the *romance* subplots end unhappily. Ngũgĩ, we see, employs romantic love as part of an exploration of his socio-political vision but in the two early novels the utopia of a Kenyan nation symbolically united through romantic relationships is not achieved as it is in the Latin-American romance novels analysed by Sommer. Like in the Latin-American novels, Ngũgĩ attempts to "locate an erotics of politics" (Sommer 6) in his early fiction as part of national development but, for complex reasons to be explored further in the chapter, Ngũgĩ does not succeed in the two early novels.



A Nation Divided: Ngũgĩ's "Things Fall Apart" in the Early Novels

Symbolically, romantic love in the early novels of Ngũgĩ appears potentially as the unification of a divided nation. In this respect, Ngũgĩ adopts an idea of Africa and of the African nation that only came into existence with the arrival of colonialism. As the East African scholar Ali Mazrui suggests, the idea that "we are all African" is a concept that came into being only in relation to European imperialism in Africa. Mazrui writes that "it took colonialism to inform Africans that they were African" (Mazrui 90), and similarly it took colonialism to produce the concept of the modern nation-state united across tribe, clan and cultures. Thus, rather than writing the future of a particular ethnic group, Ngũgĩ tries to write a future Kenyan nation into being, and by projecting an African continental alliance, as a form of united resistance to the colonialism he documents very carefully in his novels. Since his narratives have local specificity, he writes his stories mainly through Gĩkũyũ culture, a factor that some critics have found problematic (Gikandi

60). But, despite the Gĩkũyũ overtones, from the beginning of his career, Ngũgĩ's concern is with the modern Kenyan nation, and by extension Africa, both of which are concepts that emerge as a response to colonialism.

As was noted above, the order of writing, rather than publication, of the novels follows the historical timeline of colonialism, of which Jomo Kenyatta's *Facing Mount Kenya* (1961) provides one of the most readable histories. Kenyatta's *Facing Mount Kenya* is an exploration of the tribal life of the Gĩkũyũ, including the peasants and their farmlands, preparation before and after marriage, and the sexual life style of the youth after initiation. According to Kenyatta, the tradition of the Gĩkũyũ was regarded as sinful in the perception of the European missionaries. However, traditionally the Gĩkũyũ man was trained "to develop the technique of self-control in matters of sex" (159). The book is widely read and is cited in almost all the scholarly works on the history of Kenya. Gĩkũyũ territories witnessed intrusion from European missionaries during the early days of colonisation. For Kenyatta, Africans were deprived of their customs. More importantly, they were detached from their families and tribal traditions and "expected to follow the white man's religion without questioning whether it was suited to his condition of life or not" (Kenyatta 270–71). Not long after the coming of the European missionaries, the colonial administration and British settlers followed. As a consequence of these incursions, a large population of Gĩkũyũ natives became squatters on farms on European lands in various districts of Kenya. These are the *muhoi* or squatters, repeatedly referred to in Ngũgĩ's novels. To a large extent, Kenyatta's work influences Ngũgĩ. Kenyatta, like Ngũgĩ, gives an account of missionaries and colonisers and their effect on the Gĩkũyũ. Kenyatta, unlike Ngũgĩ, includes a consideration of indigenous sexual customs and personal relations, and European perceptions of, and effects on, them. Both Kenyatta and Ngũgĩ explore the transformation that ensued in the lives of Gĩkũyũ natives that created great

disruption among the people. But it is only Kenyatta who critically compares indigenous and colonial conceptions of personal relationships, especially as they pertain to marriage.

The River Between presents the earliest period of British colonial history in Kenya and *Weep Not, Child* a later period when Britain had already established its disputed control. Even though Ngũgĩ is often regarded as romanticising the pre-colonial past (Ogude 110), we see in *The River Between* that the divisions that develop as a consequence of colonialism are already there before the colonists arrive. There is a rivalry between the two ridges and the people who live on them that is explained by Gĩkũyũ mythology. The people of Kameno believe that Gĩkũyũ and Mumbi, the Gĩkũyũ mythological mother and father, stopped near Kameno where the boundaries of Gĩkũyũ country were established by the high god, Murungu. So near Kameno, “a sacred grove had sprung out of the place where Gĩkũyũ and Mumbi stood; people paid homage to it” (2). The sacred grove acquires a new importance in relation to the personal story of the love of the main protagonists in the story, who themselves are subtly presented as modern-day embodiments of Mumbi and Gĩkũyũ. Furthermore, most Gĩkũyũ heroes are believed to have originated in Kameno — “heroes and leaders” like Mugo wa Kibiro, the great seer of old, who first prophesied the coming of the “white men” (2) as “many butterflies, of many colours, flying about over the land, disrupting the peace and the ordered life of the country” (19). The next hero from Kameno was Kamiri, the great witch and magician, “whose witchery” astonished the white men, but who was made powerless when lured by the white men with “smiles and gifts” (2). Another important leader, Wachiori, a great warrior from Kameno, prevented a defeat by the Maasai but he was later killed by a white man. Thus what we see is that in one way or another, the importance of Kameno is linked to the transformation that begins with the white men’s invasion. Both the protagonist, Waiyaki, and his father, Chege, carry the legacy begun by earlier Kameno heroes. These claims to

pre-eminence are disputed by Makuyu. Thus, the struggle for leadership between Kameno and Makuyu pre-dates the arrival of the colonists, but it takes on a new form and a new intensity after the influence of Christian religion and British colonialism. In the context of these intensified divisions, the love between the hero, Waiyaki, and the heroine, Nyambura, becomes a kind of magical charm that will bring the ridges together again, much like the river Honia, which divides but also brings the two peaks together.

The divisions that exist are intensified during the period of colonial rule when the ethnic groups in Kenya experience land losses, with different groups responding in politically different ways, as we see with Ngotho and Jacobo in *Weep Not, Child*. Most of the natives from Kikuyu and Maasai territories were displaced, since they began losing their lands to white settlers around 1934. The people became squatters with the white settlers as landlords. George Bennett and Alison Smith's "Kenya: From 'White Man's Country' to Kenyatta's State 1945-1963" in *History of East Africa* consider historical records indicating that the European settlers became dominant in the Kenyan lands and they note that "following the end of the [Second World] war some 8,000 white immigrants came out to join them [settlers], actively encouraged by the British government" (Bennett and Smith 112). Fred G. Burke's study on the "Political Evolution in Kenya" discusses the effects of European encroachment on the Kenyan lands and the benefits the Europeans derived from the employment of Africans to work as peasants on lands (Burke 197). *Weep Not, Child* covers the period of Kenyan history where British colonial administration is secure and the land is largely in the hands of British settlers.

As with *The River Between*, in *Weep Not, Child* it is the question of leadership and ownership of the land that results in the greatest divisions. The divisions emerge from social class, politics, religion and education. The most significant division that needs to be healed in the story

is not the division between the indigenous people and the colonisers who occupy the land. The division that is the main focus of the complexities of the narrative is the division between the people themselves, especially the people who have been made homeless or *muhoi*, by the treachery of the indigenous comprador class. It is this tearing of the social fabric that Njoroge and Mwihaki, the romantic hero and heroine in *Weep Not, Child*, have to stitch together.

For the most part, scholarship on the early novels does not really focus on the passionate alliances that this thesis proposes are crucial to an understanding of Ngũgĩ's writing. Scholarship on *The River Between* and *Weep Not, Child* reveals a number of trends, none of which deeply considers the importance of the romantic love relationships represented. A few studies consider the question of leadership in *The River Between* very closely (Lovesey; Williams; Cook and Okenimkpe). Oliver Lovesey carefully explores the repeated historical confrontations that lead to the leadership struggle between Waiyaki and his rival, Kamau, the son of Kabonyi. For Patrick Williams, this leadership struggle is the thing that ultimately destroys Waiyaki, rather than any of the other challenges he faces — it is the “nub of power struggle which destroys Waiyaki” (25). Cook and Okenimkpe indirectly use the analysis of the novels to present a vision of ideal leadership — how young readers should become responsible leaders. They advise that “leadership must not become distanced from the throng” and that the leader ought to cooperate with all (30). A number of studies also closely centre on the antagonism and potential reconciliation between the ridges of Makuyu and Kameno, which generates into serious tension between the tribe, on the one hand, and Christianity, on the other (Narang 46; Killam 21). Patrick Williams suggests further that the geographical separation, historical rivalry and growing contemporary antagonism between the ridges of Kameno and Makuyu are paradigmatic of the organisation of the novel (23). Elleke Boehmer's study of *The River Between* foregrounds the representation of women in the novel and

highlights the politics of Muthoni's attitude to circumcision (181). Similarly, Clifford Robson suggests that the clash between the old and new, which is geographically represented by Kameno and Makuyu, is brought out at a "symbolic level by the custom of circumcision" (8).

Most studies of *Weep Not, Child* do not consider romantic love either, but tend to read the novel as a novel of development or education. According to Lovesey, the narrative of *Weep Not, Child* is an "autobiographical coming-of-age" novel with mythic dimensions (34). G.D. Killam, for example, explores the tensions of an education that is bound up with the Christian religion (36–37). Brendon Nicholls, among other critics, foregrounds a gender analysis of this novel, concluding that patriarchal forms of oppression persist in Ngũgĩ's vision.

Although the studies enumerated above offer exegeses and critical insights of the two novels, *The River Between* and *Weep Not, Child*, examinations of intimate relationships in the two novels is sometimes alluded to, but do not form a dedicated focus. Eros is a major part, however, of the reading of these two novels in the monographs by Ogude and Gikandi, which will be detailed further later. It is also a strong focus in Apollo Amoko's article "The Resemblance of Colonial Mimicry: A Revisionary Reading of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *The River Between*". Amoko argues that "Waiyaki's romantic relationship with Nyambura is a problematic allegory for the eventual reconciliation and reunification of Makuyu and Kameno" (36). He further describes the love between Waiyaki and Nyambura as a "union of gendered unequals" (48) since Waiyaki is described as "an articulate, educated visionary" while Nyambura is presented as a "rather less articulate, less educated [partner]" (48). Elias Bongmba also offers a similar view in his article "On Love: Literary Images of a Phenomenology of Love in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *The River Between*". He focuses on the subject of love between Waiyaki and Nyambura as "an expression of eros which can be considered an alternative path for resolving conflicts imposed by the colonial

experience” (388). He describes the intense passion that exists between Waiyaki and Nyambura as a love that involves a “vision for their future and the future of their people” (388), which is more than simple sexuality. The reading of romantic love in the two early novels in this chapter draws on the analyses of other scholars, but will go significantly further in its consideration of eros. I agree with Amoko’s and Bongmba’s assertions on the crucial role romantic love play in resolving conflicts between a divided people. The thesis as a whole will also track the developments and transformations of the conception of romantic love across Ngũgĩ’s career.

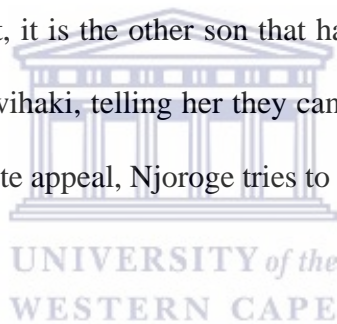
The significance of romance has been identified by both Ogude and Gikandi in their monographs on the work of Ngũgĩ. Ogude focuses mainly on the allegorical nature of the romance plots in the novels, especially the allegorical representation of female characters. Ogude thus presents a gender studies approach to romantic love. Gikandi also focuses on the romance dimension in the two early novels, citing Sommer’s *Foundational Fictions*. Gikandi uses the romance plots to show up the contradictions in the political and individual desires of the male characters. This chapter, by contrast, explores romance in more detail than in the monographs by Ogude and Gikandi, and will show the centrality of the romantic plot to the deeper construction of the novels, rather than a focus only on female characters and the internal divisions of the male characters.

The River Between foregrounds the main character, Waiyaki, who may be the “black messiah” (38, 103) who will lead the Gĩkũyũ to unity, purity, peace and prosperity. As was noted above, Waiyaki thus continues the line of great epic heroes who come from Kameno. Waiyaki is brought into contact with his beloved, Nyambura, through her sister, Muthoni, who rebels against their father, Joshua. Joshua is an early convert to Christianity who becomes quite fanatical in abandoning the traditional ways. Muthoni’s rebellion is of the worst possible kind, which cuts

Joshua to the core. Muthoni insists on being circumcised since this is what ritually and spiritually can bind her again to the people from whom her father, in his Christian zealotry, has separated her. When she falls ill, Waiyaki is instrumental in her care and informs her sister, Nyambura, of her critical condition. It is through the rebellious sister that the more cautious Waiyaki and Nyambura meet and fall in love. Their relationship meets obstacles in the division that exists between the ridges, which takes the form of a division between traditional religion, represented by Kamen, and Christianity, represented by Makuyu. There is also a personal obstacle in the form of a rival for the attention of Nyambura, namely, Kamau, who is the henchman of his father Kabonyi, who resents the ascendancy of Chege and his son, Waiyaki.

The River Between covers the period with the gradual encroachment of missionaries and colonial education while *Weep Not, Child* covers the next period of Kenyan history where the British have complete control over the colony and British settlers themselves have established deep roots in the Kenyan land. Njoroge, the boy-protagonist of the novel, does not have the deep attachment to the land that his father, Ngotho, does. Although Njoroge's attachment is primarily to formal education, the question of land shapes his fate. As a result of colonial policies, Ngotho loses his land to the puppet and sell-out Jacobo, on whose pyrethrum farm Ngotho is a *muhoi* (13). Ngotho works on the farms of the British settler, Mr Howlands, who, like Ngotho, reveres the land. Ngotho's connection to the land goes back through the ancestors to the mythological origins of the Gĩkũyũ as a people. He tells Njoroge stories about how they came to find their home on the land: "God showed Gĩkũyũ and Mumbi all the land and told them: 'This land I hand over to you. O man and woman / It's yours to rule and till in serenity sacrificing / Only to me, your God, under my sacred tree'" (24). Ngotho is at odds with both Jacobo and Howlands, who are the legal, but not moral, occupants of the land. As a consequence of his self-interest, and willingness to betray his

people to the British, Jacobo is able to profit and become wealthy, while Ngotho becomes poorer and poorer and, at one stage, when Njoroge goes to high school at Siriana, his family is even driven out of their home. In a plot reminiscent of *Romeo and Juliet*, Njoroge comes to fall in love with Mwihaki, the daughter of Jacobo, since she acts as his protector and defender when he first starts school. There is an obvious class difference between the families, but the tension becomes even more pronounced when Ngotho is seen as the leader of a strike against the big farmers because he does not want to be regarded as a coward in allowing the lands to be occupied by exploiters. Ngotho is arrested for threatening Jacobo. Jacobo later is killed by one of Ngotho's elder sons who has joined the Mau Mau rebellion, and Ngotho confesses to the crime to protect the son whom he thinks is responsible, when, in fact, it is the other son that has committed the deed. Against this backdrop, Njoroge proposes to Mwihaki, telling her they can escape to Uganda. When Mwihaki realistically turns down his desperate appeal, Njoroge tries to commit suicide, saved finally by his mother, Nyokabi.



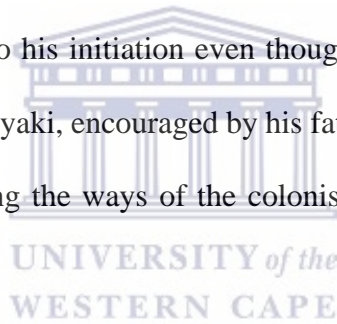
The plot summaries above make clear the social divisions identified in each of the two early novels. In *The River Between*, the division is between traditional religion and Christianity. In *Weep Not, Child*, the division is between classes — the middle class that betrays itself to the colonisers and the exploited working class or peasantry who suffer at the hands of both. Although the task of romantic love to bring the Kenyan nation together across these divisions is clearest in the two early novels, it remains a feature of Ngũgĩ's novels throughout his career. In Ngũgĩ's next novel, *A Grain of Wheat* (1967), again a love relationship is presented across different social backgrounds. In this novel, Gikonyo, a poor carpenter from a single-parent family, falls in love with Mumbi, the daughter of a wealthy man of standing. Similarly, in *Petals of Blood* (1977), where there are three protagonists rather than one, we see numerous instances of relationships

across social boundaries. Perhaps the most interesting of these is the relationship of Munira, one of the main male characters with his wife, Julia. Munira, who comes from a Christian family, enters a relationship with Julia, a “pagan”, mainly to rebel against the hypocrisy of his father, Ezekiel. Ironically, Julia becomes a Christian and goes on to be her father-in-law, Ezekiel’s, favourite daughter-in-law, while Munira enters adulterous relationships as a form of rejection of his wife who betrayed him. The relationship between Warĩnga and Gatuĩria in *Devil on the Cross* (1980) also crosses class lines since Warĩnga is a poor young woman whose circumstances were made even more desperate by her teenage pregnancy when she was taken advantage of by the wealthy father of Gatuĩria, a fact that becomes known only at the end of the novel. The pattern continues in *Wizard of the Crow* (2006), Ngũgĩ’s last novel, where Nyawĩra the well-to-do female protagonist chooses a poor suitor who exploits her in opposition to her father’s desire that she marries a man of similar social position. Nyawĩra finally falls in love with the poor Kamĩĩ regardless of his social standing. Although the romantic relationship that bridges boundaries occurs in all Ngũgĩ’s novels, the focus in the first two novels is exclusively on the ways in which eros can forge connections across divides. In the later novels, the social differences are one aspect of the relationships, other dimensions of which become a stronger focus, as we shall see in later chapters.

In *The River Between*, all of the divisions that exist between the ridges of Kameno and Makuyu come to cohere around the ritual of circumcision. The importance of circumcision in the cultural context of which Ngũgĩ writes is apparent from its centrality in Jomo Kenyatta’s *Facing Mount Kenya*. Here Kenyatta suggests that initiation of both boys and girls is an important custom that gives them the status of manhood or womanhood in the Gĩkũyũ community (133). These ideas are reiterated in other studies, for example H.E. Lambert’s *Kikuyu: Social and Political Institutions*. Lambert suggests that circumcision is an important ritual that “confers the right of

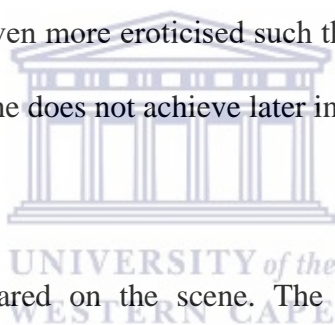
marriage and procreation on persons of both sexes and is of more importance in regard to procreation than marriage” (66).

Circumcision in *The River Between* is both that which brings the lovers together and that which finally tears the lovers apart. The significance of circumcision for men and women is foregrounded right at the beginning of the novel when Waiyaki, as a boy, is told by a friend that he cannot play the part of a Kikuyu hero in their game since he is not circumcised: ““You cannot be Demi [the masculine giants of the tribe]’... ‘You are not ready for circumcision. You are not born again”” (10). He goes home to his mother and encourages her to hasten his second-birth ceremony, after which he keenly anticipates his initiation, which will fully incorporate him into the tribe. Waiyaki looks forward to his initiation even though it is despised by Livingstone, the leading missionary in the area. Waiyaki, encouraged by his father, Chege, nevertheless recognises that the future lies in understanding the ways of the coloniser through getting an education, to which Livingstone is key.



The fateful circumcision of Muthoni, Nyambura’s sister is also introduced early in the novel. It is introduced when the sisters go to the Honia river that literally and metaphorically unites and divides the ridges. In this sense, the Honia river is much like the role played by the ritual of circumcision, and the role of romance, which paradoxically unites and divides. Muthoni tells her sister that she desperately wants to be circumcised even though her Christian father regarded it as a pagan rite that came from the devil: “Look, please, I — I want to be a woman. I want to be a real girl, a real woman, knowing all the ways of the hills and the ridges ... it is beautiful, oh so beautiful to be initiated into womanhood. You learn the ways of the tribe. Yes, the white man’s God does not quite satisfy me. I want, I need something more” (26). Muthoni then steals away from her family to be secretly circumcised.

Muthoni's circumcision is presented in the text in such a way that it foreshadows the relationship between Waiyaki and her sister, Nyambura, and in a way that presents Waiyaki's desire as being divided between Muthoni and her sister, Nyambura. When the time for initiation comes, Waiyaki's mind is "unsettled" (40) not only by the importance and the excitement of the huge dance and the rituals to come, but also by Muthoni's revolt: "All the time Waiyaki kept on wondering 'Why should she do it?' And he felt a desire to speak with her and hear it from her own mouth" (40). When she is pointed out to him at the dance, he notices her hips "swinging from side to side" (40) sensually among the group of dancing women. He is amazed that Muthoni should have the courage to disobey her father, a thing that he could not contemplate doing to his father, Chege. Waiyaki's gaze becomes even more eroticised such that he even seems to achieve a kind of ecstasy and consummation that he does not achieve later in his relationship with Nyambura:



And then Muthoni appeared on the scene. The singing increased in volume and excitement. And she was a wonder. Where has she learnt this? Waiyaki wondered as he watched from the side. She danced, sang; describing love; telling of relationships between a woman and a man; scenes and words of love-making. ... Waiyaki gazed at her. Something slightly stirred in him. In the yellow light she appeared beautiful and happy, a strange kind of elation. ... And suddenly he felt as if a hand soft and strong had held his soul and whipped it off. It was so strange that he felt his emotions and desires temporarily arrested in a single timeless moment; then release. Waiyaki was nothing. He was free. He wanted only this thing now, this mad intoxication of ecstasy and pleasure. Quick waves of motion flashed through his flesh, through his being. ... Muthoni's secret was out. You did not have to learn. No. You just gave yourself to the dream of the rhythm. Within a

few seconds he found himself face to face with Muthoni. Both had been thrown into the centre. (42–43)

The communion Waiyaki experiences here is a response to the mysteries of initiation, but it is a response that is provoked by Muthoni's presence. Muthoni's presence and Waiyaki's feelings for her allow a unity of purpose that Waiyaki had not experienced for some time.

This description of the initiation ceremony comes just a few pages after we are told about Waiyaki's attendance at Siriana Secondary School, which forces him to keep away from home for long periods at a time. However, he comes back especially for the initiation ceremony. The narrative suggests that Waiyaki's "absence from the hills had kept him out of touch with those things that mattered most to the tribe. Besides, however much he resisted it, he could not help absorbing ideas and notions that prevented him from responding spontaneously to these dances and celebrations" (39). Gikandi identifies this tension as Waiyaki's "ambivalence towards tradition" which "becomes apparent in "Waiyaki's romance with Nyambura" (Gikandi 66). For Gikandi, the contradiction in Waiyaki's desire lies in his wanting cultural purity through a romantic union with a woman who is uncircumcised and therefore "impure". However, as will be argued later, Waiyaki uses the idea of Gĩkũyũ cultural purity to represent the strength of the Kenyan nation rather than the pre-eminence of a single ethnicity. We see thus that Waiyaki has become alienated from the way of life and the traditions to which his father had bound him even more securely through his suggestion to his son some years before at the sacred grove that he was the black messiah come to deliver his people from oppression. Chege's message to his son, however, is different from the task of the prophets before him. Chege says to Waiyaki: "Arise. Heed the prophecy. 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” (20). It is thus through Muthoni, who represents cultural autonomy, that Waiyaki is able to realise his father’s vision. He comes back to the initiation ceremony cloaked with the wisdom of modernity, the wisdom of the white man, and he is able to connect this wisdom to the wisdom of the tribe. In this unity Waiyaki is able through combining individual and group knowledge to find freedom: “Waiyaki was nothing. He was free” (42). This fleeting moment is the only moment in the novel where this triumph is achieved, and it is significant that it is achieved through an amorous interest in Muthoni, who gets circumcised, rather than Nyambura, who is not.

Muthoni, through her daredevil abandonment of her father and the stern Christianity he represents, also attempts this reconciliation in her act of rebellion. After the moment of communion experienced by Waiyaki, he recognises what Muthoni represents to him. She appears to be the spark that brings him back from anxiety and doubt to a full life. He thinks he is attracted to her laughter. He thinks “there was magic in it because it rang into his heart, arousing things he had never felt before” (43). But the magic does not last. He runs behind Muthoni into the shelter of some trees as night falls to ask her about her defiant act. She says: “No one will understand. I say I am a Christian and my mother and father have followed the new faith. I have not run away from that. But I also want to be initiated into the ways of the tribe” (43). Muthoni’s belief that in her action she will reconcile Christianity and traditional religion becomes even more apparent in her delirium when her circumcision wound does not heal. She declares to her sister who has come to visit her in her final illness: “I am still a Christian, see, a Christian in the tribe” and “... I see Jesus ... I am a woman, beautiful in the tribe ...” (53). Waiyaki is physically drawn in when Muthoni says further that she wants to be a “woman made beautiful in the manner of the tribe” (44). But since Muthoni’s commitment is to this ideal and not to Waiyaki, she walks away thereafter, leaving

Waiyaki abandoned and alone: “That night a feeling that he lacked something, that he yearned for something beyond him, came in low waves of sadness that would not let him sleep” (44). Waiyaki attempts to fill the lack left by Muthoni through her sister, Nyambura.

Circumcision brings Waiyaki and Muthoni close, but it is circumcision also that finally makes the division between the ridges deeper. Muthoni’s death leads to a hardening of attitudes so that the missionaries, represented by Livingstone, announce that no person who has been circumcised will be able to attend Siriana. It also leads Kabonyi, a longstanding rival of Waiyaki’s father, Chege, to abandon the church and return with great vehemence to the ways of the tribe.

Muthoni’s death as a result of the circumcision wound also ironically leads Waiyaki to try to find what he lacks in Muthoni’s sister, Nyambura, whom he meets when he arranges for her to visit her dying sister who has been rejected by their father. Later, he comes to recognise that the freedom through reconciliation that he longs for takes the shape of the woman, Nyambura. He comes to this recognition one night when he cannot sleep and goes for a walk full of deep thoughts. He “coincidentally” meets Nyambura on his moonlit walk that takes him in the direction of Joshua’s village after this epiphany: “Suddenly he thought he knew what he wanted. Freedom. He wanted to run, run hard, run anywhere. Or hover aimlessly, wandering everywhere like a spirit. Then he would have everything ...” (73). The relationship with Nyambura thus becomes invested with a lot more for Waiyaki than a simple affair. The love that he perceives he has for Nyambura becomes charged with the task of bringing him freedom through allowing him to reconcile the divisions he begins to see in himself, which reflect the divisions between the ridges, between Christianity and the ways of the tribe. For the task of reconciliation between the ridges, circumcision again becomes highly symbolic. On another moonlit walk, Waiyaki thinks to himself that, unlike himself, Nyambura is not circumcised, “[b]ut this was not a crime” (76). Furthermore,

to reiterate the epigraph, “[s]omething passed between them as two human beings, untainted with religion, social conventions or any tradition” (76).

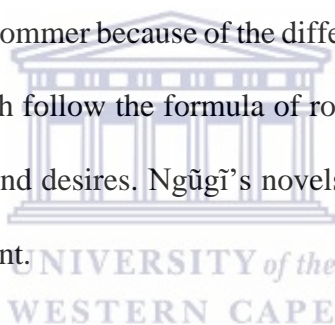
The courtship between Waiyaki and Nyambura is presented in great detail in the narrative using the formula of the romance tradition, which details their meetings and the personal and social obstructions to declaring their love. Obstructions in the path to love have been identified as the defining feature of the romance tradition in Western literature, highlighted in Denis de Rougemont’s major study *Love in the Western World* (1983). Guides to writing popular romance also recommend numerous obstructions to generate the necessary tension: “Conflicts, obstacles and misunderstandings ... You really can’t have too many” (Moorcroft 100). However, since Ngũgĩ’s interest in romance constitutes an “erotics of politics” (Sommer 6), even the obstacles to love have a political overtone. The main obstruction in the relationship between Waiyaki and Nyambura comes in the form of a rival, namely the son of Kabonyi, who was Waiyaki’s father’s rival before his death. The son, Kamau, also loves Nyambura. Kamau believes that had it not been for Waiyaki’s intervention, Nyambura would have “agreed to run away with him to Nairobi” (108). In the same way that love relationships are part of a political vision, obstructions to love are similarly political. Kamau is not just an incidental suitor. Kamau symbolically represents a politics opposed to the politics represented by Waiyaki. Waiyaki, as messiah and carrying on Muthoni’s legacy, is inspired to bring together the opposing factions represented by the two ridges. As the “gulf” between them widens, Waiyaki wants to be the “instrument of their coming together” (91). However, there is more at stake than simply the two ridges representing Christianity and traditional culture. Having attended Siriana where Waiyaki meets boys of different ethnicities from all over Kenya, the ultimate mission is the unity of all Kenya and its freedom from colonial rule. We see that a “novel national ideal [is] ostensibly grounded in ‘natural’ heterosexual love and in the

[potential] marriages that [provide] a figure for apparently nonviolent consolidation during internecine conflicts ...” (Sommer 6).

Kamau, as delegate of his father, Kabonyi, represents instead a reactionary throwback to a stifled idea of tribal unity and strength. Kabonyi dominates the Kiama, or tribal council, set up to protect the “purity” of the tribe (87). Thus, while Waiyaki sees a “tribe [Kenya] great with many educated sons and daughters, all living together, tilling the land of their ancestors in perpetual serenity, pursuing their rituals and beautiful customs”(87), Kamau represents a narrow tribalism in which education plays no role. When Nyambura agrees to marry Waiyaki and escapes her father’s home with him, she is abducted by Kamau, to obtain leverage in the battle against Waiyaki.

At the Kiama (tribal assembly) where Waiyaki is tried for betraying the unity and the purity of the tribe through going to a church meeting and through wanting to marry an uncircumcised woman, the fate of Waiyaki and Nyambura is left open-ended. However, the general tone of the conclusion is pessimistic, suggesting that their union is thwarted at the end since the differences are too great and the political power-play and rivalry too keen. Thus a fully realised “erotics of politics” (Sommer 6) cannot be located on Kenyan soil as it was in nineteenth-century Latin-American romance novels, since Ngũgĩ’s narrative cannot conquer “the antagonist[s] through mutual interest or ‘love’ rather than through coercion” (Sommer 6). In discussing the parallels between Sommer’s study and that of *The River Between*, Gikandi writes that, through patriotism (public function), Waiyaki tries to overcome ““personal frustration and hardships” (his inability to marry Nyambura in the face of opposition of his political allies).” (68). Gikandi notes the correlation between reconciliation and romance: “[r]econciliation can be represented in a language of romance that appears to be above partisan politics” (Gikandi 68). “Romance” and “republic” are shown to be connected by Ngũgĩ in this early novel, since the tensions and possibilities of

romance are an analogy of the tensions and possibilities of republic. However, romance cannot create the republic since the differences run too deep. Unlike the novels studied by Sommer, Ngũgĩ's novels are not able to develop "a narrative formula for resolving ... conflicts" (Sommer 12). This is because Ngũgĩ's narratives usually end with tensions/ conflicts which are heightened and unresolved. The early novels in Ngũgĩ's hands do not become "a postepic conciliatory genre that consolidate[s] survivors by recogni[s]ing former enemies as allies" (12). This is the consequence of differences in the visions of the parties to the romance, differences that Ngũgĩ is able to reconcile only in the final novel, *Wizard of the Crow*, where the each of the beloveds is committed to the same political vision. The tensions are not so pronounced, or so difficult to negotiate, in the novels studied by Sommer because of the difference of genre. The Latin-American novels are popular romances, which follow the formula of romance that requires a happy ending through the fulfillment of wishes and desires. Ngũgĩ's novels, by contrast, are more literary and realistic in the dynamics they present.



A similar trend where there is a desire for unity that is thwarted may be observed in *Weep Not, Child*. Culturally, land unites people in the Kenyan context through ritual attachment. This is often dramatised in *Weep Not, Child* and is introduced in the early pages. But it is education that has the most significant symbolism for the protagonist, Njoroge. When Njoroge is told by his mother that the collective family resources will allow him to go to school, his first reaction is to compare himself with Mwhaki, the daughter of the local landowning family: "Njoroge's heart had felt like bursting with happiness and gratitude when he had known that he, like Mwhaki, the daughter of Jacobo, would start learning how to read and write" (12). Njoroge immediately develops a special relationship with Mwhaki at school since she protects him as a newcomer, or *Njuka*. She says to the bullies who pick on him that "He is my *Njuka*. You cannot touch him" (14).

It is made clear that the class difference between himself and Mwhaki is apparent to Njoroge from the time that he is a boy: “It was sweet to play with a girl and especially if that girl came from a family higher up the social scale than one’s own” (15). Thus the differences that are emphasised in this novel are largely class differences; but class differences in the colonial context are also linked to political differences. Mwhaki’s father, Jacobo, can get ahead only since he betrays the Kenyan cause to the British. The differences between the families are heightened as a result of political resistance that sees Njoroge’s father, Ngotho, labelled a troublemaker and a threat to Jacobo. The comfort that the young couple find in each other leads Mwhaki at one point to suggest that they “marry” and run away together: “Suppose you and I go from here so that we come back when the dark night is over ... I could be such a nice sister to you and I could cook you very tasty food and ...” (95). Njoroge immediately responds that family responsibility, and by extension responsibility to the nation through the family, would make this dream impossible: “No, no, how can we leave our parents alone?” (95). Roles are reversed towards the end of the novel, when Jacobo has been killed by one of Njoroge’s brothers, and Ngotho is arrested since he tries to protect the other brother whom he thinks did the deed. Now Njoroge pleads with Mwhaki for them to elope to Uganda and escape the tension and tragedy:

And Njoroge went on whispering to her appealing to her with all his might.

“Mwhaki, dear, I love you. Save me if you want. Without you I am lost.”

She wanted to sink in his arms and feel a man’s strength around her weak body. She wanted to travel the road back to her childhood and grow up with him again. But she was no longer a child.

“Yes, we can go away from here as you had suggested when—”

“No! no! she cried, in an agony of despair, interrupting him. “You must save *me*, please Njoroge. I love you.”

She covered her face with both hands and wept freely, her breast heaving.

Njoroge felt sweet pleasure and excitedly smoothed her dark hair.

“Yes, we go to Uganda and live—”

“No, no.” She struggled again.

“But why?” he asked not understanding what she meant.

“Don’t you see that what you suggest is too easy a way out? We are no longer children,” she said between her sobs.

“That’s why we must go away. Kenya is no place for us. Is it not childish to remain in a hole when you can take yourself out?”

“But we can’t. We can’t!” she cried hopelessly. (133)

In the dialogue above, we see again how Ngũgĩ’s narratives rely on romance conventions at the same time that he departs from them. Throughout the novel, Njoroge is presented as a “feminised” male hero who is not distinguished by his looks or physique. In fact, as mentioned earlier, the heroine is his protector when as a boy he gets bullied at school. Njoroge also lacks the decisiveness of the more masculine hero, the “alpha” male of popular romance fiction (Moorcroft 10). However, Njoroge is transformed into the ideal romance hero and Mwhaki the ideal heroine in this clearly

erotic scene. Mwihaki desires to “sink in his arms and feel his arms around her weak body”. Where Mwihaki has always been the stronger and more assertive partner, she now wants to be saved by Njoroge with her bosom heaving in despair and rapture. But here again Ngũgĩ’s failed “erotics of politics” (Sommer 6) dictates the conclusion of the scene. The emotion and the sexual charge between the hero and heroine cannot bring them together. Instead, it forces them apart since the more mature Mwihaki recognises that in Emergency Kenya the relationship across the class and political divide is difficult — in fact, it is inconceivable in the narrative frame. It is interesting that the dream of elopement is now considered ‘childish’ (a rejection of a certain romantic convention by Ngũgĩ).

After this rejection by Mwihaki, Njoroge contemplates suicide by hanging: “He knew the tree well. He had been there a number of times for the voice had spoken to him many times after his father’s death. The only thing that had restrained him was the hope that he might find an anchor in Mwihaki ... he had prepared the rope” (135). We see that “the counter-productive social constraints that underline the naturalness and inevitability of the lovers’ transgressive desire” (Sommer 18) are so great that they push Njoroge to this desperate end. Initially, the love relationship, which begins as friendship between Mwihaki and Njoroge, was based on sincerity and certainty. Njoroge is unable to “imagine their ideal relationship through an alternative society” (Sommer 18). The narrative then decisively shifts from foregrounding the volatile relationship of romantic love that challenges kinship relations. Njoroge is saved from killing himself when he hears his mother crying out his name. He is then led by his biological mother into the further security represented by his social mother, his father’s second wife.

The possibility for a romantic reconciliation of class and political enemies is thus even more elusive than reconciliation across a religious divide in *The River Between*. In the context of

heightening contradictions, at no point do the lovers even entertain the thought of the families and society sanctioning their union. Even though Ngũgĩ clings to the idea of nation-building through the volatile and productive possibilities of romantic love, in both of the early novels the unity aimed for remains unobtainable through an “erotics of politics” (Sommer 6). Instead, salvation is found in the figure of the mother who as the title of the later collection of essays, *In the Name of the Mother* (2013), shows is a very important figure in Ngũgĩ’s philosophy. However, the importance of the mother is not specifically highlighted in the later novels; but the romantic love subplot endures throughout in the fiction.

What’s Love Got to Do with Education?

The focus on education in the early novels is as strong as the focus on romantic love; but, while the “erotics of politics” (Sommer 6) is extended into all of the later novels, the nationalist optimism linked with education declines in Ngũgĩ’s later fiction. For example, in the next novel, *A Grain of Wheat*, the revolutionary hero, Kihika, drops out of school. Kariuki, the brother of the central female character, Mumbi, has a school education whose relevance is unclear in the community. Mumbi herself rejects Richard Jackson, a prominent former student of Siriana Secondary School, for the uneducated carpenter, Gikonyo. In the two novels that follow, *Petals of Blood* and *Devil on the Cross*, education for girls is foregrounded; however, the young girls, Wanja and Warĩinga, drop out of school as victims of sexual exploitation. Furthermore, educated elites who are leaders of the nation are presented as exploiters of the peasants and workers in society. Similarly, the narratives of *Wizard of the Crow* and *Matigari* emphasise the manipulation of education as a form of exploitation of the masses.

In the early novels, however, this cynicism around the possibilities presented by education does not exist. Education, by contrast, is lauded as a social unifier and as a path to a prosperous future. The significance of education in these novels as a potential reconciler of the existing divisions has been identified by Robson and Boehmer, among others. Cook and Okenimkpe identify the elements that are missing in Ngũgĩ's vision of the utopian possibilities of education. They assert, as previously noted that "education must embrace the social arts, and [should] involve above all a sensible training in political concepts, and so be a basis for making real choices. The novel poses a question which remains urgently relevant today as to what form of education is desirable in Africa — or elsewhere" (30). The numerous tensions that exist in the projection of education in the early novels have been identified by Killam, Narang, and Gikandi, among others. The focus on romantic love in the novels, however, sheds a slightly different light on questions of education.

As noted above, in *The River Between*, the father, Chege, sends his son, Waiyaki, to school to help him fulfil his destiny as messiah who will lead his culturally revitalised people into a modern future. In this novel, and the next, while girls are not excluded from school, schooling seems to be the priority of the boy protagonists, and they are presented as excelling at school.

When Waiyaki is expelled from school after the hardening of missionary attitudes to circumcision after Muthoni's death confirming the "barbarity of Gikūyū customs" (55), he starts his own school, Marioshoni, around which the entire community rallies. Some of the tensions inherent in the educational project are apparent from the description of Waiyaki's popularisation of the school: "In starting self-help in education, Waiyaki had seen it as a kind of mission. It was a vision that he followed with hope and passion. He travelled from ridge to ridge, all over the country of sleeping lions. He found a willing people" (67). Waiyaki's implicit modelling of his

task with that of the missionaries is subtly suggested by the description of Waiyaki's purpose as his "mission". He crosses from "ridge to ridge", hinting at the "suturing" or joining that education could foster. The idea that education could fire up the internal strength of the people is latent in the description of them as "sleeping lions". The people do not want the ways of the white people, but they do want their "magic", represented by education (68). So absorbed is Waiyaki by the practical problems faced by the school, that he loses sight of the political interests that widen the divisions between the ridges. Education unites, but because education is connected with colonisation, Waiyaki's passion about education allows him to be marked as a traitor: "It was all confusion building up and spreading under the outward calm of the ridges. Where did people like Waiyaki stand? Had he not received the white man's education? And was this not part of the other faith, the new faith? ... Waiyaki felt himself standing outside all this. And at times he felt isolated" (69). Education thus, rather than enlightening him, alienates him from the tribe, as mentioned above, and blinds him to the political manoeuvrings that ultimately will rob him of leadership, and the partnership with Nyambura. His political opposition highlights the ways in which education, as Waiyaki conceives it, is linked with Christianity and colonialism. The description of the school as "immaculate" with "little flower gardens" (92) highlights the way it is conceived along English lines. The children who come to the school, rather than learning more about their own language and culture, "could speak a foreign language, could actually read and write" (92). Thus, while the Kiama is concerned with the purity of the tribe, Waiyaki seems to be contaminating tribal purity with outside cultural influences. He is "forced by the Kiama in their extravagant enthusiasm to take an allegiance to the Purity and Togetherness of the tribe", while he himself is obsessed by the idea of education like a "demon" (98). For Waiyaki, "[e]ducation was life" (98), and it strikes him too late that in his absorption with an education in modernity, "he had forgotten to preach

reconciliation” (98). In this respect the love relationship that is wholly endogenous to Gikuyu (but also all world cultures as the introductory chapter shows) and potentially can cross all boundaries, becomes the talisman on which Waiyaki counts since education seems to have alienated him from the heart of the tribe.

By contrast, in *Weep Not, Child*, education is more intrinsically linked to the social bridges that need to be crossed. Njoroge first meets Mwhaki at school and their special relationship is established in the school context where Njoroge gets picked on and Mwhaki acts as his protector. The school is linked even more strongly with Jacobo and the higher social class he represents through the fact that Lucia, Mwhaki’s elder sister, is a teacher at the school. School also is a social leveler, giving Njoroge the opportunity to compete equally with Mwhaki. Since he outdoes her academically, he goes on to Siriana Secondary School, which is presented as a microcosm of a perfect Kenyan polity: “The school itself was an adobe of peace in a turbulent country” (108). Here he can meet “boys from many tribes” and has the opportunity for socialisation across racial and class lines when he meets Stephen Howlands, the son of his father’s boss (109). Njoroge finds himself at times wishing that the entire country were like the school, “a paradise where children from all walks of life and different religious faiths could work together without any consciousness” (115), but the dream ends when Njoroge is expelled after the murder of Jacobo. We can infer that Njoroge’s end results from his expulsion from school. School is linked with Njoroge, and is the context of the formation of his relationship with Mwhaki. The ideal that school represents also ends with the death of Jacobo. It would seem in this novel that the fate of education and the romantic relationship are tied to each other in the sense that the end of one leads to eventual collapse of the other.

Bridging Divides: Romantic Love and Education

In *The River Between*, Waiyaki, the last descendant of the heroes, is charged to save his people through acquisition of the white man's knowledge: "Arise. Heed the prophecy. Go to the Mission place. Learn all the wisdom and secrets of the white man. But do not follow his vice. Be true to your people and the ancient rites" (20). In *Weep Not, Child*, like *The River Between*, Ngũgĩ portrays education as the only means of fighting colonisation and resolving the divisions created between the natives: "if people had education, the white man would not have taken all the land" (37). For Njoroge's generation, education held the "key to the future" (48). Gikandi's study "Educating Colonial Subjects: The 'Emergency Stories' and *Weep Not, Child*" reveals education as a unifier: "for Njoroge, school is posited as the instrument of understanding, social upliftment, and of overcoming the social divisions engendered by colonialism" (89). Education seems to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor. Examples are the friendship between Njoroge and Mwihaki as well as Njoroge and Mr Howlands' son, Stephen. Njoroge and Mwihaki's love affair begins in school. Although in the two novels education is presented as a national unifier, it seems to have failed in uniting the people and the nation. This is because both protagonists, Waiyaki and Njoroge, fail to accomplish their dreams of acquiring wisdom from education. Waiyaki faces dismissal from Siriana School after his traditional initiation and his refusal to renounce his tradition, while Njoroge is expelled from school as a result of the tensions that mount between his family and Mr Howlands, especially after the death of Jacobo. Love, therefore, emerges as the last resort for both protagonists to unite the citizenry and the nation — although it also finally fails. However, and this is where love seems to play and have a different weight to education in Ngũgĩ's thought, the focus on love continues in all the later novels in important subplots. Although romantic love in the first two novels fails to break the boundaries of class, religion and politics —

there is no marriage at the end of these novels — Ngũgĩ achieves this aim in the third novel, *A Grain of Wheat*, where the passion between the hero and the heroine from different backgrounds is consummated in marriage. But, as we shall see in the next chapter, the marriage is not where the story happily ends since, repeatedly in Ngũgĩ's later fiction, we see the happy union of marriage (that in some ways allegorises the united nation) destroyed by betrayal. This is especially true of *A Grain of Wheat* and *Devil on the Cross*.



CHAPTER TWO

THE PERSONAL IS POLITICAL: LOVE, BETRAYAL AND ADULTERY

IN NGŪGĪ'S *A GRAIN OF WHEAT* AND *DEVIL ON THE CROSS*

What else is there to tell you? That I remember being full of submissive gratitude? That I laughed — even welcomed Karanja's cold lips on my face? I was in a strange world, and it was like if I was mad. And need I tell you more? 'I let Karanja make love to me' (A Grain of Wheat 131).

Betrayal is a key idea in Ngũgĩ's works and one of the major factors that undermines progress towards his vision of a just society. However, in the cases of the major characters of the novels considered in this chapter, namely *A Grain of Wheat* and *Devil on the Cross*, betrayal is often justified by the cruel and extenuating circumstances in which the characters in question find themselves. Political ideals are betrayed by the complex and divided characters in Ngũgĩ's narratives, as they themselves are implicated in a range of betrayals. Betrayal in the political arena may thus be counterpointed with betrayal in personal contexts. The most significant form of personal betrayal in Ngũgĩ's work is the betrayal that occurs in romantic relationships; more specifically, the betrayal represented by adultery in marriage. While the subject of betrayal occurs across the range of works by Ngũgĩ, it is preponderant in *A Grain of Wheat* and *Devil on the Cross*.

A climactic scene of betrayal is represented in the epigraph to this chapter. The narrative in *A Grain of Wheat* recounts a complex romantic love subplot between Mumbi and Gikonyo that reveals the rivalry between Gikonyo and Karanja, with Mumbi as the centre of attention and object of competition. Gikonyo triumphs over his rival, Karanja, by winning the love of Mumbi, which

results in their marriage. Their love and marriage unsettle Karanja, who “had never considered Gikonyo a serious rival,” and he wonders how a mere carpenter “without wit or any suavity, even dare [to consider a relationship with Mumbi]?” (107). We read about Gikonyo and Mumbi’s separation for six years during the Emergency — when Gikonyo is sent to detention. Karanja, whose heart is wounded by Mumbi’s refusal, pursues his obsessive love for her while Gikonyo is away. Karanja also is made Chief by the British in the period of Gikonyo’s incarceration. Ironically, Mumbi eventually offers herself to Karanja at the moment when he informs her that her husband, Gikonyo, is about to be released.

Mumbi succumbs to Karanja for a complex range of reasons suggested by the rhetorical questions she uses to describe the pivotal incident: “What else is there to tell you? That I remember being full of submissive gratitude? That I laughed — even welcomed Karanja’s cold lips on my face? I was in a strange world, and it was like if I was mad. And need I tell you more?” (131). The parallelism in the rhetorical structure “That I remember being full of submissive gratitude?” “That I laughed [?]” “[That I] even welcomed Karanja’s cold lips on my face?” presents a response to Gikonyo about what really transpired between Mumbi and Karanja. Her response is a heady mixture of joy and relief at her husband’s imminent release, while at the same time being aware of Karanja’s cruelty and political treachery — his lips on her face are sinisterly “cold”. At this moment she is so overwhelmed, that she does the unthinkable; she sleeps with Karanja whom she despises, and at whom she later throws her shoe, the worst gesture of insult, when she realises she has been used. Clearly, Mumbi’s position is absurd in the sense that she remains faithful to her husband throughout his six years of detention, only to offer her body to Karanja in her elation at his release. We see that Ngũgĩ presents the significance of romantic love as a complicated institution where those in love can easily change their minds, especially in times of hardships,

regardless of the love and commitment to each other. Also, Ngũgĩ depicts romantic love as an avenue where those in power capitalise on love as a means of exploiting the common people.

Mumbi reveals her complex “betrayal” of her husband, which was motivated by euphoria at his being freed from prison, to the troubled character Mugo. Mugo comes to Mumbi and Gikonyo’s home after the couple is reunited to speak to the husband, who happens to be out. Mumbi takes the opportunity to disburden herself since her husband cannot forgive her and treats her cruelly. In this meeting and conversation, the “doubleness” of personal and political treachery is highlighted. While Mumbi and Mugo speak, two officers of the Kenyan independence army come to offer him an invitation. Having not found Mugo at his own home, they are pleased to find him at Gikonyo’s place, past which they had to walk. They have come to give Mugo the honour of exposing Karanja at the freedom day celebrations — Karanja, they believe, is the person who betrayed Kihika, Mumbi’s brother. The dramatic irony of the moment is apparent only at the end of the novel, when Mugo reveals that, in fact, he was the traitor responsible for Kihika’s death. In the same way that Mumbi was forced into a personal betrayal, Mugo, the great hero of the anti-colonial struggle, was forced into a political betrayal. In this way thus, the epigraph presents a really charged moment in the text that acts as a symbol of all the other acts of betrayal that I will discuss in the rest of the chapter. It is one of the most highly charged and complex moments of betrayal in the novel and in Ngũgĩ’s oeuvre as a whole. In it, we see with how much sensitivity Ngũgĩ understands the question of betrayal, which is to be contended with in political contexts and also the personal context of erotic entanglements.

Questions of betrayal at a personal and political level have concerned Ngũgĩ from the beginning of his career, as is clear from the betrayals in *The River Between*, Ngũgĩ’s first novel, (though in terms of date of publication, it is the second). Here, in a bid to reconcile the community

through their love, Waiyaki and Nyambura are forced into a series of betrayals. Waiyaki's betrayal is based on his personal convictions, especially his love for Nyambura. He indirectly betrays the tribe and the confidence reposed in him by his people to follow the dictates of his heart. We see another form of personal betrayal on the part of Nyambura and her sister, Muthoni, who betray their father, Joshua, and his Christian dogma. Muthoni is the first to betray her father through insisting on being circumcised in order to become a woman according to the customs of the tribe, and be "faithful" to it, as it were. Political betrayal emerges after Muthoni's death. Livingstone, the head of the Mission, feels betrayed by the people and their unwillingness to accept salvation, for "[t]hey were entrenched in their blind customs" (55). He blames himself for the death of Muthoni: "People would accuse him. He felt cheated by fate" (56). Another form of political betrayal is represented by Joshua, the father of Muthoni, betraying the tribe and pronouncing circumcision rituals as an unforgivable sin. Also, Kabonyi, head of the faction that challenges the hero, Waiyaki's, family in their leadership of the tribe, is a traitor in a number of contexts. Kabonyi initially betrays the tribe for Christianity and then later abandons Christianity when he opportunistically sees a chance to gain power in the tribe in a time of political uncertainty. His betrayal of Waiyaki stems from his political ambitions. He envies Waiyaki's position as the potential messianic leader of the community. Kamau, Kabonyi's son, also betrays Waiyaki to his father and the entire community.

Ngũgĩ highlights betrayal also in *Weep Not, Child*. The story, as was outlined in more detail in the previous chapter, centres on two feuding families, namely the family of Ngotho and the family of Jacobo. The story begins on a hopeful note for Ngotho's children, Njoroge and Kamau, who determine to pursue their dream of upliftment. While Njoroge is chosen in the family to pursue education as a means to success, his brother Kamau seeks training in carpentry. Ngotho, the father,

works for the white settler, Mr Howlands who acquires Ngotho's family lands. Jacobo is a Christian and a collaborator with Mr Howlands. His daughter, Mwhaki falls in love with Njoroge on their first meeting at school. In the narrative, Ngũgĩ presents a personal betrayal between the young lovers, Mwhaki and Njoroge. Initially, while they are young, Njoroge betrays Mwhaki by refusing to "elope" with her since he values education more. Later, Mwhaki betrays Njoroge when he proposes that they marry and go to Uganda together, and Mwhaki refuses. Apart from romantic betrayals, we also see other forms of betrayal. For example, Njoroge's brother Boro holds the oppression of their people against his father and their forefathers: "it was through the stupidity of our fathers that the land had been taken" (41). But it is Jacobo's betrayal of his people to the Europeans that is seen as the main political betrayal in this novel, presented from Ngotho's point of view: "For one single moment Jacobo crystallized into a concrete betrayal of the people. He became the physical personification of the long years of waiting and suffering — Jacobo was a Traitor" (58). The most significant betrayal thus is the knowing betrayal of Kenyans to the outside oppressors motivated by self-interest.

Ngũgĩ's concern with betrayal in both personal and political spheres continues in the novel after *A Grain of Wheat*, namely, *Petals of Blood*. Here, the most significant betrayal is betrayal of the people by the post-independence elites. This betrayal is reflected in a range of personal betrayals related through flashbacks in the narrative after the arrest of four friends, Munira, Abdulla, Karega and Wanja, following the arson attack leading to the death of three prominent businessmen. Munira, Karega and Abdulla all love Wanja, who, in a sense, betrays all their dreams by her cynical attachment to money rather than an ideal of love. But she loses faith in the idea of love because of her own betrayal in her youth by a well-to-do older man who impregnates her and then abandons her. Munira was in a loveless marriage that sees him adulterously betray his

marriage vows. Munira's most significant betrayal, however, is also an ambiguous betrayal. In setting fire to Wanja's brothel, not only does he allow her to rise, Phoenix-like, from the ashes to embody the revolutionary spirit, but he also destroys the exploiters, Mzigo, Chui and Kimeria, who die in the blaze.

The theme of betrayal occurs again in *Matigari*, possibly Ngũgĩ's most highly allegorical novel. The freedom fighter, Matigari, returns in search of his family and his home, to find that his inheritance has been betrayed by local and foreign exploiters. Matigari is assisted in his quest by a young woman, Gũthera, who is unwilling to betray her principles to save her father, but betrays her integrity by sleeping with a policeman to get Matigari out of jail. There are also a host of acts of betrayal among the members of the government leadership and their families in this novel.

In Ngũgĩ's last novel, *Wizard of the Crow*, which presents a Kenya subject to contemporary globalisation, we see exploitation among African leaders. The story revolves around four protagonists: the Ruler, the nation's second independence-era leader, Kamĩtĩ wa Karimiri, the one who metamorphoses as the Wizard on the Crow, Grace Nyawĩra, the chairperson of the Movement for the Voice of the People, and Titus Tajarika, a businessman who succeeds the Ruler. The narrative presents a whole range of marital infidelities, which are matched by political betrayals, where government ministers betray one another in order to win the favour of the Ruler. Thus we see that the question of betrayal remains a constant theme throughout Ngũgĩ's career.

This thesis argues that in the range of forms of betrayal presented, the strongest link is established in Ngũgĩ's work between political betrayal and romantic love. This is because romantic love is the embodiment at a personal level of Ngũgĩ's political ideals. Thus betrayal of love represents betrayal of commitment to a utopian society. In this respect, the two novels that are most interesting are *A Grain of Wheat* and *Devil on the Cross*. In the case of *A Grain of Wheat*,

the acts of betrayal manifest through selfish ambition on the part of individuals who betray their loyalty to the anticolonial resistance. But betrayal is also presented in the political sphere as being the product of complex and ambiguous motives, paralleled by complex betrayals in the personal sphere. Similarly, the narrative of *Devil on the Cross* repeatedly connects numerous betrayals in the context of love-relationships with political treachery.

For Better or for Worse: Marriage and Adultery in *A Grain of Wheat*

As the overview of Ngũgĩ's work in the introductory chapter suggests, *A Grain of Wheat* continues the history of colonial Kenya begun by Ngũgĩ with *The River Between*. This novel covers the period of Emergency and ends with the preparations for Uhuru or independence. The Kenyans who witnessed the invasion of the white man later felt betrayed because his initial appearance depicted the imagery of piety, claiming to have been sent by God, but was pretense and betrayal. Fred G. Burke's study on the "Political Evolution in Kenya" notes that the Kikuyus were among the first East African people to appreciate the fact that European penetration would result in the employment of Africans to further European enrichment and power (197). The Kikuyu retaliated by murdering company personnel and by burning company forts. These demonstrations elicited one British punitive expedition after another. He writes that the Kikuyus' residence in the Kiambu areas succeeded in destroying the British fort at Bagoretti. In 1892, the leader of the Kikuyu raiding party, Waiyaki Hinja, regarded as one of Kenya's earliest patriots, was captured and placed in confinement (Burke 197–98). Following this The Kikuyu Association, led by Harry Thuku, a government-employed telephone operator, was formed in 1920 and, the following year, was renamed the Young Kikuyu Association. Among its members was a meter-reader for Nairobi Town Council, a certain Johnstone Kenyatta. This political organisation protested the increase in

poll taxes and the Kipande registration system. In 1922, Thuku was arrested and deported — setting a precedent often followed in years to come — and his organisation was proscribed. When Thuku was held in Nairobi jail, thousands of his supporters gathered on the street and threatened to set him free by force. The British opened fire, Kikuyus fell dead, and Kenya had its first nationalist martyrs. Three years later the Young Kikuyu Association was revived under the name of Kikuyu Central Association (Burke 206). Thuku’s arrest was a result of his radical stance. His arrest was followed by a huge demonstration in Nairobi in which more than twenty-two people were shot dead which saw the proscription of the association (Sifuna 190–91). Subsequently, Jomo Kenyatta and other leaders of the party also emerged. Jomo Kenyatta was described as “the man with the flaming eyes” (17) and his contribution to the party was significant in the sense that he had just returned from Europe and that, being an orator, people poured into his meetings and listened to him. E.S. Atieno-Odhiambo’s “The Formative Years 1945–55” outlines some of the necessities that precipitated the radical struggle for independence and avers that “[a]ll the pent-up frustrations that social historians study as preconditions to a revolutionary situation, and which explain the dilemma in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s *A Grain of Wheat*” (Atieno-Odhiambo 32–33) contributed to the fight for freedom. He describes Kenyatta as the “man with the message” who was able to inspire the young men and women in Kenya, hence the formation of Mau Mau. According to Atieno-Odhiambo, “[t]hey sang of him as the messiah” (34). B.A. Ogot’s “The Decisive Years 1956–63” explores the reforms in response to Mau Mau and how the pressure of the nationalists compelled the imperialist government to lift the State of Emergency in 1960. In mid-January of the same year, the first Lancaster House Constitutional Conference was convened and the loopholes in the constitution made Briggs, one of the leaders, describe the new constitution as “a victory for Mau Mau” (Ogot 61). The preparation for Uhuru was received by the white people

in the land with frustration and disappointment. Ogot records that after the Lancaster House Constitutional Conference, the white settlers felt betrayed. Most of them fled from Kenya in fear for their lives, property and pride, while the people cried “‘*uhuru na Kenyatta*’ (freedom for Kenyatta)” (Ogot 63). William R. Ochieng’ buttresses the fact that the radicals and conservatives of KANU [Kenya African National Union] government accused the government of “betraying the pledges which they made to the masses before independence” (94). It is against this wider historical backdrop that incorporates various forms of political betrayal that the betrayal of love in *A Grain of Wheat* should be considered.

A Grain of Wheat is one of Ngũgĩ’s novels that has received considerable scholarly attention, a brief overview of which will now be outlined. David Cook, for example, has examined the structure and the theme of violence and loneliness in the novel while a number of other scholars discuss the style and technique used (Harrow, Lovesey, Robson and Mwangi). Clifford B. Robson discusses the novel’s complex framework with the use of “the past, present and future being interlocked” (46), while Oliver Lovesey reads the novel as a “series of intertwined snapshots or interrelated autobiographical narratives” (40). Evan Maina Mwangi, challenging the assumption of uncomplicated realism in Ngũgĩ’s early fiction, discusses the use of self-reflexive techniques in the novel. Other scholars emphasise the strong historical dimension, highlighting the effects of underdevelopment during colonialism and the preparation for national independence (Hay, Ogude, and Cook and Okenimkpe), while Peter Nazareth explores *A Grain of Wheat* as a socialist novel.

But it is an undisputable fact that analysis of the theme of betrayal dominates the scholarship of *A Grain of Wheat*. Criticism of the novel foregrounds mainly a thematic exploration of betrayal, often through a comparison with Joseph Conrad. In analysing the theme of betrayal, scholars compare the novel to Conrad’s *Under Western Eyes* (Cook and Okenimkpe, Gikandi,

Caminero-Santangelo, Ogude, Bu-Buakei Jabbi, Bardolphe, Byron, Ebele Obumselu and Maughan-Brown, among others). Cook and Okenimkpe explore the parallels between *A Grain of Wheat* and Conrad's *Under Western Eyes* with the betrayal of the two protagonists, Mugo and Razumov strongly highlighted, and they posit that "Mugo shares Razumov's social uncommittedness and individualism" (76). Byron Caminero-Santangelo also juxtaposes the two novels and describes Ngũgĩ's novel as a representation of political and social relations through "betrayal of the ideals and goals of the national liberation movement" (142). He outlines the resemblances between Razumov and Mugo consisting in the fact that they have very similar personal backgrounds. Similarly, Bu-Buakei Jabbi analyses Ngũgĩ's theme of betrayal as influenced by Conrad's plot thematically. He groups the themes in the novel as follows: the love-jealousy theme, the trust-betrayal theme, and the theme of political revolt (53). Also, Lovesey's chapter on the novel draws resemblances between the novel and George Lamming's masterpiece, *In the Castle of My Skin*, which Ngũgĩ greatly admired, and Conrad's *Under Western Eyes* (40). G.D. Killam's interpretation of the novel is sympathetic to the character Mugo and attributes his betrayal of Kihika as in some part "mitigated by the suffering he experiences in various detention camps he is put in because of his defence of Wambuku" (62). Patrick Williams for his part compares forms of betrayal including Mugo's betrayal of Kihika and Gikonyo's betrayal in refuting the Mau Mau oath (63). Also, Jacqueline Bardolph writes about the various acts of disloyalty exhibited by the characters and the confessions made at the end of the story. (33). Sarala Krishnamurthy examines the crucial role each of the four main characters play in relation to betrayal in *A Grain of Wheat*. She describes Kihika as "the Moses figure and the true hero" while Mugo is the "false hero" and the "subaltern voice" (107). For her, Gikonyo and Mumbi equally entrench the theme of betrayal (108). In like manner, K. Indrasena Reddy looks at the theme of

betrayal and reconciliation in the novel and examines Ngũgĩ's use of irony to depict this theme of betrayal in the novel. Moving the question of betrayal from the thematic to questions of authorial choice, David Maughan-Brown discusses the influence of Conrad's *Under Western Eyes* on Ngũgĩ's writing and asserts that Ngũgĩ's attempt to affirm the value of community over that of the individual "is betrayed by the choice of the plot of *Under Western Eyes*" (251), a choice which privileges individual action and individual destiny. Also betrayal and the relief of guilt are perceived as a kind of regeneration or new life (Palmer 46, Monkman). Leslie Monkman writes, "the new citizens of Kenya must recogni[s]e that in the sins and failures of the past the potential for positive achievement and rebirth has not been lost" (114). For all of these scholars, betrayal is the pivot around which the narrative, at various levels and in different ways, is constructed.

Betrayal in the sphere of intimate relations has been more closely considered in the analyses of the following scholars, Gikandi and Ogude. Although Gikandi primarily considers the novel as a representation of decolonisation that shows Ngũgĩ's appreciation of Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, he also highlights the question of love and betrayal that engages the main characters, Gikonyo, Karanja and Mumbi. Ogude's chapter, "Allegory, Romance and the Nation: Women as Allegorical Figures in Ngũgĩ's Novels" from his monograph on Ngũgĩ looks at Ngũgĩ's use of romance to portray women as nationalist figures. Although both Gikandi and Ogude foreground the significance of romance, a full analysis of the link between romance and betrayal, and the significance of romance in itself in Ngũgĩ's oeuvre as a whole, demand further attention. This chapter, therefore, explores the correlation between romance and betrayal, and its significance in Ngũgĩ's fiction especially *A Grain of Wheat* and *Devil on the Cross*.

Looking at the novel specifically through the lens of romance, we see that in *A Grain of Wheat*, Ngũgĩ combines the novel of courtship and marriage with the novel of marital breakdown.

Some of the trends one observes in Ngũgĩ's works in this regard are part of more general trends identified in African literature. Isidore Okpewho's chapter on "Understanding African Marriage: Towards a Convergence of Literature and Sociology" in the book *Transformations of African Marriage* looks at the correlation between courtship and marriage in Africa. Okpewho examines the traditional outlook of African marriage, as well marriages that explore change, mainly through centralising romance. He writes about the adaptation of Western ideas of romantic love and courtship as a modern trend among educated married couples. He states that there is a trend where educated Africans override the decisions of their parents and choose their own spouses: "Nevertheless, [at the time at which Okpewho was writing] parental or 'reference group' norms about marriage still takes precedence over their children's ideas and interests" (Okpewho 335). In Ngũgĩ's novels, marriage always challenges "reference group" norms. In *A Grain of Wheat*, Ngũgĩ presents the love between men and women based entirely on their own choice, often challenging the status quo. The relationships presented are not in any way forged or fostered by families of the future couple, but are initiated and pursued by the couples themselves.

In the first part of *A Grain of Wheat*, a typical romantic plot between a man and a woman is presented: Gikonyo, a carpenter, and Mumbi, a girl from an affluent family, fall in love and establish a relationship despite their backgrounds. In the case of Gikonyo and Mumbi their love breaks the boundary of class: Gikonyo, a carpenter, falls in love with Mumbi, "the most beautiful girl on the ridge" (87) and the sister of Kihika, the hero of Thabai. Mumbi is the daughter of a man of high social standing. Her father, Mbugua, was a well-known warrior and a farmer on the ridge. On the other hand, Gikonyo comes from a single-parent, struggling household, since his father left his mother. Clearly, Gikonyo needs Mumbi's love to secure his status in society; but he also needs Mumbi's love to fulfil himself at an existential level. We can see from the beginning of their

relationship that Gikonyo lacks the confidence to approach Mumbi, but he comes to enjoy her attention when she brings him a panga to repair. They also share a love of music, and Mumbi is enraptured when she hears the talented Gikonyo singing in his workshop.

Gikonyo's lack of confidence in wooing Mumbi stems from a feeling of being inferior. This feeling is made even worse since Mumbi has rejected the proposal of a prominent suitor, Richard Jackson, the successful son of a wealthy and prominent Christian family — Gikonyo thinks to himself: “if she has refused such a man, what chance have I?” (89). The novel reveals Mumbi as a genuinely independent woman who loves Gikonyo in an ideal way for who he is. There are no conditions attached to her love, and material concerns do not come into play, as they do in relation to some of Ngũgĩ's other female characters. If one considers the trajectory of Ngũgĩ's novels, *A Grain of Wheat* represents the first instance where a couple could be united in marriage despite the differences in station that exist between them. In fact, it is precisely the differences that make the lovers attractive to each other, as the rejected suitor, Richard Jackson shows. Where the lovers in *The River Between* and *Weep Not, Child* could not be reconciled across the divisions of religious, class and political differences, here we see those differences are overcome. At the crucial moment of independence from Britain, we see that the divisions that plagued the formation of the Kenyan nation, discussed fully in the previous chapter, seem to have been conquered in the union of Gikonyo and Mumbi. Thus the hope linked with independence from colonial control is linked with a momentary transcendence of internal national divisions.

This union is symbolically represented by the panga that gets fixed for Mumbi by Gikonyo. Gikonyo romances Mumbi by singing for her, and one of the songs he sings is a song which rewrites the myth of Gĩkũyũ and Mumbi, the Kikuyu forefather and foremother, in the context of anti-colonial resistance: “Gĩkũyũ na Mumbi / Gĩkũyũ na Mumbi / Gĩkũyũ na Mumbi / Nikihiu

ngwatiro” (70). As Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin interpret the song, it is a song that says the relationship between a man and a woman is always complicated and “spells ‘trouble’” (58). They derive this suggestion from the translation of the final lines, “Nikihiu ngwatiro”, namely that the “handle is too hot”. But, as Brendon Nicholls develops the reading, the song can also refer to political questions, since the Kenyan Land and Freedom Army referred to themselves as “Gĩkũyũ na Mumbi” and not Mau Mau (103). The final line of the song, “Nikihiu ngwatiro” (70), could also be translated as “burnt at the handle”, an indication that the tradition represented by Gĩkũyũ and Mumbi needs revival or rejuvenation in the new postcolonial context. But Mumbi in the song also refers to the character Mumbi who has brought her panga, which has been burnt at the handle, to be repaired by Gikonyo. In fixing the panga, an act that solidifies the relationship between Gikonyo and Mumbi, the tensions in the political issues represented by the mythical Gĩkũyũ and Mumbi are also repaired. Metaphorically, the fixing of the broken panga represents the mending of love between Gĩkũyũ and Mumbi, which was supposedly destroyed or “burnt at the handle” with colonial intrusion, the third party in the romance. Significantly, Gikonyo and Mumbi’s relationship represents national unification symbolised by the panga, which was burnt at the handle, but now is repaired. Their relationship thus represents national unification through an ideal love and marriage that could not be achieved in the earlier novels, where the divisions of class, religion, and politics could not be overcome. The tension that needs to exist in this novel, since tension provides the momentum for the narrative, now must come from elsewhere. It now comes from betrayals of that unity at personal and political levels.

Looked at from the perspective of romantic love, the first part of *A Grain of Wheat* is in some ways a classical romance novel, a genre which developed in a European context in the period of modernity. The romance novel is partially influenced by the tradition of courtly love, which

sees the male lover putting the female beloved on a pedestal and worshipping an ideal image of her. According to the twelfth-century treatise on love by Andreas Capellanus's (Andre the Chaplain) titled *The Art of Courtly Love*, in courtly love women do not reciprocate the love their male counterpart expresses in the relationship: "[t]he mutual love which you seek in women you cannot find, for no woman ever loved a man or could bind herself to a lover in the mutual bonds of love" (200). Capellanus asserts that in courtly love the woman's only interest is to "enrich" herself through being the object of devotion: "For a woman's desire is to get rich through love, but not to give her lover the solaces that please him" (200). This form of romance is very ritualised and stylised. Courtly love traditions have filtered into European ideas about love and about the relationship of men to women. Most scholars of romance in European literature track the modern romance form back to the novels of Jane Austen, which also are indirectly influenced by the courtly love tradition. *Pride and Prejudice* is the novel by Austen that is regarded as being the most important influence on romance in literature and also film. Barbara Sherrod's article titled "*Pride and Prejudice: A Classic Love Story*" attempts to examine why Elizabeth and Darcy's love is such a classic. For Sherrod, Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* is a classic love story, which sets the pattern for the modern popular love story. The story revolves around the heroine, Elizabeth, an independent-minded and captivating woman who is loved by an aloof, powerful man, Darcy. Sherrod's reasons for categorising the novel as a classic love story include the fact that love rather than property or politics, is the main attraction between the hero and heroine. Another reason Sherrod gives for Austen's novel being a romance classic is the centrality of the sexual tension between the lovers; other factors include the idea that love improves a person's character and that love is based on integrity (Sherrod 66–69). Of course, in recent times, many of the conventions of courtly love and the Austen-inspired romance have been challenged by a spirit of equality and

democracy in intimate relationships. It is also important to note that even though “property” or material questions do not overtly animate the relationship of the heroine and hero of *Pride and Prejudice*, without exception in Jane Austen’s novels the financially insecure heroine marries into a better station in life. But none of the popular romance plots, as inspired by Austen’s now “classic” romances, are fully represented in *A Grain of Wheat*. Neither are the conventions of Gĩkũyũ courtship and marriage. In *Facing Mount Kenya*, Kenyatta outlines the stages of the marriage process: the first stage involves the proposal, where the young man does not propose directly to the intended, but she is informed by his friends, who accompany the future groom to the young woman’s house to woo her on his behalf. The second stage continues only if the girl accepts the proposal. At this stage the young man informs his parents of his intention to marry the chosen girl and the parents “prepare honey or sugar-cane beer, which they send to the girl’s parents... the beer of asking the girl’s hand” (166). The girl is made to sip some of the beer to indicate consent. If there is no objection, close friends are invited to partake in the engagement ceremony, in which prayers are said for the happy future of the prospective couple (167). Thus even though Ngũgĩ frequently invokes African culture, the conventions mentioned by Kenyatta are not alluded to at all, even though they were probably a part of the practices of the communities among whom Ngũgĩ grew up.

Romance in *A Grain of Wheat* is instead constructed around permutations of Western literary romance traditions, as we shall see. Unlike most romance novels, Ngũgĩ’s novel is focalised mainly through the hero, Gikonyo. Gikonyo and Mumbi are acquainted with each other in the small community presented in the novel, and their attraction to each other is clear. As in almost all romance novels, there is an obstacle to the love of the hero and heroine, in the form of a secondary male hero, Karanja. Karanja is the main rival for the Mumbi’s affections. As with the

classic romance novel which uses Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* as a model, the romantic relationship is mapped as a journey where each partner grows and develops in response to the other partner. Gikonyo's flaw is his shyness and lack of confidence since he sees himself as inferior to Mumbi's other suitors. He gradually overcomes this shyness through Mumbi's encouragement. Mumbi is attracted to Gikonyo because of his patience and passion, reflected in his qualities as a craftsman, which allow him to repair the old, allowing the new to emerge. As with the plot and characterisation of the classic romance novel, the lovers are seen to encourage each other's development until they achieve a perfect "fit" in marriage.

Unlike the classic romance plot, however, *A Grain of Wheat* does not see love consummated most importantly in marriage. Instead, sexual consummation is more prominent in the novel, highlighting the strong influence of D. H. Lawrence on Ngũgĩ's development. Salah Kaci Mohamed's article "A Lawrentian Imagination for a View of Fiction: The Impact of D. H. Lawrence on Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o" examines Lawrence's influence on Ngũgĩ's oeuvre. In a comparative study, Mohamed demonstrates how the Lawrentian romantic imagination echoes in Ngũgĩ's fiction. He asserts that Ngũgĩ admits being inspired by reading Lawrence's works and his way of "entering into the spirit of things ... entering into the soul of people ... even of land, of the countryside, of things like plants, of atmosphere" (Mohamed 2–3). In his view, Ngũgĩ's approach shares similarities with Lawrence's, especially in the creation of mystical characters and in themes that foreground sexual desire and love: "the concept of love — conceived, as with Lawrence, as in symbiosis with sexuality — not only occupies a central part in almost the totality of Ngũgĩ's fiction but is, what is more, often 'explored in Lawrentian intensity'" (23). For him, the love-making scene between Gikonyo and Mumbi has a strong Lawrentian influence (24).

Ngũgĩ artistically dramatises the consummation of love as if it was orchestrated by the two lovers, rather than being a fortuitous event. The narrator describes with great intensity the love-making scene between Gikonyo and Mumbi when they were left alone in the woods while their friends have gone to entertain themselves with the passing of the train:

He [Gikonyo] stood facing Mumbi and surrendered himself to a power he knew drew them together. He held her hands and his fingers were full, so sensitive. Mumbi — he tried to say something as he held her to himself. She lay against his breast, their heart-beat each to each... Gradually, he pulled her to the ground, the long grass covered them. Mumbi breathed hard but could not, dare not, speak. One by one, Gikonyo removed her clothes as if performing a dark ritual in the wood... Gikonyo passed his hands through her hair and over her breast, slowly coaxing and smoothing stiffness from her body, until she lay limp in his hand. Suddenly Gikonyo found himself suspended in a void, he was near breaking point and as he swooned into the dark depth he heard a moan escape Mumbi's parted lips. She held him tight to herself. Their breath was now one. The earth moved beneath their one body into a stillness. (106)

Ngũgĩ repeatedly employs in the extract above the imagery of two people bonded in love: “a power he knew drew them together”, “their heart-beat each to each”, “their breath was now one”, finally achieving a climax in “their one body”. But there is another dimension where Ngũgĩ moves out of the Lawrentian idea of a higher truth achieved through sex, to a postcolonial consideration of the consummation of love through sex. Love-making in the extract is compared

to a sacrament, “a dark ritual [performed] in the wood”. The “pagan” African ritual, especially female circumcision that was so contentious in the earlier novels, is here unproblematically replaced by an erotic African ritual, which presents the bond of romantic love as the most important one, and a ritual that replaces circumcision. Gikonyo admits the inexpressible pleasure he derives after making love to Mumbi: “It was like being born again ... I felt whole, renewed ... I had made love to many a woman, but I never had felt like that before ... Before I was nothing. Now, I was a man” (114). From the extract, we see that sex, which represents the consummation of an ideal love, enhances the strong bond between Gikonyo and Mumbi, also allowing Gikonyo to be a man. Gikonyo compares his feelings after the sexual encounter to “being born again ... I felt whole, renewed”. Ngũgĩ employs biblical allusion with the figure of being “born again”, which in Christianity denotes repentance from sin and acceptance of Jesus Christ as saviour. By inference, Gikonyo experiences a change in his personality and becomes complete, with Mumbi as his saviour. By this, Ngũgĩ depicts the man who has not experienced true love as an incomplete, immature being. Gikonyo’s admission of incompleteness or deficiency is evident in the extract above. It is only the love of Mumbi that makes Gikonyo a complete man: “I had made love to many a woman, but I never had felt like that before ... Before I was nothing. Now, I was a man” (114). Gikonyo achieves individual existential fulfilment through sexual consummation, but marriage for Ngũgĩ plays a more significant social role. Marriage symbolises Kenyan unity.

The idea of self-fulfilment through love of the other has a long history that in the European tradition is traced back to Plato’s *Symposium* (trans. Allen 1993). Ngũgĩ’s portrayal of love echoes Aristophanes’ speech in *The Symposium* which suggests that after Zeus divides the initial wholeness of the human being, the one half always perpetually yearns for the other: “Now when their nature was divided into two, each half in longing rushed to the other half of itself and they

threw their arms around each other and intertwined them, desiring to grow together into one, dying to hunger and inactivity too because they were unwilling to do anything apart from one another” (Allen 131–32). Romantic love in this view is probably the most important path to individual self-realisation.

The other half of *A Grain of Wheat* takes the form of a novel of marriage and adultery, which also has a well-represented trajectory in the history of the novel. Ngũgĩ presents marriage between Gikonyo and Mumbi as a fulfilling venture in the sense that they are completed in each other. Gikonyo and Mumbi’s marriage begins on an enviable note since onlookers are jealous of the happiness they enjoy, despite their reservations about the suitability of the match. The collective town “chorus” is disappointed with Mumbi’s poor choice of a husband: “What did Mumbi see in him? How could a woman so beautiful walk into poverty with eyes wide open? (22). Eventually, Gikonyo gains recognition as he becomes one of the richest men in Thabai, motivated in his aspirations by overcoming his sense of inferiority. In due course, he comes to be admired as “a symbol of what everyone aspired to be” (22). Gikonyo tells Mugo about his blissful and idyllic, albeit short-lived, marriage:

During our short period of married life, Mumbi made me feel it was all important ... suddenly I discovered ... no, it was as if I had made a covenant with God to be happy. How do I say it? I took the woman in my arms — do you know a banana stem? I peeled off the layer, and I put out my hand, my trembling hand, to reach the Kiana coiled inside. ‘Every day I found a new Mumbi ...’ (114)

This is an indication that Mumbi's love completes Gikonyo's life. Gikonyo describes the complexity of their union as divine. Mumbi and Gikuyu (rather than Gikonyo) are the names of the ancestral founders of the Gĩkũyũ nation. Hence, their happy marriage presupposes a hope for unity, happiness and prosperity of the community on the one hand, and the entire nation on the other. Gikonyo admits to Mugo that Mumbi was his source of life: "she was my life, all my life" (61). The marriage also does not lose its sheen in the tedium of day-to-day life, since Mumbi keeps revealing new layers of herself. She gratifies Gikonyo's joyfulness to the extent that she always appears as "a new Mumbi". Michael Vaughan's article "African Fiction and Popular Struggle: The Case of *A Grain of Wheat*" in some incidental remarks on the relationship sees romantic love in the novel as "not a contradiction of individualism, but an expression of it. Romantic love between Gikonyo and Mumbi constitutes a nuclear bond which involves two individuals whose concentration and existence depend on each other" (37). Vaughan asserts that Ngũgĩ's depiction of romantic love is geared towards individual rather than social realisation, but, as I have shown, their union symbolically represents national unity.

Mumbi's expression of love, furthermore, underlines the bigger revolutionary importance of their union:

Even when I got married, the dream did not die. I longed to make my husband happy, yes, but I also prepared myself to stand by him when the time came. I could carry his sheath and as fast as he shot into the enemy, I would feed him with arrows. If danger came and he fell, he would fall into my arms and I would bring him home safely to myself. (120)

We see that Gikonyo and Mumbi unite to fight the oppressor, “the enemy”. The elation Gikonyo experiences in his marriage symbolises delight in the people’s expectation of Uhuru and its aftermath. Ngũgĩ presents Gikonyo’s and Mumbi’s time together, their love and happy marriage, as completely fulfilling to emphasise the loneliness and suffering of their later separation. Even while Gikonyo is in detention, the novel portrays Mumbi’s love as his source of happiness. His only desire while in detention was to “see Mumbi just once” (127). The reason being that “I did not even say farewell to her when the soldiers carried me away” (127). His dream while in detention always centres on his wife, Mumbi: “She was my life, all my life” (80). His wish is to see Mumbi and take up the thread of life where he had left it (130). Robson suggests that while in detention, Gikonyo “keeps Mumbi alive in his mind; she provides a source of inspiration greater than that of patriotism” (59). In other words, Gikonyo’s commitment to romantic love is greater than his commitment to national ideals and goals. For Gikonyo, Mumbi is a “[r]edeemer who will provide him with a new source of life” (Robson 70). Robson’s reading of the significance of romantic love in Gikonyo’s life strikes me as being correct. Gikonyo remains a tragic hero despite the positive note of the ending of *A Grain of Wheat*. At the end, hope resides in the child that Gikonyo dreams Mumbi will bear. It does not reside in the resolution of the conflicts of the character, Gikonyo, for whom romantic love is the most important part of self-realisation. As long as Gikonyo expects to achieve fulfilment through romantic love alone, he is destined to fail. As will be shown in a later chapter, the place of romantic love in Ngũgĩ’s ideal society is only resolved in the final novel, *The Wizard of the Crow*, where romantic love is conscious of its collective political role. In *A Grain of Wheat*, love cannot unambiguously triumph since it remains an individual relationship unaware of its social role. The relationship and marriage of Gikonyo and

Mumbi is not one whose purpose is in the national cause, even though their initial happy union was an analogy for the newly independent Kenya. Their relationship is predominantly about Gikonyo's obsessive need for self-affirmation, rather than being about a union that supports the social project.

A Grain of Wheat is Ngũgĩ's first novel where an idealised love across social divides is realised in marriage. Love is idealised since it is not tainted by anything outside of romance. It is not, for example, tarnished by material concerns since Gikonyo does not marry Mumbi for money. More significantly, Mumbi does not marry Gikonyo for money. As Florence Stratton has extensively shown, the female figure in African literature by male writers is often linked with the exchange of sexuality for money. This link becomes explicit in Ngũgĩ's later novel *Petals of Blood* but in *A Grain of Wheat*, an unsullied love exists between the couple. Marriage, furthermore, in Ngũgĩ's novels is always heterosexual, monogamous and exclusive, with monogamy as the more prominent feature. One can compare monogamy in the novels with the representation of polygyny in some of Ngũgĩ's life writings. In the memoirs and autobiographies, where polygyny is referred to, for example his mother's experience when his father takes other wives, the representation is always negative. In terms of the understanding of marriage as monogamous and exclusive, adultery represents the ultimate betrayal. The betrayal of the ideal marriage by Mumbi when she sleeps with Karanja is what breaks Gikonyo.

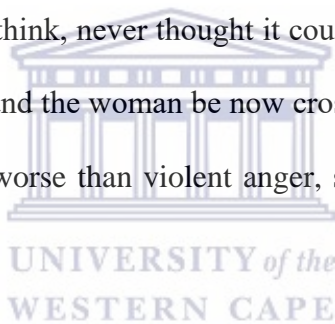
In this context, the significance of adultery in marriage needs to be further explored. The correlation between marriage and adultery has been considered by Chris Roulston in *Narrating Marriage in Eighteenth Century England and France* (2010). Roulston presents adultery not as the nemesis of marriage, but as essential to the structure of marriage. He asserts that "[a]lthough thematically, marriage is about the beginnings — procreation and genealogy — structurally it is

linked to endings; it concludes the narratives of courtship, and it comes to an end through the invention of adultery” (2) in the novels considered in this study. In his view, marriage narratives in both England and France emerged alongside courtship and adultery as subplots within novels. Adultery is perceived as “re-injecting the tension that marriage has drained away” (Girard 6). From Ngũgĩ’s perspective, adultery also becomes a significant focus of the novel at the same time that marriage is a possibility.

The question of adultery has attracted scholarly debate in many disciplines, including anthropology, sociology, and religion, among others. From the literary point of view, one work that has become a reference point for many works on love and marriage is Tony Tanner’s *Adultery in the Novel: Contract and Transgression* (1979). Tanner discusses the concept of adultery and its impact on the individual and the society as a whole. He explores the relationship between marriage and society and cautions on the effects of the intrusion of adultery on society as “the action of adultery portends the possible breakdown of all the meditations on which society itself depends, and demonstrates the latent impossibility of participating in the interrelated patterns that comprise its structures” (17). Ngũgĩ presents in *Mumbi* a single act of betrayal through adultery that results in tension in the ideal marriage, which may be magnified to suggest the betrayal of the whole body politic of the newly formed nation. Adultery represents the betrayal of the national ideal at the moment of its birth.

In terms of the place that the love-marriage holds in this novel, and in Ngũgĩ’s novels generally, adultery represents the worst form of betrayal. This is because, as has been established above, the love marriage represents the unity of the ideal nation. *Mumbi*’s adultery very nearly causes the destruction of her home and, by extension, betrayal can undermine the entire community and nation. *Mumbi*’s role in the novel thus is as symbolic to the Gikuyus as Helen of Sparta is to

the ancient Greeks. Menelaus's wife, Helen, commits a "simple act of adultery ultimately [that] leads to the destruction of Troy and the near destruction of the Greeks" (Tanner 27). Just like Helen, Mumbi regrets her actions but the repercussions persist. Tony Tanner writes that "the adulterous woman becomes the 'gap' in society that gradually extends through it. In attempting to ostracize her, society moves towards ostracizing itself" (Tanner 13). Gikonyo's initial reaction to his betrayal by his wife was to "kill her and the child... end all misery" (132), but he withdraws into his thoughts. The narrator sums up the thoughts running through Gikonyo's mind as: "Six years he had waited for this day; six years through seven detention camps had he longed for it, feeling, all the time, that life's meaning was contained in his final return to Mumbi. Nothing else had mattered ... Little did he then think, never thought it could ever be a return to silence. Could the valley of silence between him and the woman be now crossed?" (133). The silence that exists between the husband and wife is worse than violent anger, suggesting how deeply the betrayal undermines the relationship.



To a large extent, adultery tends to denigrate Mumbi in her husband's eyes. Gikonyo loses confidence in Mumbi and develops extreme hatred for her as he reflects on the whole episode: "Mumbi had walked to another man's bed, had allowed, actually held, another man's dangling thing between her thighs, her flesh, had rapturously welcomed the explosion of that man's seeds into her... She had betrayed the bond, the secret, between them..." (134). The perverse detail of Gikonyo's reflections underline the revulsion he experiences. Mumbi's adultery means a lot more to him than the simple breaking of a contract. Gikonyo is unable to fathom Mumbi's actions. Bu-Buakei Jabbi describes the love-jealousy theme as a complex relationship between Gikonyo and Mumbi, including the seduction of Mumbi by Karanja during Gikonyo's absence in detention. We read that Karanja was filled with extreme hatred for Gikonyo and nearly shot him when Gikonyo

visited him. Gikonyo feels betrayed by Karanja, for he considers him as a friend. Gikonyo nearly goes mad as he reflects on Karanja's and Mumbi's affair: "I suppose there is nothing so painful as finding that a friend, or a man you always trusted, has betrayed you" (140). In an attempt to explain the love and betrayal among the three characters, Patrick Williams writes that "both Gikonyo and Karanja commit acts of betrayal of the collective because each of them wants Mumbi ... it almost places the blame on Mumbi for the betrayals, making her, like the primal Eve figure whom, mythologically, her name evokes, the cause of man's downfall from grace" (64). Although the intrusion of Karanja seemingly creates tension in an enviable ideal love and marriage, Mumbi could be seen in the novel partly to be blamed for her actions.

Even though, in terms of the significance of the love marriage in Ngũgĩ's novels, adultery is the worst possible betrayal since it betrays the foundation of the modern Kenyan nation. *A Grain of Wheat* is sufficiently nuanced to show how betrayals are forced by contexts and may be understood and, possibly, excused. It is only Gikonyo who perceives Mumbi's action as a betrayal. For example, Wangari, Gikonyo's mother, empathises with Mumbi and accepts her without qualms. Mumbi can therefore be pardoned since her betrayal is equal to all the other forms of betrayals, both personal and political, which are forced by circumstances as demonstrated in the novel.

Like Mumbi, Gikonyo is forced into an act of betrayal as bad as Mumbi's. He is compelled to betray the Mau Mau oath to allow him to get together with his wife again. The narrator describes Gikonyo's feeling of estrangement as he walks out of the prisons of detention with guilt written all over him: "All the other detainees of Yala crowded to the walls of their compounds and watched him with chilled hostility. Gikonyo fixed his mind on Mumbi fearing that strength would leave his knees under the silent stare of all the other detainees" (98). It looks like Gikonyo's own conscience

was rebuking him: “the sound of his feet on the pavement leading to the office where screening, interrogations and confessions were made, seemed, in the absence of other noise, unnecessarily loud” (98). We see that Gikonyo’s betrayal seems parallel to Mumbi’s betrayal in the sense that both Gikonyo and Mumbi are seemingly forced into personal betrayals by the difficulties and hopelessness of their contexts. In their chapter on *A Grain of Wheat*, Cook and Okenimkpe write that Gikonyo’s longing for Mumbi while in detention, leads him to be disloyal to the swearing of the oath of loyalty to the struggle for freedom. They express the disloyalty on the part of both Gikonyo and Mumbi as disloyal in their own ways: Gikonyo betrays his people and Mumbi breaks the marital vow (Cook and Okenimkpe 77). It is unsurprising that Gikonyo regrets his actions on hearing his wife’s infidelity: “Mugo’s purity, Mumbi’s unfaithfulness, everything had conspired to undermine his manhood, his faith in himself, and accentuate his shame at being the first to confess the oath in Yala Camp” (107).

More generally, Ngũgĩ’s propensity for subjecting his characters to forced betrayals reflects his socio-political vision. The betrayals and the compromises of the central love relationship chart the way for the betrayals and compromises at a national level. A good example is the sequence of the treachery of Gikonyo, Mumbi and Karanja all motivated by love. Ironically, it is love that makes one betray other causes. Gikonyo snitches in the camp because he wants to get back to Mumbi. Mumbi gives in to Karanja because of the hopelessness of life without Gikonyo. Karanja betrays his loyalty to the oath because he loves Mumbi and wants to be with her. In a way, Karanja’s humiliation is revealed when Mumbi rejects his proposal and clings to Gikonyo. Karanja is hopelessly in love with Mumbi, but she refuses to requite his love. We can possibly interpret the sexual encounter between Karanja and Mumbi as Karanja’s way of regaining his manhood after experiencing humiliation because of Mumbi’s rejection. Also, Mumbi’s brother

Kihika, the hero with the messianic vision, abandons his beloved, Wambuku, to become a forest fighter because of his love for his country. Meanwhile, Njeri, a secret admirer of Kihika and a friend of Wambuku and Mumbi, leaves the comfort of her home to pursue Kihika, and finally meets her death because of love for him. These are just some of the betrayals presented in the novel, betrayals that are all motivated, or in some way impacted by, a love relationship.

We see that despite betrayals in personal and political contexts there is still hope at the end of the novel. But the hope resides in the baby to be born, not in Gikonyo, who remains a tragic hero since he continues to privilege the love relationship over political relationships. This may be deduced from his betrayal of the national cause while in detention in order to be with the woman who existentially completes him. More than any other relationship, the romantic love relationship in Ngũgĩ's literary project at a personal level symbolises the ideal nation at a political level. It is only when the romantic personal plot and political plot that scripts social justice reflect and reinforce each other that tension is resolved. This tension is not resolved at the end of *A Grain of Wheat*, evidenced by the fact that Gikonyo cannot clearly emerge as an exemplary hero. At end of the story, the possibility exists of a reunion between Gikonyo and Mumbi, but it is a reunion that does not resolve the tension between romantic and political relationships. Instead, unresolved tension is deflected onto the *deus ex machina* of a mythical child to be born. Gikonyo carves a wooden stool as a belated wedding present for Mumbi. On the sides of the stool he carves a woman big with child. Hope thus comes to be embodied in the child that will be born, rather than the resolution of the tensions of eros and politics in which Ngũgĩ's novels are heavily invested.

The novel that follows *A Grain of Wheat* is *Petals of Blood*. *Petals of Blood* does not explore further the question of the betrayals that occur in the love marriage, which symbolises the ideal union of the Kenyan nation. However, betrayal in marriage occurs again in the novel written

after *Petals of Blood*, namely, *Devil on the Cross*. But in *Devil on the Cross*, as we shall see next, betrayal in marriage is considered from the opposite vantage point, namely, the inexcusable and abusive betrayals of the husband-cum-bourgeois exploiter in the marriage of convenience not love.

Gerontocratic Betrayals: “Sugar Daddies” in *Devil on the Cross*

Devil on the Cross is well known in literary circles as the novel Ngũgĩ wrote on toilet paper when he was detained in prison. It was written in Gĩkũyũ and titled *Caitani Mũtharaba-inĩ*. The novel was later translated by Ngũgĩ into English as *Devil on the Cross*. *Devil on the Cross* is arguably the most interesting text in Ngũgĩ’s oeuvre since it crosses orality and literature in more than one way. The narrative takes the form of the oral prophecy of the traditional Gĩkũyũ figure of the Gĩcaandĩ Player. It was also widely read aloud in bars in Kenya and collectively performed in the period after its publication. The story is woven around the central figure of a young woman, Jacinta Warĩinga, a secretary, who has experienced a range of personal betrayals. Warĩinga, in the present time of the text, faces dismissal from her company, Champion Construction, for refusing the advances of her employer, Boss Kĩhara. Thereafter, Warĩinga is rejected by her beloved, a university student who not only ditches her but also accuses her of infidelity with her boss. The next day, her landlord evicts her from her rented apartment for refusing to pay an increment in her rent. Here, a corrupt form of romantic love, represented by Boss Kĩhara, is linked not with social ideals and aspirations, but with misfortune and downfall. Out of despair, Warĩinga attempts suicide, but she is saved by a Good Samaritan who assists her. The Good Samaritan invites her to a “Devil’s Feast” in the town of Ilmorog, to which she travels with him in a matatu (taxi). Out of frustration, Warĩinga recounts her story to the other occupants of the matatu by using a fictional

character in the person of Kareendi. This semi-autobiographical narrative recounts Kareendi's repeated betrayal in love by older male figures, to which I shall return later.

The other focus in the narrative centres on the Devil's Feast, where the Modern Theft and Robbery organisation arranges a competition among Local Thieves and Robbers. The aim of the competition is to identify and crown the chief national thief and robber who will be able to join forces with the foreign partners most effectively to exploit the peasants and workers in the country.

An overview of scholarship of *Devil on the Cross* reveals three main areas of interest, all three of which will very briefly be considered here. These areas focus on questions of orality, the analysis of neocolonialism presented in the novel, and the representation of the female figure. Studies of orality in the novel highlight the frame narrative of the Gĩcaandĩ Player. Lovesey takes the Gĩcaandĩ Player at face value as “a traditional storyteller” (61) whose narrative is unproblematic. Gikandi interprets the figure as Jesus Christ in the wilderness (212), and also highlights the multiple sources of influence of this traditional Gĩkũyũ oral form (209). Mwangi similarly reads the Gĩcaandĩ Player as a prophet of justice (29), in whose narrative, however, there are inconsistencies and contradictions (29–31). Cook and Okenimkpe turn their attention more to the specific oral genres used by the Gĩcaandĩ Player (121), as does M. Keith Booker (67); while Nicholls sees the Gĩcaandĩ Player as an accommodation of African cultural forms in the genre of the novel (161).

The focus on Ngũgĩ's Marxist analyses of neo-colonialism emerges mainly from the Devil's Feast strand of the narrative, which form part of the readings of scholars like Lovesey (63), Josef Gugler (336), Booker (66–67), Ogude (56), F. Odun Balogun (76), and Harish Narang (121), among others.

Some scholars foreground an analysis of the female character, Warĩinga. Warĩinga is a young schoolgirl whose parents have been sent to detention and is left in the care of her aunt and her husband. She falls in love with a “sugar daddy”, the Rich Old Man. Little does she know that she has been “sold” to the man by her uncle. Gradually, the Rich Old Man lures Warĩinga into a romantic relationship and showers her with gifts, money and a deceptive form of “love”. Ignorantly, she also enjoys her relationship with the man: “Her Rich Old Man encouraged her with soothing words: he said that she should never worry, that he was perfectly willing to divorce his first wife on account of Warĩinga’s thighs and breasts” (143). The old man betrays the love of Warĩinga after impregnating her, an affront that nearly causes her death, but Warĩinga, being a strong character, is able to get back on her feet. Eventually, Warĩinga gets revenge on the old man who almost destroyed her life. Cook and Okenimkpe interpret this female character as Ngũgĩ’s symbol of justice (115). For Stratton, *Devil on the Cross* could be considered a female *Bildungsroman* due to Warĩinga’s development from a troubled girlhood to a fully socialised adulthood (159). However, Stratton takes issue with Ngũgĩ for portraying Warĩinga’s development in masculine terms. In order to be a fully-realised character, she develops stereotypically male attributes, while remaining sexually attractive to men (162). Ogude also takes issue with the portrayal of Warĩinga. For Ogude, the portrayal is “an oversimplification of gender discrimination and the process of mental liberation that it requires” (116). He writes that “Warĩinga’s dramatic transformation into her new social role is incredible” (116). Elleke Boehmer writes ironically about Warĩinga’s resourcefulness and her ability to fit in a field of male characters. In her view Warĩinga manages to reclaim her womanhood “despite her hard labour in the workshop” (194), where she nevertheless, “remains sexually attractive” (194). Nicholls describes Warĩinga as a “fallen woman” who develops into a heroine of Kenyan resistance, a reflection of Ngũgĩ’s “larger metaphorical

aspirations for Kenya” (160). Nicholls posits that the depiction of Warĩinga is Ngũgĩ’s means of reconstituting “the mother body”, which likens Kenya to a mother (160). For the most part, thus, critics have been unconvinced by the representation of the central female character in *Devil on the Cross*. I would like to depart from established scholarship on the novel by looking at the character of Warĩinga not in terms of stereotypes, but in the context of her significance in the love plot in the novel.

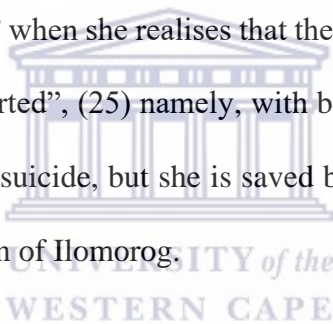
Looking at the complex nature of the narrative, I firstly want to separate the love story strand of the narrative from the satire of the conference of thieves. But thereafter I want to show how the love story strand and the political critique presented by the conference of thieves narrative may be brought together in an unexpected way. The love story plot revolves around Jacinta Warĩinga and her intimate relations that are quite clearly offset from her other relationships, which act as a backdrop for the romantic attachments. The love story plot is told as a flashback where Warĩinga relates her experiences of betrayal by her lovers to the unnamed man who subsequently saves her from suicide. She tells her personal history in the form of a story, with fictional characters representing herself and the other parties. In the narrative, Warĩinga’s dream of climbing educational heights gets shattered as a result of her involvement in a romance with a wealthy older man when she is just a girl. Her uncle lures her into falling in love with the rich man who abandons her after impregnating her. Warĩinga learns her lessons from her first love relationship and resolves to focus on her career. Eventually, Warĩinga falls in love again, this time with a university student, John Kimwana, who is of her generation. Warĩinga admits to John that she has a child at home and he calms her with kisses of love: “A child is not a leopard capable of wounding people. Besides giving birth is a proof that you’re not a mule” (20). She pledges her loyalty to her newfound love, “[b]ecause I am lucky, and I have looked and found a Kamoongonye, a young man, with modern

views, I Kareendi, will never anger him or argue with him over issues. I will never look at another” (20). There seems to be sincerity in Warĩnga’s declaration, which expresses her deepest affection for John. Unfortunately for Warĩnga, her sweetheart, John Kimwana, accuses her of infidelity with her boss. As Warĩnga tells the “story”:

He declares that he knows very well that Kareendi has rumped Waigoko Kĩhara’s bed, that Kĩhara is not even the first to eat from Kareendi’s thighs, that a girl who has sipped at the delights of money can never stop drinking. He who tastes develops a penchant for tasting. A chameleon will always be a chameleon. A girl who starts going with men old enough to be her father while she is at school, to the extent of giving birth to babies when still a student, how can she stop herself? “Tell me this Kareendi of the easy thighs, if you had allowed Waigoko to rub off his soot on your thighs, would you come to tell me? No. You are spinning me this yarn only because Waigoko has refused to let you continue making his bed in hotels for modern love”. (25)

The way in which the narrative represents John’s reprimand of Warĩnga suggests a scenario that has played itself out and continues to play itself out repeatedly in the society described in the novel. Through John, the foolishness of young women who allow themselves to be manipulated by money into compromising themselves with treacherous older men is highlighted. Warĩnga, however,

having learnt her lesson with the Rich Old Man, does not allow herself to be exploited again. When later asked by Gatuĩria whether she lost her job with Boss Kĩhara because she went on strike, Warĩnga replies that she lost her job because she “refused to be his *sugar girl*” (73). One of the other female passengers in the matatu adds: “She went on strike all right — against the tyranny of the Boss’s bedroom” (73). The “sugar girl” phenomenon is referred to again in the novel in the presentations of the thieves at the Devil’s Feast competition. The text thus makes a link between these corrupt forms of love and the exploitation of young women, especially under neo-colonial capitalism. The subsequent focalisation through Warĩnga in the narrative, however, foregrounds the treachery of accusatory young men like John also. “Kareendi”, we are told, is “speechless” (25). “Tears flow down her cheeks” when she realises that the “sword is burned at both ends” (25) and that “she is back where she started”, (25) namely, with betrayal by a man. After this blow to her confidence, Warĩnga attempts suicide, but she is saved by an unknown man, whereafter she boards the matatu for her hometown of Ilomorog.



The matatu journey, which is the point at which the romance plot and the satirical Devil’s Feast plot coincide, is also the context in which Warĩnga meets the true love of her life, Gatuĩria. Here again we see the influence of the idea in the Western romance tradition that goes back to Aristophanes’ speech in Plato’s *Symposium*. The relationship between Warĩnga and Gatuĩria is the love of two halves becoming whole, following Aristophanes’ theory. According to Aristophanes in his description of the origin of love in Plato’s *Symposium*, humans were created with both sets of sexual organs; they were provided with two faces, four hands, and four legs. This, in fact, made them very powerful to the extent that the gods were unable to dominate them. In an attempt to weaken humans, Zeus, the Greek king of the gods, cut each human into two and threatened to cut them again should they misbehave. It is clear that the narrative conceives of the

relationship between Warĩnga and Gatuĩria as the love of one “half” for the other, without which the beloveds can never be whole. Their meeting in the matatu is a case of love at first sight since there seems to be a chemistry between them that bonds them together. A good example is how they mingle in the cave during the lunch break of the competition for thief and robbers. Gatuĩria holds Warĩnga’s hand and requests that they go out for fresh air. While they were together, “their eyes spoke to each other. They laughed together. Warĩnga felt her heart lighten” (129). Warĩnga’s sorrows disappear while conversing with him. Gatuĩria and Warĩnga express deep affection for each other and seem able to cope with the horrors of what they hear at the Devil’s Feast only through supporting each other: “each feeling that were he or she to let go of the other’s hand, they would both drown in the darkness of the cave” (175). Gatuĩria and Warĩnga cling to each other since they can only overcome the exploitation they are witness to in the cave together. The one cannot do without the other. They are Aristophanes’s two halves that have become whole.

Similarly, Gatuĩria and Warĩnga are only able to individually fulfil their potential when they discover each other. This other-fulfilled love that allows one to realise one’s self is described in Aristophanes’ terms as follows: “Love is born into every human being; it calls back the halves of our original nature together; it tries to make one out of two and heal the wound of human nature. Each of us, then, is a ‘matching half’ of a human whole...and each of us is always seeking the half that matches him” (qtd. in Naugle 23). Gatuĩria needs someone to love and heal his “wound” for him. In this case “the wound of human nature” expresses the burden that Gatuĩria carries in his heart. Gatuĩria’s burden is his unfulfilled desire to complete his musical artistic mission. The desire to compose a musical score that captures the spirit of the people is the personal dimension of his work as a junior research fellow in African culture. His inability to find the tune or the theme for his music stems from the fact that he has not yet found his inspiration since he is incomplete

without his “matching half”: “[b]ut I have not yet found the tune or theme of the music of my dreams. Day and night I have searched for the tune and the theme, but in vain. You can’t know the pain I carry in my heart” (59). Gatuíria’s incompleteness is revealed in his endless search for the tune or the theme of his music. He attends the Devil’s Feast to find “peace in his heart” (73) and Warĩnga also admits that she too has “a knot in [her] heart” (74).

Later, we witness Gatuíria alluding to the feast, where their relationship develops and is cemented, while expressing his deep affection for Warĩnga romantically:

Since the Devil’s feast, it’s as if you have been transfigured, body and soul.

Your skin has a depth of blackness that is softer and more tender than the most expensive perfume oil. Your dark eyes shine more brightly than the stars at night. Your cheeks are like two fruits riper than the blackberry. Your hair is so black and soft and smooth that all men feel like sheltering from the sun in its shade. Your voice is sweeter than the sound of a thousand and one musical instruments. Warĩnga, my love, you are the music of my soul. (225)

Gatuíria highlights the fact that they are soulmates by referring to the transfiguration of “body and soul” which happens after their meeting. In Aristophanes’ view, “when a person meets the half that is his very own,” he exclaims, “something wonderful happens: the two are struck from their senses by love, by a sense of belonging to one another, and by desire, and they don’t want to be separated from one another, not even for a moment. These are people who finish out their lives together and still cannot say what it is they want from one another” (qtd. in Naugle 24–25). Gatuíria

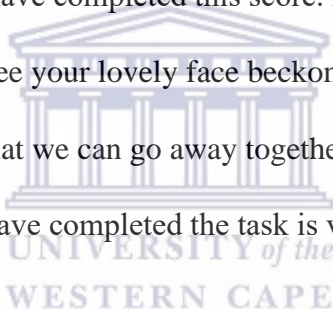
confesses that Warĩnga is his happiness: “the music of my soul”. Ngũgĩ uses the imagery of the description of Warĩnga to symbolise African beauty. The metaphor of the “blackness” of the skin, the “dark eyes” which illumine, black hair, and sweet voice denote the ultimate beauty of an African woman. Thus, ironically, at the same time that Warĩnga is the unique individual that makes Gatuĩria whole, she is also an allegory of the ideal beauty of an African woman, elegant and luminous.

Furthermore, in the *Symposium*, a story attributed to the wise woman Diotima is recounted which highlights the significance of beauty in love. According to Diotima, the lover of beautiful things loves the “engendering and begetting upon the beautiful” (76). Thus, it is the “beautiful rather than the good that is the attracting object” (35). The beauty of the beloved is a mirror of the beauty of art. The beauty of art is reflected in Gatuĩria’s musical composition which will be performed at their wedding: “an artistic composition should be inspired by love ... love of your country ... a love that inspires the composer to sing hymns of praise to the beauty” (132). Thus the beauty of Gatuĩria’s art develops out of his appreciation of Warĩnga’s beauty, which is the catalyst for love. He considers himself the luckiest person for two reasons: “I have composed the music that it has always been my ambition to compose. And now I have a special gift — a beauty of all beauties” (236). He plans to present his composition, which could be completed only because of their love, in the form of an “opera” to her on their wedding night: “Tomorrow would be the first stage towards the union of their hearts: during tomorrow’s ceremony Gatuĩria intended to offer her the two hundred sheets of music, the fruits of two years of the labour of his heart” (226). The use of “two” is symbolic of their union. It connotes the power behind the unity of the “two halves becoming whole”. Gatuĩria’s efficacy is found in Warĩnga’s love, which culminates in love of country. He sincerely and fervently hopes that “his music will inspire people with patriotic love

for Kenya” (227). For Lovesey, Gatuĩria’s “commitment to the nation and his belief in his composition, like his love for Warĩinga, stops at the boundary of hatred, which must be, as Warĩinga, says, intertwined with true love” (66).

Love becomes the source of artistic inspiration for Gatuĩria, and it is the source of self-realisation for Warĩinga. He expresses his elation at the power of Warĩinga’s love:

... there is music and *the* music; there is song and *the* song! In fact, if I hadn’t met you and gazed into your eyes, and if love hadn’t given my heart wings, I don’t know if I could ever have completed this score. But when I locked myself away in my study, I could see your lovely face beckoning me, urging me, telling me: Finish it, my love, so that we can go away together. The gift that will be waiting for you when you have completed the task is very special ... (226)



Gatuĩria specifically distinguishes between the potency of pure idyllic love and ordinary love. He uses the definite article to specify “*the* music” and “*the* song” as against “music” and “song”, which are mere generalisations. Unquestionably, Warĩinga’s love serves an inspiration for Gatuĩria not just to compose “music” or “song” but “*the* music” and “*the* song”. We can infer from the repetitive use of the conditional clauses: “if I hadn’t”, “if love hadn’t”, “if I could ever” that Gatuĩria’s completion of the project is entirely dependent on Warĩinga’s love: “But when I locked myself away in my study, I could see your lovely face beckoning me, urging me, telling me: Finish it, my love, so that we can go away together”. Ngũgĩ uses their love to foreground unity in eros against oppression and exploitation of the masses. What makes Ngũgĩ’s conception of love

different from the understanding of love in Plato's *Symposium*, is the fact that for Ngũgĩ love achieves its ultimate conquest in the conquest of societal oppression and exploitation.

For Warĩnga also, romantic love, for the first time now that she is with Gatuĩria, apparently is a perfect non-hierarchical, non-oppressive and non-exploitative love. This ideal love allows the self-development that also permits Warĩnga to become the consummate female revolutionary: "Today's Warĩnga has decided that she'll never allow herself to be a flower ... [t]he Warĩnga today has decided to be self-reliant all the time, to plunge into the middle of the arena of life's struggles in order to discover her real strength and realize her true humanity" (216). We discover that, fired by true love, Warĩnga's ambitions change to the extent that she enrolls in the Polytechnic to pursue a programme in mechanical engineering with specialisation in motor vehicles. She competes with male students, who ridicule her in class. We read that after their first results were released, and they realised she was a force to be reckoned with, the male students began to treat her as "one of their comrades in the journey's struggle" (219). She abandons being a secretary, one of the earliest "acceptable" female professions, so that she will not have to work as a subordinate to the "likes of Boss Kihara whose condition for employing girl is a meeting for five minutes of love after a hard drink" (218). Love, furthermore, allows the development of the Marxist revolutionary Warĩnga. Warĩnga's philosophy is captured by her self-exhortation, "Oh Warĩnga, work harder to develop our land!" (216). As an independent young woman, Warĩnga decides not to accept any financial assistance from Gatuĩria, who "offers to help with her fees and rent" (219). Thus through the personal empowerment generated by romantic love, Warĩnga is able to avoid being a "sugar girl", a phenomenon the narrative suggests is the specific form of the exploitation of young women by the elite under neo-colonial capitalism, as discussed above.

Despite the personal fulfilment achieved by each of the two lovers through the completion they experience in their love, the end of their relationship is ominously foreshadowed at its height. In the extract quoted above, where Gatuíria extols the pleasures of Warĩinga’s beauty on their trip to visit their parents to tell them they are to be married, Warĩinga responds with alarm to Gatuíria’s praise: “His words suddenly startle Warĩinga. A shadow crosses her face and laughter disappears from her eyes. How can words she heard two years ago now spring from Gatuíria’s own lips? Words spoken in a dream two years ago ...” (225–26). Warĩinga, if the reader casts back, heard these words in a dream-vision in an interlude at the Devil’s Feast. Unable to take the sordidness of what she hears in the cave, Warĩinga goes outside and falls asleep near a golf course. In a liminal state of consciousness, she enters into a dialogue with a “Voice” that ambiguously could be both Devil or Christ. Portentously Gatuíria repeats in the same expressions, the praises of her beauty that the Voice had earlier proclaimed: “The blackness of your skin is smoother and more tender than the most expensive oils. Your dark eyes are brighter than the stars at night. Your cheeks are like two fruits riper than the blackberry. And your hair is so black and soft and smooth that all men must feel like sheltering from the sun in its shade” (192). The Voice had ominously gone on, however, to say “Now add to the power of youth and beauty the power of property, and you’ll rid your heart of all the troubles that poverty is heir to” (192). Gatuíria’s declaration foreshadows the later discovery that Warĩinga’s beloved is the shadow, literally and figuratively, of Warĩinga’s nemesis, the Rich Old Man. In the conclusion of the narrative, we discover that Gatuíria is the Rich Old Man’s son. The ideal romantic relationship is thus corrupted by the gerontocratic exploitation that turns young women into sugar girls. The potential of the love of Warĩinga and Gatuíria is destroyed by exploitative, older, wealthy patriarchs, who are the central traitors in this novel.

Gatuñria's father betrays their love in the most fundamental way imaginable. As the father of Warĩnga's daughter, Wambũi, and Warĩnga's de facto husband, Warĩnga is incestuously transformed into Gatuñria's "mother" rather than lover. Their relationship thus becomes inconceivable in terms of conventional moral norms. The father also manages their first unexpected meeting in such a way that he is left alone with Warĩnga. He implores Warĩnga to separate from the son: "I would like you to leave Gatuñria. Go back to Nairobi together. When you get to Nairobi, tell him that your love affair is over. He's only a child. He won't feel a thing... Be mine. Remember you once belonged to me. I believe I am the man who changed you from a girl to a woman" (251). The gerontocratic lover is a traitor of his wife, of his family, of young women and the social cause. When Warĩnga asks the father about his wife, he says to her, "Jacinta, she does not count. No one applies old perfume that has lost its scent" (251). Underlining the link between the sugar daddy, the gerontocratic treacherous male lover, and neocapitalist exploitation of young women turning them into sugar girls, the father tries to persuade Warĩnga by tempting her materially:

Please, my little lady, my fruit, listen to my words. Release me from this shame today. Be my woman and I will rent a house for you in Nairobi, Mombasa or wherever you choose. I will furnish the house with the kind of furniture and carpets you see in this house, and with mattresses and curtains and other things you see from abroad — from Hong Kong, Tokyo, Paris, London, Rome, New York. Name it, and it's yours. I'd like you to take off this cloth [traditional Gĩkũyũ clothing] and these necklaces and these earrings made of dry maize stalks and to put on clothes and jewellery made in Europe. I will also buy you a shopping basket, a basket to take to market, like a Toyota Corona, a

Datsun 16B, an *Alfasud* or any other car of your choice. Jacinta, my baby, my fruit, my orange, come back to me and solve the problems of your life, of my home and of my child! (251)

The sheer excess of the consumer goods the father offers her emphasises the connection between gerontocratic betrayal and capitalist exploitation. On the part of Warĩnga, what the final betrayal does is to change her from a revolutionary inspired by love to a revolutionary driven by anger and hatred, which leads her to shoot the Rich Old Man in cold blood.

The sugar daddy phenomenon is a well-researched area of African sociological study of intimate relationships. For example, Carmel Dinan's "Sugar Daddies and Gold-Diggers: The White-Collar Single Woman in Accra" explores the position of single, middle-class working women who prefer to maintain their status as single, rejecting the cultural prescription of marriage. Dinan emphasises that extramarital affairs between sugar daddies and sugar girls is a common practices in Ghana, where: "no emotional attachment was involved: they were a cultivated fashion by the girls" (346). Similarly, looking at the phenomenon from the perspective of the sugar daddies, Daniel Jordan Smith in "Managing Men, Marriage, and Modern Love: Women on Intimacy and Male Infidelity in Southeastern Nigeria" describes sugar daddy relationships with young girls as mostly "economically driven". Smith asserts married men prefer to engage in extramarital affairs with educated young women whose friendship provided the men with the possibility not only of fulfilling their physical needs, but also their lifestyle aspirations. Relationships with sugar girls fulfilled "the fantasy, of having more exciting, stylish, and modern sex" than what their wives give them (169). Mark Hunter considers the way the phenomenon has been impacted by the Aids pandemic. In "The Materiality of Everyday Sex: Thinking Beyond

‘Prostitution’”, Hunter examines Sundumbili Township in Kwa-Zulu Natal in South Africa, where young women regard themselves as more “civilised” for engaging in relations with older men. They enter these relationships with relative freedom and sometimes with support from their parents (113–14). Often schoolgirls engage with multiple sexual partners and enter into relationships with both sugar daddies and young men of their own age. Hunter’s chapter on “Failing Men: Modern Masculinities amid Unemployment” in *Love in the Time of Aids: Inequality, Gender, and Rights in South Africa* (2010) examines the essential role wealth plays in securing girlfriends for richer men. He recounts the relationship between sugar daddies and girls from two dimensions: “on the one hand they [sugar daddies] can be chastised as exploiters of young women; yet on the other they can be positioned as respectable men who, unlike young men, provide for the women with whom they have relationships” (169). What Ngũgĩ shows, that these studies do not, is the link between the sugar daddy and the neo-colonial capitalist context, which makes the sugar daddy relationship more widespread than it had ever been in the past. It represents the ways in which young women and their families in contemporary African communities have had to adapt norms of intimate relationships. This is the lens through which Ngũgĩ views the sugar daddy, leading to the condemnation of this type of relationship.

The perversion of romantic love represented by incest is suggested in the novel in another way apart from the examples already cited. We have seen how the young couple’s ideal love becomes a perverted form of incest when we discover that Gatuĩria’s father was Warĩinga’s first lover, making her in a sense Gatuĩria’s “mother”. We have also seen how the sugar daddy phenomenon courts incest in encouraging the relationships of young women with men old enough to be their fathers. But Mwangi alerts us to another perversion of romantic love in the form of

incest with the mother. This is possibly the worst form of perversion since, as we have seen in *Weep Not, Child*, the relationship with the mother for Ngũgĩ is a hallowed relationship.

Mwangi's article "Romance in Times of Mega Corruption" explores the role of romantic love in the midst of corruption in *Devil on the Cross*. Mwangi examines the portrayal of corruption in *Devil on the Cross* as an illegal sexual act which depicts the bourgeoisie of the new nation esteeming their nation as "a mother", "whose *ciero* (thighs) they should be left in peace to incestuously toy with" (1). He asserts that the issue of corruption has been pushed to the background by recent writers, unlike the writers during the 1970s and 1980s. It is in the novels like Ngũgĩ's *Devil on the Cross* that "the brazenness of the thieving class was most openly laughed at" and that the spread of corruption among different classes was exposed (1). He foregrounds the correlation between romance and corrupt deals in Kenya when he describes corruption "as regular as a casual sexual act, in this hotbed of sleaze that we call our motherland" (1). Mwangi identifies one weakness of Ngũgĩ's early writing on corruption as the situation where the wives of corrupt men are depicted as "an extension of their husbands" (1); however, Mwangi states that these changes in *Wizard of the Crow*, in which Rachael, the wife of the Ruler is highly critical of the mercenary exploitation conducted by her patriarchal, dictatorial husband.

It is obvious that the worst perversion or affront is when romantic love and love for the mother intersect. David M. Schneider's "The Meaning of Incest" defines incest as "something animals do, not human beings. It is thus the mark of humanity, as against the animal world" (162). He outlines forms of incest as father-daughter, mother-son, and brother-sister but emphasises that father-daughter incest among some cultures is treated as less serious compared to mother-son and brother-sister (163). Leslie Margolin's "The Effects of Mother-Son Incest" argues that mother-son incest is the most harmful form of incestuous behavior in psychiatric and sociological literature

for the last thirty years. She notes that the primary question which the study addresses is “whether Parson’s theory of mother-son incest is supported by actual case experience. Is mother-son incest really the most potentially regressive form of incest, commonly resulting in psychosis, or should this form of incest be interpreted by a different set of expectations?” (104). She highlights the relevance of her the study since most of the research concerning sexual assault has concentrated on the female victim (104). In “Mother-Son Incest: Confronting a Prejudice”, Anne Banning proposes that the incidence of child sexual abuse by female perpetrators is underestimated: “until recently mother-child incest was considered to be virtually nonexistent” (563). While other studies reveal that mother-son incest is uncommon, Christine Lawson’s “Clinical Assessment of Mother-Son Sexual Abuse” explores the extent to which mother-son incest is underreported as child sexual abuse and opines that figures for mother-son incest may be “erroneous partly because of a failure to ask about it” (Lawson 391). She describes how “(a) mother’s inappropriate sexual behavior with a son is more likely to be viewed as affection rather than abuse” (392). In *Devil on the Cross*, the relationship between Gatuĩria’s father and Warĩinga on the one hand, is like father-daughter incest, and that between Gatuĩria and Warĩinga, on the other hand, is like mother-son incest since Warĩinga was and could again become Gatuĩria’s mother if she accepts the father’s proposal. This individual example of mother-son incest is symbolic of the horror of the corruption and exploitation of the Kenyan motherland by a corrupt generation of postcolonial sons.

In *Devil on the Cross* the obstacle to marriage is not ethnic, religious or class barriers — the obstacle that is rolled in the path of the love-marriage of the optimistic young couple is the treacherous gerontocratic patriarch, who represents the capitalist postcolonial elite. In this novel the materialism of the gerontocratic relationship is rejected by the heroine, unlike the heroine of

Petals of Blood, to be looked at in the next chapter, where materialism is embraced as the inevitable position of the women in the postcolonial state.



CHAPTER THREE

LOVE AND MONEY: EROTIC MATERIALISM IN *PETALS OF BLOOD*

Well, that is how we used to lure men. It was our only minute of glory. Two girls could be dancing together on the floor. Men would beg with their eyes and beg with their hands and in the end with their drinks and money. I was really very wicked. I hate a man thinking he can buy me with money. I once made a man spend over two hundred shillings buying me imported cider. Cider can never make you drunk you see. I simply walked out on him. I went with another who had not spent a cent on me. It felt good. (Petals of Blood 77)



This chapter offers a reading of *Petals of Blood* (1977) in which Ngũgĩ exposes the practical, utilitarian side of intimate relationships, revealing ambiguities that complicate the romantic love ideal that is the social embodiment of his utopian political vision. In this respect, *Petals of Blood* explores further the betrayal by the woman, first considered in relation to Mumbi's adultery in *A Grain of Wheat* (1967), and the betrayal of gerontocratic patriarchs in the later novel, *Devil on the Cross* (1980), which dramatises the consequences of the exploitation of young women by a moneyed indigenous capitalist class, who in the process, also betray their own wives and families. This middle novel looks at the material side of intimate relationships from the perspective of the "fallen" woman, whose image we first see emerging in Mumbi in *A Grain of Wheat*.

The extract from the novel that forms the epigraph to this chapter sums up the paradoxes in Ngũgĩ's conception of love, where the material realities of women's lives contradict an idealised picture of romantic love. The passage is from one of the sections where a character fills the reader

in on their history through a recollection of the past. Here Wanja, the central female character, who is the love interest of the three main male characters in the novel, Munira, Karega and Abdulla, reflects on her life as a barmaid-cum-prostitute in Nairobi. In this context, women derive their power from their sexuality, which also paradoxically makes them slaves of men. Wanja's real power, however, comes from the fact that she can control a man who thinks he has financial power over her, exploiting her need for economic survival. The man thinks he can buy her. Wanja gets him to spend his money, but frustrates him when she proves she has the independence to have sex with a man not for money, but simply for free, in order to prove the point that she is independent. Ironically, she enjoys independence in her intimate relationships since she sells sex for money, which in Ngũgĩ's novels is linked with the oppression and dependence of women. Prostitution seems to be the only profession in the Kenya of which Ngũgĩ writes where women can be materially successful. These questions will be considered in more detail in the body of the chapter. Even though material concerns do not come up as striking issues in Ngũgĩ's early fiction, we see the links between love and money infiltrating where the forced transition into postcolonial capitalist modernity has been made. It is there in incipient form in the class divisions that separate Njoroge from Mwhaki in *Weep Not, Child*, and in all of the other relationships that bring lovers of different class backgrounds together, for example, Mumbi and Gikonyo in *A Grain of Wheat*, Warĩnga and Gatuĩria in *Devil on the Cross* and Nyawĩra and Kaniũirũ's marriage in *The Wizard of the Crow*.

It is clear that the term "materialism" in all its connotations is a central concern in Ngũgĩ's philosophy. As a Marxist materialist, an ideological paradigm that influences the construction of the novels from his middle career, Ngũgĩ writes novels that repeatedly show how the unjust economic base of Kenyan society, and its unequal relationship with the world economy, is the root

cause of many of its social ills. The novels also expose materialism in the sense of capitalist consumerism where the accumulation of wealth and spending on goods, largely of foreign manufacture, hold individuals and the society at large in thrall. In *Petals of Blood*, through the character of Wanja, Ngũgĩ also shows the complexities of materialism where money, and the things it can buy, are a recognition of the possessions needed for survival, but also a sign of the loss of more abstract, idealistic values. Many of these ideas have been identified for analysis by scholars of Ngũgĩ's *Petals of Blood*, as will be tracked below. However, this chapter considers them very specifically in the context of the importance of romantic love in Ngũgĩ's oeuvre and the ways in which different angles on the love relationship and various conceptions of love are developed in relation to the author's social vision.

The narrative relates the story of Ilmorog village that is neglected by its MP, Nderi wa Riera-aa, in favour of his own selfish interests. Most notably, the people of Ilmorog contribute towards the installation of a piped water system — money which gets diverted into the coffers of the MP. Later, when Ilmorog village experiences drought, the people decide to embark on a trip to the city in search of their MP. This journey is politicised to the extent that Ilmorog becomes the centre of attention in a parliamentary debate. Ilmorog village, which is underdeveloped by its own political leaders, finally sees development in industry and tourism attracting foreign investors and greedy political leaders, who deprive the locals of their livelihoods. It is in this context that Wanja, the central female character in this novel, should be seen. Wanja drops out of school as a result of her pregnancy with her “sugar daddy”, Kimeria, who abandons her, leaving Wanja with no option than to get rid of the newborn child in a latrine. Having worked as a prostitute to survive in the city, Wanja relocates to her hometown, Ilmorog, to assist her grandmother, Nyakinyua, in daily

chores and in the fields. When her nascent business in brewing theng'eta beer is taken over by local and international big business interests, she opens a brothel called the Sunshine Lodge.

A brief overview of studies of *Petals of Blood* reveals that there are two main approaches to the novel: those that focus on Ngũgĩ's shift to a full Marxist aesthetic, and those that look at the representation of women, where the figure of the prostitute emerges especially strongly. What is interesting about the focus on romantic relationships is that they seem to bring these two approaches together and reveal some blindspots in Ngũgĩ's materialism and in Ngũgĩ's characterisation of women. Most of the book length-studies of Ngũgĩ analyse *Petals of Blood* by relating Marxist and Fanonist theory with Ngũgĩ's unique ideology that also draws in the conception of a glorious African past. G. D. Killam shows how Ngũgĩ's employment of Marxist ideology supports his representation of the estrangement of Africans from the land first by imperial-colonialists, and then subsequently by a class of African landlords who, because of their connections with the forces of world capitalism, are able to expedite the process of land acquisition through various forms and degrees of expropriation (102). For Killam, Ngũgĩ juxtaposes "African 'populism' and capitalism" (107) through the representation of capitalist development in Ilmorog village. According to him, Ngũgĩ analyses the class division between the capitalist class and the masses, showing the antagonism between the two factions. Killam highlights Ngũgĩ's departure from Marx in celebrating "Africa's glorious past in numerous passages in the novel" (109). He describes Karega as a "Marxist revolutionary who accepts the odds and who recognizes that the struggle will be long and hard" (114).

In a similar manner, Patrick Williams posits that there is a shift in the focus of Ngũgĩ's narratives from "colonialist domination" to "capitalist modernity: "urbanisation, industrialisation; commodification of goods, processes and people; exploitation; class formation; relentless pursuit

of profit; rural depopulation and immiseration” (81). He writes that the division of Ilmorog is a direct representation of the class divisions which capitalism constructs, and for the first time in Ngũgĩ’s novels, there is “the creation of the urban proletariat so important in Marxist analyses” (84). He provides a good illustration of Marxist argument about the way in which “capitalism turns use value (theng’eta made with care by people for their own use in important community ceremonies) into exchange value (theng’eta commercially produced simply as a commodity to be sold for the greatest possible profit)” (83). Similarly, Simon Gikandi explores the tensions between Ngũgĩ’s different influences and commitments. He interprets the highly symbolic descriptions of the drought in Ilmorog as a reminder of this “poor community’s radical dislocation” that comes to represent Marx’s “primitive mode of production” (136). Gikandi finally describes Ngũgĩ as a Marxist who advocates that the key elements of a just modernity include “the rationalization of culture, the restoration of individual authority, and industrial progress” (142). David Cook and Michael Okenimkpe highlight the ways in which the novel exposes the capitalism of greedy leaders who impose misery and suffering on the unprivileged to gain wealth (87). Oliver Lovesey interprets the novel’s narrative as the story of developing historical consciousness (57). In particular, the character Karega comes to see that history begins with present struggles against political, economic, and social oppression, and that the history of resistance works towards the creation of a new world (57). Peter Nazareth describes three different “personalities” for Ngũgĩ that emerge out of his reading of *Petals of Blood*: first, there is the “village” Ngũgĩ, the Ngũgĩ who rejects hypocritical Christianity; second is Ngũgĩ the pan-Africanist Fanonist and socialist (122); and the third Ngũgĩ is the writer of “Latin American marvellous reality” (124). On the other hand, Grant Kamenju describes the novel as a mirror of Africa and blames Africa’s suffering on imperialism in Africa: “imperialist financial capital is the real enemy to Africa today” (131).

Another group of critics foreground slightly different concerns, reading Ngũgĩ's Marxist-Fanonist influence as a background to more literary questions. Clifford Robson foregrounds Ngũgĩ's manipulation of time in the novels where "time shifts" are perceived as the basic pattern of "gradual revelation up to the present" (93). Robson also highlights Ngũgĩ's use of the intertextuality of "radical thinkers, such as Blake, Whitman and Amilcar Cabral to conscientise readers that exploitation and suffering are universal" (102). Edna Aizenberg also examines Ngũgĩ's approach to the interaction of past and present in *Petals of Blood* in recounting the collective struggles of the people (92). She suggests that the novel reveals both "Western linearity, [and] the revolutionary-messianic time of Ngũgĩ's Marxist conviction" (93). Michael Andindilile analyses the text in terms of the shift from a Christian paradigm to the temporality of Marxism. According to him, Ngũgĩ deals with the ills of Christianity, something Andindilile attributes to Ngũgĩ's "emboldening Marxist leanings" (52). In Andindilile's view, Ngugi treats Christianity as what "Karl Marx labels as the opiate of the people, as a conduit for entrenching social injustice" (53). Chidi Amuta describes the novel as "Ngũgĩ's most ambitious novel" (143) and asserts that the novel is a complex exploration of real human experiences, motivations and dilemmas in a historical context where the characters are made to dramatise ideological positions (144). Adopting a poststructuralist approach to the novel, Stewart Crehan explores "the politics of the signifier" as opposed to a "politics of the signified" (2). He discusses the functions of the signifiers both within the text, "interacting with each other to produce its textuality, and through and beyond it as part of a larger web, so that the novel seems less an autonomous entity than a local configuration of strands forever suspended between texts, in other words, an 'intertext', for which no single author can be held responsible" (2-3).

The woman figure emerges as a topical issue among critics who analyse *Petals of Blood* from a feminist standpoint. Tom Odhiambo examines Ngũgĩ's portrayal of the woman figure in *Petals of Blood* and *Devil on the Cross* as "the allegory of the Kenyan nation as a woman. The woman finds herself at the mercy of men, both foreign and local, who literally rape or sexually exploit... hence metaphorically raping the Kenyan nation" (196). He explores Ngũgĩ's use of romance as a metaphor of the nation in the figure of a woman – hence "romancing woman, romancing the nation" (197). Jennifer Evans shows how more practically Ngũgĩ demonstrates women's contribution to African liberation and the development of Africa. She explores the vital role of Wanja and compares Wanja to other female characters, namely, Mumbi and Nyambura, in Ngũgĩ's earliest fiction. Evans juxtaposes the female characters and their male counterparts, and metaphorically compares the female characters to "the soil of the land", which symbolically depicts the significant role of women in Kenyan history and Africa as a whole: "Mumbi and Wanja, as fertile female images, represent Mother Earth, Mother Africa, and the survival of the people, both in body and soul" (63). Florence Stratton specifically focuses on Ngũgĩ in her analysis of the female "tropes" (50) of Africa in male-authored writing. The figure of the prostitute emerges very strongly in Stratton's critique of Ngũgĩ's "embodiment of Africa in the figure of a woman" (39). The character Wanja in *Petals of Blood* comes up sharply for analysis. Stratton examines Wanja's role in two phases: as a barmaid-prostitute exploited by men, and as a village girl providing assistance to her grandmother in the fields. For Stratton, Ngũgĩ presents in Wanja "in one body the figures of Africa as mother and whore" (49). Stratton writes that "Wanja is her sexuality: she is a virgin, whore, or mother ... she is the emblem of male potency or power and sexual/ political allegory is produced in which her story is transformed into his story" (52). In a counter-argument to Stratton's study, Bonnie Roos asserts that Stratton fails to commend "Ngũgĩ's rich layers of

symbolic motifs, the beauty of his prose style that mixes tradition with modern language” (156). Roos describes Wanja as an archetypal character who represents women’s positive identity in Ngũgĩ’s vision of nation. Roos writes that “Wanja’s sexuality is rarely ‘free,’ in any sense. Even when she recalls her seduction by Kimeria, she sees herself going with him partly in exchange for the new floral dress and the film show in the city, a symbol of the modern life that he seems to promise and she to desire” (39). Also, when Wanja sleeps with Munira for the first time, “she demands that he brings her rice” (Roos 161). Thus Wanja enjoys an agency that Stratton’s analysis denies her. In “The Master’s Dance”, Elleke Boehmer argues that Ngũgĩ draws distinctions between the Kenyan labour force of men and women by setting class above gender. Boehmer categorises “productive labour”, “real labour”, as male-dominated, while the women are economically marginalised and disregarded: “[f]or if mothers are assumed to be non-workers, and prostitutes, like Wanja ... part of a lumpen-proletariat, and if most of Ngũgĩ’s women can be slotted into either category, then both groups are automatically and conveniently marginalised” (191). For Boehmer, the women are subordinates to their male counterparts, and only provide “support-roles in an essentially male struggle” (192). Even in sexual encounters, “Wanja is passive, openly subordinate, ‘exhilaratingly weak’” (194). However, the role of Nyakinyua, Wanja’s grandmother, recalls that of the ancient and noble Wangari. Wangari, like her predecessors, was involved in the Mau Mau struggle (194). Nyakinyua is a well-known woman among the natives of the Ilmorog; she is the grandmother of Wanja. Brendon Nicholls examines the novel as a gendering of the nation where Gĩkũyũ femininity is perceived as “‘mother Kenya’ and its subordinate construction is of Gĩkũyũ woman as a “fallen woman” who represent a prostituted economy (122). Nicholls opines that Ngũgĩ attempts to relate the neo-colonial contest with indigenous patriarchal discourse by his “patriarchal construction of Wanja” (122). Nicholls

perceives Wanja's prostitution as a debasement of femininity and sexuality that are constructed through the "consensual tropes of 'harvesting' and 'flowering' throughout the novel" (124). In his view, the harvest imagery is not only related to agriculture and sexuality. It becomes a general metaphor of deprivation of wealth from the Kenyan peasantry. He explains harvesting in the novel as encoding "male virility and partenity" (124). Thus we see that in criticism of *Petals of Blood* diametrically opposed readings of the character Wanja have been produced. In the context of the focus on romantic love relationships, I would like to suggest that there is another way to read the character of Wanja, as will be shown below.

The Harlot's Curse and the Death of Marriage

Petals of Blood, is the first novel where marriage is not explicitly or implicitly held to be the culmination of love. Marriage is "bracketed" while love is explored as a taunting obsession or an addiction. *Petals of Blood*, Ngũgĩ's fourth novel, opens with the arrest of four protagonists who have been accused of the murder of three prominent people in the town. In a flashback, Munira, the principal of the village school and an alleged suspect, recounts the circumstances leading to his arrest. His prison notes or diary form the major part of the narrative of the novel. He tells how he left his wife and children and relocated to Ilmorog to establish a school that had been abandoned after independence. Munira revolts against the domineering attitude of his father, a staunch Christian, who hypocritically manipulates his workers for his egoistical interests. He makes friends with Abdulla, a one-legged man, shop owner and one of the suspects in the crime that occurs later. Munira strikes up an acquaintance also with Wanja, another future suspect and a native of Ilmorog. Karega, the last suspect, joins the friendship later after accepting an appointment as a teacher at Munira's school.

Ngũgĩ complicates the narrative with the epic story of the people of Ilmorog who journey to the city in search of their MP. The village of Ilmorog does not benefit after Uhuru (independence) because of the ways in which the countryside is underdeveloped. The political business elites who control the national government and the national income like the Member of Parliament of the area, Nderi wa Riera-aa, exploit the people through bribery and mismanagement, as the text shows: “He had even collected two shillings from each household in his constituency for a Harambee water project, and a ranching scheme. But they had hardly seen him since” (18). He uses the money as collateral to secure loans and invests in other personal projects such as housing and land acquisition. Nderi collaborates with foreigners who lure him to partner with them in business. It is clear that the impact of colonialism and capitalism have contributed to influencing the elites becoming greedy and materialistic. We read that the nation is flooded with leaders who have been influenced by international capitalism and exploitation: “every corner of the continent is now within the easy reach of international capitalist robbery and exploitation” (262). Ngũgĩ outlines the effects of colonialism and neo-colonialism on Africa’s economy in *Writers in Politics*:

For the last four hundred years, Africa has been part and parcel of the growth and development of world capitalism, no matter the degree of penetration of European capitalism in the interior. Europe has thriven, in the words of C.L.R. James, on the devastation of a continent and the brutal exploitation of millions, with great consequences on the economic political, cultural and literary spheres (11).

Ngũgĩ chronicles the negative effects of neo-colonialism in two forms of materialism in the narrative: good materialism and bad materialism. Generally, materialism connotes bad or selfish means of amassing wealth or obsession for money; however, good materialism is a selfless

means of acquiring wealth or possessions for the benefit and survival of oneself and, importantly, others. On the other hand, bad materialism is a means of making wealth through manipulation of the nation and subjugation of the masses. There are many definitions of materialism, but the definition in Raymond Williams's *Keywords* is the most detailed and most nuanced. Williams suggests that there are three main senses of the word materialism that are interconnected in complex ways. Firstly, "materialism" refers to set of arguments that propose that matter is the primary substance of all living and non-living things, secondly "materialism" refers to a set of "explanations and judgments of mental, moral and social activities, and thirdly, it refers to a set of attitudes with no philosophical or scientific connection" (199). Williams tracks philosophical understandings of materialism back to the fifth century BC in Greece, with "materialism" being contrasted with spirituality and religion in eighteenth-century Europe. From this point on, the term "materialism" is often negatively viewed as an attitude rather than as a description of observable forces. Karl Marx's historical materialism, for Williams, highlights human subjects in the scientific approach of mechanical materialism. Marx's understanding of materialism is known as historical materialism. Friedrich Engels, on the other hand, highlighted the universal laws of materialism, known as dialectical materialism. However, in popular understanding, these different forms of materialism become lumped together and are moralistically seen as a "selfish preoccupation with goods and money" (200). Drawing then from Williams's discussion, Ngũgĩ is a historical materialist in the sense that he believes economics, rather than spirituality/God/gods, explains individual human beings in history and society. He criticises materialism in the sense of selfishness and greed. But his Marxist materialism is rather narrow in that it cannot encompass concerns with material needs in romantic love, which he completely idealises. Material concerns cannot be a part of love is what *Petals of Blood* tells us. However, Ngũgĩ does not recognise that the idealistic view

of pure love is a paradoxical product of capitalist modernity. Love alone becomes a prerequisite for marriage or a committed relationship at the same time as the development of capitalism. In most other systems, the intimate relationship is tied up with material concerns — bridewealth or dowry — which can be seen as bad materialism, but may be part of the definition of love. The exchange of property as a form of love is more clearly identified in the exchanges of gifts among lovers in most cultures.

In *Petals of Blood*, we witness the full range of materialisms. Among those who engage in bad materialism include Chui, the headmaster of Siriana School, who capitalises on his position as the headmaster to align with foreign investors in order to enrich himself. We read that initially Chui opposes the leadership of Siriana School before independence, but he is presented as an autocratic leader even more so than the Englishman Fraudsham, in his attempt to become “a black replica of Fraudsham” (171). He seeks to promote foreign values to the detriment of African culture. Also, Ngũgĩ presents Kimeria as both an oppressor and a capitalist exploiter whose affluence begins during the Emergency when he transports the dead bodies of Mau Mau victims killed by the Europeans. Kimeria baits Wanja with gifts; impregnates her and abandons her. He also manipulates and betrays Nding’uri, Karega’s deceased brother, and Abdulla to his advantage. Patrick Williams describes Chui, Kimeria, Nderi, and the likes, as persons involved in “the active exploitation of their fellow countrymen” (85). The culture of materialism, rather than a commitment to social or spiritual values, drives characters like these to the open abuse and oppression of their countrymen, and in particular, women. There seems to be rampant materialism in the display of opulence among the leaders who collaborate with foreign investors. For example, there is an exposé of incredible capitalist materialism during the epic journey of the delegation of Ilmorog to the city in search of their MP. On their way, Joseph, the adopted son of Abdulla,

becomes ill and the group decides to seek for help from the “big” men. They first enter the house of Rev. Jerrod Brown, a staunch Christian who receives them awkwardly. His hypocritical attitude is revealed in the way he interacts with them, preaching and praying for all classes of people but refusing to grant their request, insinuating that they are beggars. He relies on Christianity to justify his lack of interest in the poor and suffering: “The Bible is then clearly against a life of idleness and begging. This is what is wrong with this country” (148). The next house they visit happens to be the residence of Chui, the headmaster of Siriana School. Here Munira offers to go alone, confident that the personal meeting with his old friend will create success. To Munira’s dismay, he is nearly lynched by Chui and his friends. Kimeria, taking the neglect and abuse of the group of journeymen from Ilmorog even further, attempts to capitalise on their hopeless situation by trying to rape Wanja. He reveals his relationship with Nderi, the MP: “We have one or two businesses together... We are all members of KCO [Kamwene Cultural Organization]. Some of us have been able to borrow a little — shall we say thousands — from the money collected from this tea party [an event used to fleece the people]. I am a life member of KCO. So is Nderi” (153). Nderi also admits to receiving millions from the Mass Tea Party (186) organised with the intention of exploiting the masses. Thus we see a degraded and exploitative society where the peasants and workers are at the receiving end of the avarice of the corrupt postcolonial elite.

Eventually, the group meets the MP, Nderi, who interprets their trip as a conspiracy by his enemies to overthrow him, and finally settles on the lawyer, Wanja’s friend, as his political enemy: “He was the Enemy of KCO and Progress” (187). His philosophy is “the need for the people to grow up and face reality. Africa needed capital and investment for real growth — not socialist slogans” (174). Nderi’s judgements are dominated by his greed, by bad materialism. This is evident in the way he sarcastically addresses his people:

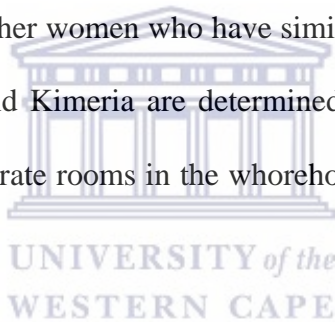
Now, I want you to go back to Ilmorog. Get yourselves together. Subscribe money.

You can even sell some of the cows and goats instead of letting them die. Dive deep into your pockets. Your businessmen, your shopkeepers, instead of telling stories, should contribute generously. Get also a group of singers and dancers —
 ... Our culture, our African culture and spiritual values, should form the true foundation for the nation (182).

Nderi speaks as a capitalist where the love of money is paramount. He disregards the predicament of the people and seeks to further his own interests to such an extent that he perverts the cooperative spirit of of “African culture and spiritual values.” Ngũgĩ satirises the irresponsible MP who fails to champion the cause of his constituency as a consequence of his bad materialism. There is clarion call for African leaders to go back to their roots and adopt our cultural values as “the true foundation for the nation” (182).

The callousness of neo-colonial capitalism, to which the reader is exposed in the journey of the inhabitants of Ilmorog to the city of Nairobi, eventually extends its tentacles into Ilmorog itself. Ilmorog develops as “a high potential area for tourism” (258) attracting both local and foreign investors. The New Ilmorog becomes a centre of attraction for capitalist businessmen such as Mzigo, Nderi wa Riero, [and] Rev. Jerrod, who acquire lands for development in Ilmorog (274). Large modern buildings are put up that symbolise the power of the new capitalist class that moves into Ilmorog. The capitalists entrap the natives into making loans which eventually result in the sale of properties of the peasants and the herdsmen “by public auction” (275) when they cannot

pay back the loans. Nyakiyua, Wanja's grandmother, attempts to fight the "black oppressors" (276); however, she dies without succeeding. Wanja and Abdulla are forced to sell their business premises to Mzigo. Wanja's right to brew alcoholic beverages is taken away, bankrupting her, as she reveals: "The County Council says our licence was sold away with the New Building. They also say our present premises are in any case unhygienic! There's going to be a tourist centre and such places might drive visitors away" (279). The trade in alcohol is now monopolised by the new directors of the Theng'eta brewery, namely Mzigo, Chui and Kimeria. It is clear that Wanja no longer has an income, Wanja is forced into the only trade that she herself may own, namely the trade in herself, in her own body. She establishes the brothel, the Sunshine Lodge, where she is sole proprietor, and employs the other women who have similarly been left destitute. In an ironic twist, the fates of Chui, Mzigo and Kimeria are determined by the same helpless people they exploit. They end up dying in separate rooms in the whorehouse that develops as a consequence of their capitalist greed.

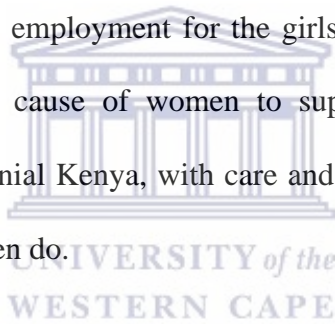


However, Ngũgĩ's approach to materialism is complex since he recognises that some materialisms are forced materialisms. In other words, his novels show how characters may be forced for reasons of survival to put money first, or may be socially conditioned to regarding money as the most important thing. This idea is explored mainly through the character Wanja. The society in which she grows into adulthood is a society that teaches her the value mainly of money, and how she can use her sexuality to acquire money — and through money, independence from the gender-specific forms of exploitation to which she is subjected as a woman. In one of Wanja's retrospective reflections, she recalls her first love affair, a schoolgirl romance. A boy, Ritho, had sent her love letters that with the cruel insensitivity of the young, she read to her schoolmates. But she did not divulge to her girlfriends knowledge of his gifts of "pencils and sweets" (37), material

gifts which entrenched her affection for him. After a school soccer match, she walked home with him, impressed by his commitment to further himself through education, which would see him build “a bridge over a road or over a river” (37). But finally the “road” on which they walked lead “to the bedroom” (37). When she returned home late and was impatient with her mother, her parents beat her mercilessly since she had associated with a “pagan” boy (38), but more especially since she “was with a boy [who] came from a family even poorer than [theirs]” (38). From the outset thus, love is linked with material concerns in both positive and negative ways. Wanja holds the young man and his poverty responsible for her treatment at the hands of her parents. As a form of “vengeance” (38), she becomes involved with a wealthy man in the village whom her father obsequiously befriends. (We later discover that this man is Kimeria.) Her maths teacher takes advantage of his knowledge of her secret relationship with Kimeria to force her into a sexual relationship with him. As a consequence of the corner into which she is trapped, she divulges all to her parents, and subsequently also discovers she is pregnant. The wealthy older man is, however, unwilling to marry her, after which she runs away from home. Forced to fend for herself, she discovers that work as a barmaid-cum-prostitute is the only way girls in her position can get by. Gone is the focus in this novel on circumcision as the rite of passage into adulthood that was foregrounded in *The River Between* and *Weep Not, Child*. Here the girl becomes a woman in the new “tribe” of neo-colonial Kenya by learning that material needs must be met and are a part of intimacy, but also that the only way to survive gender injustices in postcolonial Kenya is to sell sex for money.

Having learnt this lesson at an early age, Wanja applies it again in adulthood in the new Ilmorog that finds itself transformed by indigenous capitalism in cahoots with foreign investors. In the bar where Wanja works with Abdulla, she is appreciated for creating employment for the

people, especially for women. When the incursion of wealthy businessmen into the area and the monopolisation of the brewing of the Theng'eta drink force the bar to close, Wanja establishes the Sunshine Lodge house of prostitution with the same passion to save the unemployed women from starving. Wanja pours out her heart: "My heart is tearless about what I have committed myself to. You know I have tried. Where was I to throw these girls that were part of the old Theng'eta premises? To others who too would profit from their bodies? No, I am not doing this for their sakes. From now onwards it will always be: Wanja First" (311–12). Ironically, Wanja learns the lessons of capitalist materialism well. If women are forced to prostitute themselves, then she will prostitute them herself — with the empathy that her own life experience has brought. She therefore employs capitalist tactics to create employment for the girls and herself. Wanja thus is a good materialist since she furthers the cause of women to support themselves in the only way independently possible in postcolonial Kenya, with care and consideration, and not for her own selfish ends as the local businessmen do.

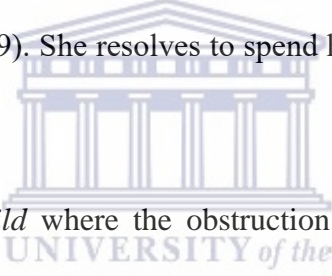


Wanja, as was mentioned in the introduction, is an heir of Mumbi in *A Grain of Wheat*, but she is also a precursor portrait of Warĩnga in *Devil on the Cross* because they suffer the same fate. In Warĩnga's case, she is lured by her uncle into falling in love with a rich old man who abandons her after she falls pregnant. Kimeria also abandons Wanja, who out of desperation drowns her newborn baby in a latrine. While Warĩnga finally succeeds through education, Wanja succeeds through using capitalist materialism against itself. According to James Ogude:

All the relationships above have similar features. In each case we have a situation in which the rich and propertied elite attempts to take advantage of poor women. We have relationships characterized by exploitation and hypocrisy. The rich men

turn the poor women into sexual objects for male pleasure and the elite men cannot commit themselves to genuine relationships with the poor women. (113)

Both women take revenge on their sexual exploiters by killing them: Warĩinga guns the rich old man down and Wanja strikes Kimeria down “with the panga she was holding” (330). However, while Warĩinga walks into an unknown future, Wanja is caught in the narrative’s double bind on the question of the significance of materialism, especially in the context of the romantic love relationship, as we shall see below. To this end, Wanja metamorphoses into a whorehouse mistress and a capitalist as she tells Munira: “No free things in Kenya. A hundred shillings on the table if you want high-class treatment” (279). She resolves to spend her life whoring after the manner of the exploiters.



Apart from *Weep Not, Child* where the obstruction to the love between Njoroge and Mwihaki took the form of differences in class, religion and political partisanship, in most of the other novels, the obstruction, in part, takes the form of a rival in love. The love triangle in *A Grain of Wheat* is the most obvious of the rivalries. In *Petals of Blood*, rivalry is explored in its fullest elaboration. The central female character, Wanja, is the love interest of three friends, Munira, Karega and Abdulla, of whom Munira is the novel’s “hero” in terms of the major attention paid to him in the narrative. But then, Karega and Abdulla emerge as heroes for what they represent in Ngũgĩ’s social vision. Each of these men loves Wanja unconditionally and love seems to be a part of the fulfillment of the self in *Petals of Blood* more than it is in any of the other novels. Wanja’s three lovers are all lonely, alienated, troubled figures for one reason or another. However, Munira is the most complex and contradictory because he turns out to be an ambivalent anti-hero, while

Karega finally commits to the people rather than Wanja, and Abdulla emerges as the affirmed hero of the romantic plot.

Munira hoped to find love and fulfillment in his wife, who represented the very opposite of everything his father was. Munira is the weak son of an authoritarian and highly socially and financially effective father, who is also an enthusiastic Christian. Munira marries a poor woman from a pagan family as an ultimately ineffective resistance against his father. His wife Julia is so impressed with marrying into a well-to-do, Christian family that she becomes the perfect daughter-in-law, to Munira's chagrin: "he had married a girl from a pagan home, maybe as promptings from the heart against what his father stood for. But the girl turns out a replica of his more obedient sisters ... she tried to be the ideal daughter-in-law" (91). Munira falls decidedly out of love with Julia since "she could have been beautiful [to him] but too much righteous living and Bible-reading and daily prayers had drained her to all sensuality and what remained now was the cold incandescence of the spirit" (16). He feels lonely in his own house. Munira therefore abandons his wife since he needs someone's passionate love to complete his troubled sense of self, being the failure in the family.

When he first comes to Ilomorog, Munira achieves heights he has not known before in his life. As the headmaster of the village school, he enjoys the adulation of the villagers, occupying a position similar to that of Waiyaki in *The River Between*. Munira is struck by Wanja from the first time he meets her. Romantic love is usually defined as love in which some element of the erotic plays a role. Munira's attraction to Wanja is highly eroticised, since sexuality seems to be part of the definition of his "self" as a response to his father's strict Christianity. Munira's first intimate relationship is a relationship that foreshadows his later relationship with Wanja. He loses his virginity to a prostitute called Amina and then, revealing his conflicted personality, tries to

“purify” himself of the deed: “He stole a matchbox, collected a bit of grass and dry cowdung and built an imitation of Amina’s house at Kamiritho where he had sinned against the Lord, and burnt it. He watched the flames and felt truly purified by fire” (14). When Munira comes to Ilmorog, Wanja appears to him as an erotic saviour, allowing him for the first time in his life to feel fulfilled; or, as Gikandi puts it, Munira’s relocation to Ilmorog is a “quest for a lost romantic ideal” (Gikandi 156) that is symbolically represented by Wanja. Wanja, who is generous in her love, initially welcomes Munira in her arms and in her bed. She allows Munira to make love to her without qualms: “She cried out in ecstasy: The moon... the orange moon. Please, Mwalimu... stay here tonight... Break the moon over me. Her pleading voice had startled Munira out of his thoughts. He too wanted to stay the night. He would stay the night. A joyous trembling coursed through his body. Aah, my harvest” (66). Eustace Palmer suggests that, “[t]he sexual prowess [Munira] demonstrates in his love-making helps give him that sense of mastery and masculinity that he has completely failed to manifest in the world of adult affairs” (277). Their love-making is focalised in the narrative through Munira, giving the reader a sense of what it means to him: “Her scream, calling out to her mother or sister for help, would give him an even greater sense of power and strength until he sank into a void, darkness, awesome shadow where choosing or not choosing was no longer a question” (72). Wanja thus becomes Munira’s obsession and final downfall as Palmer underscores: “But it his association with Wanja which [also] reveals the cracks in his personality and eventually leads to his disintegration” (277). The relationship between Munira and Wanja in some ways is symbolised by Munira’s relationship with the mystical drink theng’eta, brewed from the plant that produces the flowers with “petals of blood”. Theng’eta for Munira is as ambivalent in its effect as Wanja is: “Deadly lotus. An only friend. Constant companion ...” (271). The Theng’eta drink also symbolises Munira’s love for Wanja: “Theng’eta. The spirit. Dreams of love

returned” (271). Munira’s lyrical expressions of appreciation for theng’eta eventually become the official advert for Theng’eta Breweries:

Do you have what it takes? Drink Theng’eta. Increase your potency: Drink
 Theng’eta. Beautiful people, beautiful thoughts, beautiful love: Drink Theng’eta.
 Join the Space Age: Drink Theng’eta. On your way to the moon with Armstrong:
 Drink Theng’eta. Three T’s: Theng’a Theng’a with Theng’eta. (273)

For Munira, Theng’eta serves as a means to unify with the “Other” through eros, in this case, through Wanja, who is the only person who fulfils him. When Wanja takes an interest in Karega, an idealistic young teacher who also comes to Ilmorog, Munira’s pathological jealousy leads him to get Karega fired from his post, leading Wanja to despise him. This tearing asunder of Munira’s oneness, which reminds us of the myth told by Diotima in Plato’s *Symposium*, referred to in an earlier chapter, and the vengeance it fires, is what causes his final downfall.

As we shall see, the love between Karega and Wanja is seen as a celebration of victory for Ilmorog and a celebration of life itself. Ngũgĩ refers to the expression of love as life characterised by the enjoyment of “inner peace and inner lightness: (230), in the case of the union of Karega and Wanja, life for each of them as individuals and life for the Ilmorog community. The consummation of love between Karega and Wanja bestows a second life for all. Their love is largely focalised through Munira in his prison meditations articulating the love and happiness between Karega and Wanja. But Munira’s meditations also suggests envy of their compatibility and their organic connectedness to both the Ilmorog landscape and the Ilmorog people:

Of an evening I saw them together running across the fields, stumbling over mikengeria creepers, over yellow merry-golden flowers ... Often, they would walk across Ilmorog ridge ... Their love seemed to grow with the new crops of the year... They were still a-wandering across Ilmorog country, always together in the fields, on the mountain-top, in the plains, their love blossoming in the wind, as if both were re-enacting broken possibilities in their pasts. (244–45)

Both Karega and Wanja come from backgrounds of poverty and were forced to drop out of school because of circumstances beyond their control. Their love, as the extract suggests, allows them to overcome the obstacles of the past and projects hopefulness for the future. It is clear from the descriptions of their relationship that the love between Karega and Wanja is a love which sees each of them fulfilled in the other, as the following assertion by Wanja further shows: “I have searched for love, too ... it has escaped me ... except ... except ... I will say it ... except with you. That time I felt my womanhood come back... I felt accepted as I was ... For the first time I could make love without the burden of guilt or a burden of a search... Then you went away... I kept myself to myself ...” (292). Wanja’s life’s journey potentially ends in Karega, again affirming the Platonic idea of romantic love as the union of soul mates. Both Karega and Wanja are linked in the narrative with natural imagery. Their love is compared with natural objects such as fields, mountains, plains and wind. This indicates their connection with the earth and community as a whole. Their union is described by Killam as “a harmonious conjunction between nature and humanity” (115). Karega, a social and political activist who selflessly throws himself into defending the rights of the poor, emerges as a hero in the novel who, some might say not

completely successfully, unites socialism and a vision of a just and prosperous African past. The consummation of their love expresses allegorically the power of their combined energies in the creation of a new world to come:

He felt the tip of his blood-warmth touch her moistness and for a second he was suspended in physical inertia. Then she cried once, oh, as he descended, sinking into her who now received him in tender readiness. Then they started slowly, almost uncertainly, groping towards one another, gradually working together in rhythmic search for a kingdom. And she clung to him, she too desiring the memories washed away in the deluge of a new beginning, and he now felt this power in him, power to heal, power over death, power, power ... and suddenly it was she who carried him high on ocean waves of new horizons ... oh the power of united flesh, before exploding and swooning into darkness and sleep without words. (230)

Significantly, after their union, they wake “in the morning, dew on their hair, dew on their clothes, dew on the grass, dew on the hills and the plains, with the earth aglow with a mellowing amber light before sunrise” (230). Clearly, Ngũgĩ achieves a stylistic effect of parallelism by setting up a relationship of equivalence between the linguistic items that are repeated in the extract. The repetition according to Geoffrey Leech presents “a simple emotion with force, it may further suggest a suppressed intensity of feeling — an imprisoned feeling” (3). So Ngũgĩ emphasises the intensity of the romance between Karega and Wanja as refreshing and self-fulfilling. The relationship between Karega and Wanja also allows Karega to overcome the trauma of his first

romantic attachment with Mukami, Munira's sister. That relationship was a "Romeo and Juliet" love affair between the poor young man whose family was involved in anticolonial resistance and a young woman from the comprador class. Munira's father's recalcitrance finally causes the suicide of Munira's sister, which adds to the resentment Munira feels towards the young man who, in other respects, is exemplary and is the male mirror image of Wanja. Karega leaves Ilmorog when Munira fires him from his post as teacher at the village school because of his jealousy at their relationship. The relationship between Karega and Wanja is presented as pure and fully reciprocated, unlike Munira's own, which is selfish and directed at overcoming his own cowardice and personal insecurities. Love for Munira is also linked with mastery over Wanja.

Wanja's love for Karega is resurrected when he returns to Ilmorog after five years. She invites Karega to her old hut and expresses her unhappiness without his love: "I have been so lonely ... so lonely. This wealth feels so heavy on my head. Please stay tonight ... just tonight, like in the old times... I have loved life! life! life! Karega, give me life ... I am dying ... and no child ... No child!" (327). Wanja's incompleteness without Karega's love is revealed as loneliness. She begs Karega to "give [her] life", implying that she desires to have a child with Karega. Karega, however, idealist that he is, rejects Wanja when he discovers that she killed her new-born child, conceived from her relationship with Kimeria, and drowned the baby in a latrine. He also objects to the establishment of a brothel, seeing it as Wanja's "trading on the bodies of other girls" (323), becoming a female version of the exploiters Kimeria, Mzigo, Chui and Nderi. For Wanja, by contrast, her establishment of the Sunshine Lodge is both the consequence of being forced into prostitution by the predatory nature of capitalist ventures in Ilmorog, which see the destruction of the local theng'eta trade in favour of monopoly control, and, in excess of need, her action is one of Fanonian vengeance against (patriarchal) capitalism. Wanja also, as noted above, in this way

provides employment for the now unemployed barmaids of the establishment run by herself and Abdulla. But Karega cannot see the double exploitation to which Wanja is subjected, and interprets her past act of desperation and her present strategic move as a betrayal of the social and political cause symbolised by the triumph of their love. The two finally realise that “[t]he magic string between them was finally broken” (326). This marks the end of this relationship and the forging of the ultimately exultant relationship of Abdulla and Wanja.

The love between Abdulla and Wanja is a pragmatic love that arises out of need, understanding and trust for each other. Abdullah and Wanja had been business partners before they became partners in intimacy. Wanja’s role in Abdulla’s shop, where she works, goes beyond the role of an employee since she has invested in Abdulla’s success. They later again join forces to brew and sell Theng’eta to the villagers of Ilmorog on a plot of ground they acquire together: “she and Abdulla were really the only local people who had successfully bid for a building plot in the New Ilmorog and started work on it” (270). Wanja also comes to play a maternal role in the life of Joseph, Abdulla’s adopted son, whose education she strongly encourages. Wanja becomes for Abdulla his “source of joy in the wilderness of his bitterness, of his consciousness of his broken promises, of wider betrayal of the collective blood of Kenyan fighters for land and freedom” (310). Abdulla refers here to the political betrayal of Mau Mau freedom fighters, of whom he is one, after independence, when hypocrites and opportunists gain control of resources and power. Abdulla seems proud of Wanja’s endeavours and attributes the positive changes in Ilmorog to “Wanja’s magic. What a woman! One in a thousand!” (310). Munira envies Abdulla’s relationship with Wanja also, even though, for the most part of the narrative, it is not a sexual relationship. He jealously remarks: “How close to Abdulla she seemed!” (270). Although Wanja and Abdulla’s business collapses because it is sold to Anglo-American International Breweries in which Mzigo,

Chui and Kimeria have shares, their happiness is restored when their friendship is transformed into an intimate relationship at the end. Abdulla finally becomes the “real hero of the book” (Killam 105), confirmed through his union with Wanja.

Wanja’s romantic relationship with Abdulla is rather different from her relationship with the other two main characters. Abdulla, unlike Munira and Karega, proposes marriage to Wanja: “Listen. Please. Stop this business. I have little money. I still have my share of what we got from the recent sale. Marry me. I may not be much to look at [he lost his leg in the Mau Mau resistance]: but it was fate” (311). Ngũgĩ presents Abdulla as loving and compassionate. Where the relationship with Munira was sudden and cataclysmic, his affection for Wanja develops gradually with time. He expresses sincere love for Wanja despite her promiscuous lifestyle. Thus for the first time, alluding to the lines from Blake’s “London” used by Ngũgĩ as an epigraph to one of the sections of the novel, the “harlot’s curse” does not strike with “plagues” the marriage, which this time does not bring death but life. Abdulla is willing to marry Wanja although Karega and Munira reject her. The couple consummate their love in the moment of excitement when they discover Joseph’s success in examinations key to his future. Abdulla expresses his elation on their union as “his turn to feel the old world roll away” (314). For him, “Wanja has given him back his life and he did not see why he should now waste it in Theng’eta. And to crown it, she wanted him back tonight” (315). Ironically, Abdulla regains his manhood in the course of their love-making, and Wanja accepts him as “her rightful man” (328), despite his physical handicap, his leg amputated, leg lost in the anticolonial resistance, which is a mark of his commitment to the people’s struggle. Through this relationship, Wanja also achieves full womanhood in the novel’s terms since she becomes pregnant, presumably with Abdulla’s child.

The novel's ending, which sees Munira burn down Wanja's bordello with the three exploiters, Kimeria, Chui and Mzigo in separate rooms inside, has been criticised as a weakness of the novel. Palmer, for example, suggests that:

Munira's transformation into a religious fanatic at the end is one of this novel's major weaknesses. A violent death seems to be a logical and well-deserved conclusion to the fortunes of the three African directors of the Theng'eta brewery, but that it should be brought about by a fire started in a moment of inspiration by a religious fanatic seems a melodramatic contrivance which takes a remarkably serious work back to the level of the detective thriller. Munira's plunge into religious fanaticism at the moment when he sees his evangelistic one-time sweetheart [Lillian] is much too sudden to carry conviction. ... His decision to set fire to Wanja's brothel "which mocked God's work on earth" and save Karega from the clutches of the woman whom he now sees as Jezebel is no more convincing ... Munira's decision can only be accepted as a sign of mental derangement: but the process of derangement is not demonstrated. (278)

The weakness of the ending, I would contend, is connected with the ambivalence with which the novel treats questions of materialism in romantic love. This is a dimension that will be considered further in the next section.

Paradoxes of Prostitution in *Petals of Blood*

The ending of *Petals of Blood* is unsatisfactory for the reason outlined by Palmer above, but it is also unanticipated in terms of the narrative need for the conflagration in which the brothel

gets engulfed. The ending is also unanticipated for the transformation we see in the central female character, Wanja. As Palmer notes, the social evil represented by the three capitalists justifies their eventual destruction, but it was not necessary in terms of the plot for them to be destroyed in the Sunshine Lodge, which represents Wanja's vengeance against the system of patriarchal capitalism that has victimised her all her life, and which was established as a form of social support for the unemployed women who otherwise would have been destitute. The fire also too conveniently razes to the ground the establishment of which Wanja is the proprietor, making way for her transformation into unemployed wife to Abdulla and mother of the child in whom the hopes for a reconstructed Kenyan future lies. As at the end of *A Grain of Wheat*, the ambivalence of the triumph of the central character is indexed by the transference of hope to the *deus ex machina* of the unborn child.

Throughout the novel, Ngũgĩ is fully cognisant of the material realities that force women into ways to survive financially that perversely parallel the common reason why women in many cultures marry, namely, for economic security. As a Marxist, Ngũgĩ throughout the novel shows how Wanja's options for survival are determined by the material realities of postcolonial Kenya. In an interview with Anita Shreve, Ngũgĩ describes the situation as a social canker and blames society for Wanja's lifestyle: "The things that have happened to her have happened to many other women. A barmaid is a woman without a fixed means of income. She is not a prostitute, strictly speaking, nor is she a straight girl. Her salary is not regular; it is paid according to the whim of her employer. She has little chance of marrying. I believe that the barmaids are the most ruthlessly exploited category of the women. The barmaid came into being after independence, and were a result of the many bars that sprang up after 1963. Drinking alcohol, and sexism are part of our national pastime" (Sander and Lindfors 72). Ngũgĩ thus empathises with his character, but at the

same time needs to transform her fate since he does not recognise that material concerns are often an inescapable part of the definition of love, even though these concerns tend to be unspoken.

In this respect, Ngũgĩ taps into the complex representations of the prostitute figure in African literature. For example, Stéphane Robolin, in an analysis of Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood*, examines the representation of the lapse into prostitution of the co-wife of the main character, Nnu Ego. Robolin presents the co-wife's prostitution as a form of liberation from societal norms and material security, which allows her to support herself and her children financially, and as a consequence of the husband's frequent absences. She seeks material reward through attaching a value to intimacies "not only to fulfil basic material needs, but also to offer her female children a chance at increased opportunities and more satisfying, independent futures" (Robolin 87). Gloria Chineze Chukukere's study of female figures in Onitsha market pamphlets categorises heroines into "fallen" and "upright" women. The "fallen woman" or prostitute generally "symbolises chaos. She is devoid of human and spiritual goodness within the world of narrative ... At the height of her professional career, she may equate success with material prosperity" (Chukukere 21). Florence Stratton similarly finds a duality in African literature by male authors where female characters form part of the "Mother Africa" trope, or by contrast are prostitutes (47). The prostitute figure, she argues, acts as a "metaphor for men's degradation under some non-preferred socio-political system — a metaphor which encodes women as agents of moral corruption, as sources of moral contamination in society" (53). The prostitute figure thus is generally depicted as a degraded or marginalised person in the society.

Ngũgĩ's novels also depict the prostitute figure as a symbol of marginalisation and oppression. In *Weep Not, Child*, Ngũgĩ presents prostitution as largely a foreign practice. In *Matigari*, Ngũgĩ presents Guthera, Matigari's accomplice, as a prostitute. Also in *Wizard of the*

Crow, the figure of the prostitute is highlighted through the character of Wariara. In all of these representations, Ngũgĩ portrays the figure of the prostitute as the result of a necessary pursuit of material security in a society that neglects its responsibility to provide employment for its female citizenry.

Critics' approaches to the figure of the prostitute in *Petals of Blood* reveal the crucial role the heroine, Wanja, plays in the novel. Jennifer Evans' "Mother Africa and the Heroic Whore: Female Images in *Petals of Blood*" explores the prostitute figure as an exceptional woman in the novel and compares her with similar figures in other works by Ngũgĩ. Evans argues that Ngũgĩ shows African liberation and women's contribution to the development of Africa. She describes Wanja as a legatee of her grandmother, who is a product of change in the community: "Wanja has inherited Nyakinyua's courageous and defiant spirit" (60). Roos, challenging Stratton's interpretation of the prostitute figure mentioned above, suggests that Wanja's body is not merely meant for exploitation by men. Instead, Wanja portrays women's identity in a localised understanding of women's experiences and Ngũgĩ's vision of a nation. This is an indication that Ngũgĩ's strategy is derived from his Marxist philosophies, which culminate in his writing. In contrasted with Roos, Nicholls argues that the symbol of "petals of blood" applies metaphorically to Wanja's prostitution, which represents the debased state of Kenyan neocolony: "As a fallen woman, Wanja is repeatedly rendered in terms of imagery of deflowering" (129). Boehmer, similarly, argues that the woman in *Petals of Blood* "is used as victim. As a thriving madam, obviously equipped with an extremely durable vagina, Wanja becomes a ready symbol for the ravaged state of Kenya. Yet her courage and resourcefulness in turning her exploitation as a woman and as a member of the oppressed classes to her advantage, is finally discredited" (193).

What the approaches to the prostitute figure outlined above highlight is that the question has not been considered through the lens of romantic love. As I have argued, for Ngũgĩ romantic love is an ideal, pure union that is sullied or dirtied by material concerns. But in many African contexts, material concerns are acknowledged as integral to love, something that does not allow for a simple condemnation of transactional sex. Thus there is an irony in the fact that he is a materialist who rejects the material in intimate relations, even though they are a factor in romantic love virtually in all cultural contexts. Ngũgĩ does not distinguish between “bad” materialism and “good” materialism, the materialism that confirms and entrenches romantic attachments. A number of studies in *Love in Africa*, the volume edited by Jennifer Cole and Lynn M. Thomas, highlight the centrality of material questions to intimate relationships. The authors in the volume explore “how shifting kinship practices, gender ideologies, and political economies shape intimate attachments” (4). The final focus on economic contexts offsets the studies of ““transactional sex” which “emphasize the centrality of material exchanges to everyday sexual relations” and which warn one to “avoid conflating various forms of African intimacy with prostitution and its stigmatizing connotations” (9). The editors clarify further: “Although Western ideology and common sense often oppose emotional attachments and economic interests, much scholarship makes clear that they are entangled at the level of practice. Western folk theory implies that love is the emotion that makes us the most altruistic and the least selfish, while money is supposed to signal self-interest and impersonal ties” (21). But, using the studies of Zelizer, the editors stress that people live connected lives where they “continually assess how different intimate relations entail different moneyed duties and material expectations and rights” (21).

Through the character Wanja, the narrative implicitly stresses the findings of these studies, but the form taken by the conclusion of the novel shows that Ngũgĩ is not comfortable with the

intimate connections between romantic love and materialism. For Ngũgĩ, eros represents the individual self-realisation of each of the lovers and the fulfilment represented by their union that forms the basis of utopian forms of social and national relationships. The ending of *Petals of Blood* suggests that the necessary materialism of intimate relationships leading to marriage cannot be accepted by Ngũgĩ. The novel cannot end with Wanja as mistress of the brothel, symbolic of material concerns in intimate relationships, and Wanja as wife of Abdulla. The plot needs to orchestrate the complete destruction of the Sunshine Lodge to represent the razing to the ground of materialism in the love relationship. As with the ending of *A Grain of Wheat*, hope for the future does not really reside with the lovers, in this case Abdulla and Wanja. Abdulla resigns himself to his fate as “petty fruit-seller on the verge of ruin” (340), even though he will enjoy the companionship of Wanja. The novel does not end triumphantly with a focus on the fulfilment of the love of the couple. Instead it brings Wanja’s pregnancy to centre-stage against the backdrop of Karega’s commitment to the cause of the people. A month after the fire at the Sunshine Lodge, Wanja’s mother returns to Ilmorog:

For the next few weeks they just talked, softly, treading toward the past, but never quite bringing it into the open ... Wanja was thinking maybe nobody could really escape his fate. Maybe life was a series of false starts, which, once discovered, called for more renewed efforts at yet another beginning. Suddenly, she could no longer keep her fears and hopes from the elder woman:

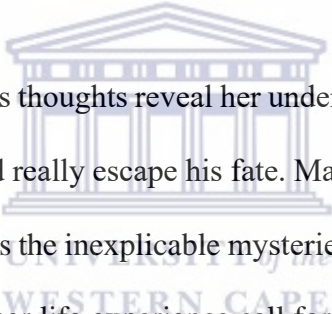
‘I think ... I am ... I think I am with child. No, I am sure of it, mother.’

Her mother was silent for a few seconds.

‘Whose ... whose child?’

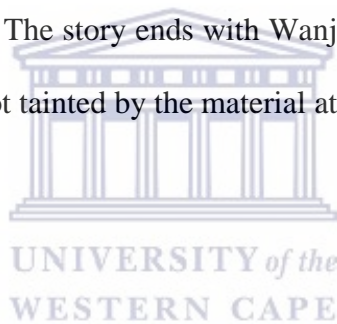
Wanja got a piece of charcoal and a piece of cardboard. For one hour or so she remained completely absorbed in her sketching... The figure began to take shape on the board. It was a combination of sculpture she once saw at the lawyer's place in Nairobi and images of Kimathi in his moments of triumph and laughter and sorrow and terror — but without one limb. When it was over, she felt a tremendous calm, a kind of inner assurance of the possibilities of a new kind of power. She handed the picture to her mother.

‘Who ... who is this ... with ...with so much pain and suffering on her face? And why is he laughing at the same time?’ (337–38).



In the above extract, Wanja's thoughts reveal her understanding of the complexities of life. She wonders: “maybe nobody could really escape his fate. Maybe life was a series of false starts”. The repetition of “maybe” highlights the inexplicable mysteries that surround one's destiny in life. For Wanja, the twists and turns in her life experience call for a renewal of “efforts at yet another beginning”. This marks the starting point of Wanja's reunion with her mother, which reveals another turning point in her life. There is a sense of belonging as Wanja decides to confide in her mother and discloses “her fears and hopes”, something which indicates her absolute commitment to her mother. For the first time, Wanja drops hints about her pregnancy and attempts to sketch the image of the father of the unborn baby. Significantly, the length of time Wanja uses to sketch, and the description of the sketch, reveal her knowledge of the identity of the father of the unborn child. Most tellingly, the sketch she draws is of the Kenyan liberation hero Dedan Kimathi, but the hero is missing a limb, suggesting that she knows Abdulla is the father. Wanja's mind goes back to the sculpture of Dedan Kimathi which she saw on the lawyer's walls when the delegation from

Ilmorog visited the city, and to other portraits of the Mau Mau hero: “[t]he walls were decorated with the pictures of Che Guevara with his Christlike locks of hair and saintly eyes; of Dedan Kimathi, sitting calmly and arrogantly defiant; and a painting by Mugalula of a beggar in a street” (161). Wanja remembers the posture of Kimathi in the picture that figures him as a proud redeemer of his country, as she attempts to sketch the father of the unborn child. Ngũgĩ presents an end to the pains and misery of both Wanja and Abdulla, and crowns their efforts with the blessing of an unborn child, which echoes in *A Grain of Wheat* with the child conceived by Gikonyo and Mumbi. Metaphorically, Ngũgĩ compares the image of the father to that of Kimathi and attempts to compensate Wanja and Abdulla by wiping away all their tears, terror and sorrow and replacing them with “triumph and laughter”. The story ends with Wanja regaining power to forge ahead in her new life, a life where love is not tainted by the material at all.



Chapter Four

Excursus: Friendship in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Matigari*

What a beautiful woman, thought Matigari; a woman with teeth that gleam white like milk, a mass of hair so black and soft, as if it is always treated with purest oils. Yes, a woman who is neither too short nor too tall; neither too fat nor thin. So well built that her clothes fit her as though she were created in them! See how well she wears her flower-patterned lasso [a wrapper] around her shoulders so that the flaps fall gently in soft folds over her shoulders and breasts. It was difficult not to stare at her. What was such a rare beauty doing in a dingy bar? (Matigari 27–28).

UNIVERSITY of the
WESTERN CAPE

Ngũgĩ's propagation of his socio-political vision depends importantly on the representation of intimate relationships across his fiction. As we have discussed in the previous chapters, intimate relationships characterised by romantic love seem to be a consistent focal point in Ngũgĩ's oeuvre. However, in *Matigari* (1987), the penultimate novel published, Ngũgĩ's narrative suggests the possibility of the exploration of another central romantic relationship, but, unexpectedly, the novel commutes romantic love into friendship. In this respect, we see in *Matigari* a paradigm shift from eros to friendship. This shift may be accounted for by the fact that up until this point in his career, Ngũgĩ struggles to present utopian fulfillment in love owing to the tensions in his previous works presented by social divisions, betrayal, and materialism, all of which obstructed romantic resolution. In Ngũgĩ's early novels, *The River Between* and *Weep Not, Child*, romantic love

attempts to break the boundaries of class, religion and politics; however, it fails because of internal and external factors. Likewise, as discussed in Chapter Two, Ngũgĩ's depiction of love is destabilised in *A Grain of Wheat* and *Devil on the Cross*, where the obstruction to romantic love emerges as betrayal. In *Petals of Blood*, romantic love is apparently compromised by materialism where love, sex and money are connected in complex exchanges. In *Matigari*, however, Ngũgĩ shifts the focus from love and sexuality to the related intimate relationship of friendship. But, as we will see in the final chapter, the focus on friendship is an excursus on the theme of romantic love engaged by Ngũgĩ over his entire career that allows him to negotiate the obstacles previously encountered in the presentation of the love stories. In *Wizard of the Crow*, the novel that follows *Matigari*, for the first time Ngũgĩ is able to present a love affair that ends in the joyous union of the lovers. In part, this is due to the specifics of the similarities Ngũgĩ identifies in friendship and eros, similarities he comes to foreground in the romantic relationship.

It should be observed that it may be misleading to suggest that this chapter is a complete deviation from the other chapters because it focuses on friendship rather than romantic love. This is the case since friendship serves as the foundation on which almost all the intimate relationships that have been identified in the earlier novels is built. We see that all of the earlier relationships begin with friendship, a strong companionable bond between the heroes and the heroines which later develops into romantic love. For instance, in *The River Between*, Waiyaki and Nyambura's intimacy begins as a continuation of Muthoni and Waiyaki's deep and almost mystical friendship. Similarly, Njoroge and Mwhaki meet at school and become best friends on Njoroge's first day in school. Also in *A Grain of Wheat*, Gikonyo and Mumbi, like Warĩinga and Gatũria in *Devil on the Cross*, are initially attracted to each other as friends. In *Matigari*, Matigari's admiration for Gũthera initially seems strongly eroticised, but instead of a romantic bond, this novel develops the

relationship between the man and the woman into one of the deepest friendships to be observed in any of his narratives.

Matigari (1986) is a narrative that recounts the plight of the protagonist, Matigari, who is a freedom fighter. The name “Matigari” refers to “The patriot who survived the bullets” (20). He buries his AK47 and his sword and puts on the belt of peace. Matigari returns from the forest in search of his family and his house. In the course of his search, he meets Mūriūki, Ngarūro and Gūthera and makes friends with them. As the epigraph above reveals, Matigari is astounded at the beauty of Gūthera on the first occasion they meet, when he visits a bar. This episode occurs after Matigari’s meeting with Mūriūki and Ngarūro, where Matigari is rescued from the attack of the village children for intruding on their privacy. Subsequently, Matigari with his friend, Mūriūki, visits the Mataha Hotel, Bar and Restaurant and requests the barmaids to serve them food and drinks. Suddenly, Gūthera appears and becomes the centre of attention for the barmaids, who interrogate her about her dealings with the policemen. Gūthera reveals to them that one of the policemen was after her: “He keeps on following me like I am a bitch on heat” (27). For her, “cops’ money stinks of blood” (28). Interestingly, Matigari and Gūthera are naturally drawn to each other by their eyes. In a telepathic scene, Matigari finds Gūthera beautiful, and, at the same time, Gūthera “walked to Matigari and without much ado sat on his lap, put her arms around his neck and looked at him with feigned love in her eyes” (28). It is quite obvious that there is a strong attraction between them, but initially it is a complicated ironic relationship since Gūthera seems to tease Matigari with a make-believe love. However, the erotic element is quickly dissipated in their relationship, which develops into an enduring, honest friendship instead.

Matigari is Ngũgĩ’s most controversial novel, which generated massive controversy and tension in Kenya after its publication. In “A Note on the American Edition”, Ngũgĩ reports that

shortly after the publication of the book, it was banned: “As to sales, about 4000 copies of the novels were printed, and about 700–1000 remaining copies were seized by the government from the publisher’s house” (Ngũgĩ and Jaggi 248). According to F. Odun Balogun, “barely four months after the publication of *Matigari*, its hero had so effectively entered Kenyan social consciousness that this phantom was mistaken for a living Kenyan and orders were issued by the government for his arrest” (161). The roots of the narrative of *Matigari* are strongly oral, based on an oral story about “a man searching for a cure for an illness” (Ngũgĩ and Jaggi 242). Clearly the narrative draws an implicit analogy with the diseased state of the postcolonial African country. The narrative opens with the description of the protagonist, Matigari, a freedom fighter, whose name hyperbolically denotes “[t]he patriot who survived the bullets” (20), as indicated above. Having struggled with his oppressors, Settler Williams and John Boy, and having defeated them, Matigari buries his AK47 and his sword, and puts on the belt of peace. He returns from the forest in search of his family and his house. He tries to revive the cordial relationships that were prevalent amongst his people, coupled with the songs they used to sing which symbolise the peace and unity once enjoyed among his people. However, he comes back to realise that after the arduous struggle for independence, his family (which represents his country) is not free from oppression, being oppressed now by the local government. Matigari’s passion for his people’s freedom leads him to seek for truth and justice in the country: “My thirst and hunger are not for material things. My only thirst and hunger are to do with my troubled spirit. I have travelled far and wide looking for truth and justice” (94). Matigari decides to fight the oppressors’ rule in this unnamed country ruled by a despotic leader, His Excellency Ole Excellence, who proposes a one-party system of the ruling party called KKK (Kĩĩama Kĩrĩa Kĩrathana). Although the president claims to be practicing democracy, he refuses to involve the people in the governing of the nation. He instigates the arrest

of citizens who criticise his rule, and, with help of his accomplices, the Minister of Truth and Justice, the industrialist son of Settler Williams and John Boy, his comprador stooge, exploits the people, whose humanity is not recognised by their bosses or leaders.

In another interesting twist, *Matigari* relates the significant contributions of committed friends of Matigari, Mūriūki, Ngarūro and Gūthera, who sacrifice their lives to ensure Matigari's success. While Matigari goes in search of his house, now occupied by Settler Williams' son, his friends, Mūriūki, Ngarūro and Gūthera, work tirelessly to project his fame throughout the country. The stories that spread about Matigari present him in many respects as a Christ-like figure, especially where he shares his food with inmates while in prison, something which is followed by their miraculous escape from the prison, engineered by Mūriūki and Gūthera. The mystery that surrounds the narrative's presentation of Matigari leads to the questions that linger on the minds of people: "Who or what really is Matigari ma Nijirūngi? Is he a person, or is it a spirit?" (170). The novel climaxes with Matigari setting John Boy's house ablaze and ends with another mystery, namely the escape of Matigari and Gūthera, who are presumably dead but their bodies never found.

Clearly, there are several perspectives from which the narrative of *Matigari* can be read and analysed. As an anti-imperialist, anti-colonialist Marxist-Fanonist narrative, the novel allegorises local and neo-colonial capitalist exploitation and oppression of people in the "independent" African state. In an interview with Maya Jaggi in which he speaks about aspects of *Matigari*, Ngūgĩ talks about the historical allusions in the novel embodied in the character Matigari as "representing the collective worker in history" who returns to claim his "collective inheritance" (243). For him, *Matigari* addresses "a fundamental issue of the twentieth century world", namely the uncovering of the "truth of history, since history as we know does not contain the fact of this inherent injustice" (243). Implicitly, Ngūgĩ advocates the return of Mau Mau armed forces and the

Kenyan people's struggle for complete independence and the fight for true liberation (244). An overview of the most significant literature on *Matigari* will be undertaken below, showing clearly that the focus on the political elements in the novel has overshadowed a focus on the personal relationships that structure the narrative.

In discussing the political connotations of the novel, Harish Narang, Steven Tobias, and Cengiz Karagöz1, among others, analyse the novel for its position on nationalism, neocolonialism and postcolonial corruption. In his study of *Matigari*, Narang examines Ngũgĩ's plot, characterisation, and the theme of revolutionary action that highlight the narrative. For Narang, the allegorical figure Matigari comes to represent all the patriotic people who participated in the struggle for freedom but who were betrayed by independence. The house Matigari searches for is the postcolonial African state that patriots must build anew (130). Tobias reviews the novel and discusses the various themes explored in it. He identifies neocolonialism and African leaders' misuse of power as causes of the suffering of the masses. He suggests that "the novel stands primarily as a powerful call for Africans to reject the role of a people enthralled by either overt colonialism or any of its newer and more oblique guises. Ngũgĩ encourages his African readers to strive for real independence" (175). Karagöz1 explores the representation of the black colonisers in the novel. He identifies two types of black people in the colonised countries: those whose interest is to make their native land salvage its independence and those whose aim is to help the colonialist nations keep on their colonisation (4). Similarly, Anders Breidlid argues that there is a paradigmatic shift in *Matigari* as the novel surpasses the orbit of the Marxist, materialist discourse of *Devil on the Cross*. Breidlid presents the novel as a non-materialist discourse that employs magical and supernatural elements in an attempt to propagate a utopia called the "ethical universal" (1). Breidlid also discusses Matigari's role as a prophet who serves as a voice of salvation in post-

colonial literature (3–5). Eric Nsuh Zuhmboshi writes about *Matigari* in the light of the politics of sovereignty in post-colonial Africa. His study examines the relationship between postcolonial African citizens and their political leaders, and also shows how these leaders manipulate the dynamics of political or sovereign powers to the detriment of socioeconomic development in their societies (18–19). Logamurthie Athiemoolam identifies the pitfalls of national consciousness among African elites, an African bourgeoisie who assume power and emulate the west through the adoption of the capitalist system and individualism, as opposed to collectivism, as part of a general neocolonial lifestyle (10). Getnet Tibebe explores the paradigm shifts as far as characterisation is concerned, reflected in the novel by the creation of strong and committed characters like Matigari. For Tibebe, Ngũgĩ seems to explain the negative effects of neocolonialism and how it should be eradicated from the land of the indigenous society (24). Tibebe asserts that the novel deals with the inequality, hypocrisy, and betrayal of peasants and workers in post-independence Kenya, and the corruption and greed of Kenya’s political, economic and social elite (27). James Ogude discusses the theme of violence in Kenya’s history as dramatised in the novel. In his view, Ngũgĩ seems to suggest that “armed struggle should supplement trade union resistance”, as Matigari attempts to use violence to win back his house and land (32). Likewise, David Cook and Michael Okenimkpe outline the fundamental theme of the novel as resistance to “neo-colonialist and capitalist ruthlessness”, which is seen in the symbolism of the AK47 gun “dug up and worn by the youthful representative of a new militant generation” (133).

Other scholars have analysed *Matigari* as Ngũgĩ’s most interesting use of oral tradition. The question of oral tradition comes up in the studies by Odun Balogun, Charles Cantalupo, Mamadu Saliou Dione, and Malika Bouhadiba, who analyse the specific uses of oral literature. Balogun’s monograph compares the novel to Ngũgĩ’s other works and explores the use of realism

and postmodernism in the novel. He discusses the important role *Matigari* plays in conceptualising “the real nature of the African novel” by clarifying the “essential distinction between the African novel and the Western novel” (4). He opines that the distinction lies in the fact that Ngũgĩ employs African oral narrative style. He states emphatically that the novel *Matigari* is “the most fully developed and most representative of the African novels” (4–5). Cantalupo’s collection of essays on the novel examines topics such as oral literature in the novel, the legacy of Fanon as manifested in the work, language use in *Gikũyũ*, and how Ngũgĩ conceptualises the novel form. Dione examines the employment of rhetoric, irony, paradox, symbolism and contradiction as “linguistically and allegorically inscribed by the systemic folklore” (225). Bouhadiba explores the use of magical realism in the novel, although Ngũgĩ objects to his novels being classified as fashionably magical realist owing to their origins in traditional orature (195). Christine M. Timm’s “Music as a Point of Resistance in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s *Matigari*” highlights the relevance of contemporary African literature and traditional African music and orature (oral literature) in the daily lives of people (3). Timm asserts that “[w]ritten African literature has its roots in the orature tradition of the culture”, which is similar to the orature of the ancient Greeks (3). Timm suggests that “*Matigari* repeatedly attempts to initiate others into the orature/song tradition in an effort to educate and recruit them into the political cause” (10). Glenn Hooper examines Ngũgĩ’s most explicit attempt to marry traditional and experimental forms, and questions how efficacious his efforts are at integrating orature within the fictional world of *Matigari* (14). Sola Afolayan Sola Afolayan adopts a similar approach, attempting to find a mathematical formula for which he coins the term “mathe-logic” to explain the suturing of different modes effected in the novel (59).

Despite Ngũgĩ’s having abandoned hope in Christianity early on in his career, the narratives seem unable to shrug the influence of Christianity. David Brown explores the theme of

Christianity in the novel, a theme that comes up again and again despite Ngũgĩ's troubled and contradictory attitude towards Christianity. Brown juxtaposes Ngũgĩ's use of Biblical language and imagery to Gĩkũyũ creation myths. He identifies Ngũgĩ's novels not as religious but rather as having Christian connotations. Brown discusses the dimension of the Christian doctrine in *Matigari* as: "the bitter attack on doctrinaire Christian morality in the person of the priest who persuades Gũthera not to sacrifice her virginity in exchange for her father's life and the scathing satire of the unnamed representative of the Church establishment, whom Matigari visits in his quest for Truth and Justice, are just as savage as anything in the earlier novels" (174). His argument is that in *Matigari*, "Ngũgĩ is doing much more than simply utilizing the imagery of Christianity as an access-point for his readers" (174).

Mention must be made of the more critical voices of the major scholar, Simon Gikandi, and Tanzanian diasporic scholar and novelist, Abdulrazak Gurnah. Gikandi contrasts *Matigari* with Ngũgĩ's other novels, and compares the English translation with the Gĩkũyũ original. Gikandi accuses Ngũgĩ of a lack of understanding of the complexity of the contemporary moment where the old colonial dichotomies no longer hold: "Writers who still seem to believe that the post-colonial situation is simply the continuation of colonialism under the guise of independence, or that the narrative of decolonization can be projected into the post-colonial world, seem to be entrapped in an ideological cul-de-sac" (31). Abdulrazak Gurnah, by contrast, highlights the reductiveness of the internal social reading presented in the novel. He criticises the "dangerous oversimplification" and "intolerant social vision" (172) that Ngũgĩ presents in the novel. Gurnah condemns Ngũgĩ for supposing that "there are only two types of people in the [Kenyan] land — patriots and oppressors" (172). Kwadwo Osei-Nyame, Jr. similarly argues that although Kenya is figured differently — and by implication complexly — in the imagination of individuals and

groups within its national community, Ngũgĩ's contention is that residual forms of colonialism make it imperative to collapse "local divisions" and "specific contradictions" in the search for progressive forms of nationalist ideological consciousness (127).

The scholarship of *Matigari* suggests the richness and depth of the novel from a number of points of view, but again we find that the personal relationships presented have not been of interest with the exception of James Ogude, considers the possible romantic relationship between Matigari and Gũthera. My view contrasts with that of Ogude since I see the potential romantic relationship being transformed into friendship. I argue that as in all the other novels, personal relationships are not simply part of the narrative background against which important socio-political comment is made, but rather that personal relationships are reflective and constitutive of the wider social vision. This chapter differs from the previous chapters as it contrasts the relationship between romantic love and friendship, since the latter is the relationship that is contemplated in *Matigari*. Friendship and romantic love are two sides of the same coin in the sense that they both involve commitment, mutual caring, solidarity and the like, with the exception of the element of the sexual, which occurs only with romantic love. This chapter attempts to answer some of the following questions: Why is it that even though friendship is foregrounded, the most developed friendship is with the woman who at first is presented through a lover's gaze? How is friendship contrasted with corrupt romantic relationships, which are also presented in the novel? What are the politics of friendship contrasted with the politics of romantic love in Ngũgĩ's works?

The Politics of Love and Friendship

In his chapter on “Allegory, Romance and the Nation: Woman as Allegorical Figures in Ngũgĩ’s Novels” in his monograph on Ngũgĩ referred to earlier in the thesis, Ogude describes Matigari and Gũthera’s relationship as a type of romantic relationship which he dubs “passion and patriotism” (114). Ogude discusses the love and friendship of the male protagonist and the most significant female character as “a symbolic marital union of comrades, with Mũriũki as their adopted child” (114). Although Ogude interprets the relationship as a romantic one, leading to an implied marriage, in fact, there is very little in the novel to support the description of the relationship between Matigari and Gũthera as a romantic attachment. From all indications, it is clear that their relationship develops in a platonic, non-erotic way. Considering their first meeting, Gũthera approaches Matigari as a child requesting a favour from the father to buy a drink for her. This is because of the age difference, brought home clearly when Gũthera sits on Matigari’s lap as a child would, and calls him father: “[w]hy do you look at me like that, dad? (28). The narrative cannot allow a romance to develop since it would too strongly resemble a sugar daddy relationship. So the narrative completely avoids the discourse and other signs of romantic attachment.

Different approaches to the concept of romantic love and an overview of the history of ideas about love were presented in the introductory chapter. A better understanding of the concept of friendship needs to be acquired to appreciate its difference from romantic love in the context of this chapter. The term friendship in Lawrence A. Blum’s *Friendship, Altruism and Morality* is expressed as a moral freedom where a friend acts for the benefit of his (or her) friend for his (or her) own sake and “without appraising himself of other possibilities for his beneficence [to his friend]” (67). For Blum, a person should have deeper and stronger concerns for a friend such that a friend should have, “the stronger desire and willingness to act on behalf of the friend’s good”

(68). He identifies the features of friendship as concern, care, sympathy and the one's readiness to give of oneself to benefit the friend (69). Blum identifies friendship as a natural process that merely happens to one: "simply a natural part of human life, not a particular achievement or a matter of something which one works at" (71). In his book *Friendship*, A. C Grayling describes friendship as "the finest of human relationships, a lasting bond that transcends whatever accidental or utilitarian reasons might have brought two people together in the first place. One can debate with a friend without quarreling, one can argue with a friend as a matter of discussion, not dissention" (Newhauser and Martin x). Likewise Rebecca G. Adams and Rosemary Blieszner's "An Integrative Conceptual Framework for Friendship" explores the friendship structure as a dyadic structure. Power hierarchy, status hierarchy, solidarity and homogeneity reflect the internal structure of friend pairs. The power and status hierarchies are independent, vertical dimensions of relationships (5). Silvana Greco, Mary Holmes and Jordan Mckenzi's article "Friendship and Happiness from a Sociological Perspective" examines sociologists' debates about whether friendship produces social cohesion or reproduces inequalities. They assert that friendship networks can either help some individuals "'get ahead' but may keep others linked to violent or dangerous communities or make life difficult for the lack of the 'right' connections. However, friendships can promote individual happiness by enhancing a sense of stable identity and allowing for emotional intimacy, expressed within trusting and reciprocal relationships. This can allow both better recognition of others and positive self-development (31). Michael Eve's "Is friendship a sociological topic?" concentrates mainly on intimate friendship, and that the relationship is seen as so "personal" as to virtually escape normal sociological concepts (386). In addition, friendship is interpreted as a "dyadic relationship between two individuals, based on the 'personal' rather than 'social' traits of the persons in question" (387). Similarly, Graham Allan's "Commentary:

Friendships and Emotions” suggests that a key issue is that the significance of friendship in people’s lives, emotionally and in other ways, is not uniform. At different life phases, the emotional benefits of specific friendships may become more or less central for an individual’s sense of identity and value (2).

Anthony Giddens provides possibly the most expansive understanding of friendship in modern Western society. Giddens discusses modern friendship as a model of a “pure relationship”, and argues that “in contrast to close personal ties in traditional contexts, the pure relationship is not anchored in external conditions of social or economic life — it is, as it were, free-floating” (89). Giddens distinguishes between friendship and other personal relations in modern contexts where friendship extends to business ties, kinship, access to work, etc. and the rest. A type of friendship is exemplified by the relationship between Matigari and Gũthera which is “free-floating” insofar as it is not shaped by traditional social conventions, neither is it for personal economic, social or political gain. It is a relationship based solely on commitment to each other and, unlike the friendship described by Giddens, to the wider cause of social justice. In presenting friendship as an entirely altruistic relationship, Ngũgĩ entrenches the understandings of friendship presented elsewhere.

Although friendship has been extensively studied in recent scholarship, as the overview above shows, concern with the relationship of friendship goes back a very long way, and occurs in many different cultural contexts. In some ways, these older understandings have better explanatory potential in the context of the analysis of *Matigari*. In Plato’s *Symposium*, the word “love” is expressed in three different ways: *eros*, *philia* and *agape*. Primarily, *eros* is used to refer to “sexual love”, and *philia* denotes “familial love and friendship”, while *agape* represents

Christian love (Gerasimos Santas 67). Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book VIII, discusses the significance of friendship in the lives of humans in a more focused way:

For without friends no one would choose to live, though he had all other goods; even rich men and those in possession of office, and of dominating power are thought to need friends most of all; for what is the use of such prosperity without the opportunity of beneficence which is exercised chiefly and in its most laudable form towards friends? Or how can prosperity be guarded and preserved without friends? ... And in poverty and other misfortune, men think friends are the only refuge. It helps the young, too, to keep from error; it aids the older people by ministering to their needs and supplementing the activities that are failing from weakness; those in the prime of it stimulates to noble actions—'two going together'—for with friends men are more able both to think and to act ... Friendship seems too to hold state together... and when men are friends they have no need for justice. (127)

This very old, classical idea of friendship comes close to what you see in Ngũgĩ's representation of friendship in *Matigari*. From the extract, Aristotle perceives the act of friendship as very crucial in a society to the extent that no one can live a fruitful life without the assistance of another person or a friend. There is no use for prosperity if it is not geared towards helping

others, “for what is the use of such prosperity without the opportunity of beneficence which is exercised chiefly and in its most laudable form towards friends?” (Aristotle 127). Hence, human beings are one another’s keepers as Aristotle suggests, “how can prosperity be guarded and preserved without friends?” (127).

Ngũgĩ presents similar views in *Matigari*, where he foregrounds the relationship between Matigari and Gũthera as one that offers the opportunity of beneficence towards each other. Both Matigari and Gũthera selflessly save each other, as will be shown in the analysis of the novel that follows. In the same vein, the relationship between Matigari, Gũthera and Mũriũki can be described as friendship that breaks the boundary of class. Thus Matigari’s success depends importantly on Gũthera and Mũriũki. Aristotle describes the benefits of friendship in the following terms: “[i]t helps the young, too, to keep from error; it aids the older people by ministering to their needs ...” (127). These benefits are evident in the relationship between Matigari and his friends. Through Matigari’s admonitions, Gũthera resolves to reform, resulting in her decision to follow Matigari. For Aristotle, friendship requires “two going together”; therefore, it is not out of place that Gũthera and Mũriũki choose to follow Matigari in his search. One aspect that is interesting, though, is that Aristotle can conceive of friendship only between men, but for Ngũgĩ the most important friendship presented in any of his novels is the friendship with a woman, as will be shown hereafter.

It is clear that everybody needs the support of other people in order to succeed in life. Although friendship is not fixed, and can change depending on the individual’s emotions, Ngũgĩ’s representation of friendship in *Matigari* seems uniform or unchanging. This is because among Matigari and his friends, Mũriũki, Ngarũro and Gũthera, their commitments to the friendship relationship never change. All of them demonstrate care, concern, solidarity and emotional support in one way or the other. They appreciate the qualities and values they see in one another. In what

follows, I will chronicle the sequence of events leading to the relationships between Matigari and his three friends and deduce the significance of their friendships, and how the friendship with Gūthera emerges as the most important friendship.

Alluding to Mau Mau resistance, we read that Matigari returns from the forest in search of his home and family after his struggle with and defeat of Settler Williams, who represents the colonisers, and John Boy, who represents the indigenous collaborators with colonialism. Matigari first comes across a young boy, Mūriūki, and strikes up an acquaintance with him. The boy becomes Matigari's devoted assistant and follows Matigari in his quest for his home and family. Matigari takes kindly to Mūriūki because of his noticeable vulnerabilities. He is "smaller" than the other children, who as a group first taunt this strange man who looks a bit out of touch, and his clothes "had patches all over them, and toes could be seen peeping out of the holes in his shoes" (13). Initially, Mūriūki understands Matigari to be one of those adults who exploits the urchins by stealing from them the things they find in the rubbish dump, which the children salvage for re-use. But instinctively drawn to Matigari, Mūriūki begins to confide in him. Mūriūki recounts the plight of the street children who do not have shelter and survive by scavenging the rubbish dump, or as Mūriūki puts it: "these are our gains, the things we found in the pit" (13). He tells Matigari that the home of the street children is in the "vehicle cemetery" (15), and that his house is "a Mercedes Benz" (16). As orphans, the children have no other homes apart from the space where the wealthy abandon their wrecked and old cars. We see a father-son relationship developing between Matigari and Mūriūki, but this paternal relationship is not fully developed, owing to the tensions and the pitfalls linked with patriarchy that occur also in the earlier novels. Almost without exception, the relationship between fathers and sons in Ngūgĩ's novels is a relationship that is hierarchical, oppressive, treacherous and sometimes even violent. Paradoxically, Mūriūki, who loses his father

because “he was killed fighting for independence” (15), in the post-independence period is on the lowest rung of the postcolonial nation. These parentless children are, to use Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s term, the subalterns among the subaltern class. Matigari is also drawn to Mūriūki since he had lost his own children. Matigari tells Mūriūki that “I first lost my home; then my children were scattered all over the country” (15). This resulted because Matigari has “spent many years fighting Settler Willaims for the sake of his children” (15).

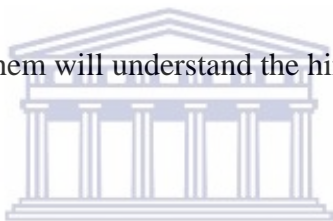
On hearing Mūriūki’s story, Matigari becomes attached to him, for he recognises Mūriūki in spirit as one of his own children. Mūriūki protects Matigari from the other children, who pelt him with stones since he is a strange and marginal adult. Matigari promises Mūriūki “My child you didn’t forsake me... You will be remembered” (18–19). Thus in this way we see an inversion of the typical father-son relationship since Mūriūki protects the adult Matigari, rather than the adult protecting the child. The relationship thus evolves along the lines of friendship rather than of parent and child. Later, Matigari is emotionally moved by the story of Mūriūki’s mother’s death: “She was burned to death when the house was set on fire” (25). The devotion between Matigari and Mūriūki intensifies when they decide to stay together. Mūriūki becomes the symbol of regeneration; he is to continue the struggle for total liberation among the next generation. Mūriūki is the first to meet Matigari after the burying of his AK47 and putting on of the belt of peace; he is also the last to go and dig “up all the things that Matigari had hidden ... Finally he picked up the AK47 and slung it over his shoulder” (175). This marks the final parting of ways between the friends Mūriūki and Matigari, since symbolically Mūriūki inherits Matigari’s mission.

Another important relationship is that between Matigari and Ngarūro, the representative of the working class. The two meet on the occasion that Matigari is pelted with stones by the gang of children and is bleeding profusely. Although most people observe the scene but refuse to help

Matigari, Ngarũro plays the role of the Good Samaritan. He takes a “handkerchief out of his pocket and dab[s] at the man’s face and ears to remove the blood” (18). The relationship between Matigari and Ngarũro appears to be one of perfect understanding in the sense that Ngarũro easily understands Matigari’s mission and agrees to spread his message to others:

I will give the others your message. That is what I will tell them at the meeting:

Williams is dead; John Boy is dead. I will call together all the members of the family and tell them: Let’s go home and light fire together. Let’s build our home together. The wise among them will understand the hint. (24)



Ngũgĩ presents the imagery of oneness that extends to the entire nation. There is the repetition of the word “together” to emphasize the unity they desire for the nation. Also there is use of patterned repetition in the sentences “Let’s go home”, “[Let’s] light fire” and “Let’s build our home”, which are syntactically and semantically parallel and express the yearning for unity among the people. Ngarũro seems strengthened by Matigari’s story and he is able to influence the masses to engage in combat with their oppressors towards the end of the narrative:

They burned down the house. / They burned down the tea-bushes.

They burned down the coffee-trees. / They burned down the vehicles.

Burn detention without trial — burn! ...

Burn the exiling of patriots — burn! ...

Burn the prison holding our patriotic students — burn! ...

Burn the prisons holding all other patriots — burn! ...

Burn Parrotalogy — burn! ... (168–69).

Matigari and Ngarũro seem to possess similar qualities in terms of their boldness and their desire to fight for the masses. Like Matigari, Ngarũro wa Kiriro, the leader of the workers' strike, objects to the Minister's demand that the workers should end the strike and return to work, which results in his confinement in the mental hospital. He interrogates the Minister about the welfare of workers: "Where is our government, we workers? We are only not asking for other people's property. The labour of our hands is all we own ... We cannot go back to work unless our demands are met" (109). This is a country in which economic conditions create enmity among citizens. However, Ngũgĩ depicts mutual love and friendship that know no bounds between Matigari and Ngarũro. They enjoy talking about people they know and events that take place around them. We see that this relationship between Matigari and Ngarũro embodies friendship in the willingness to act for the good of the friend, with no recompense for oneself.

However, the most strongly developed friendship is the friendship not with the man, or with the child, but with the woman, Gũthera. Their friendship begins when Gũthera first bumps into Matigari at the bar to which Mũriũki takes him and requests that Matigari should buy her a drink. Matigari, as is made clear in the epigraph to the chapter, finds Gũthera beautiful. The language used to describe Gũthera is pregnant with meaning in that Ngũgĩ presents more than just the beauty of an individual woman. He presents implicitly the beauty of an African woman.

Another example of this type of presentation of the beauty of the archetypal African woman is presented in *Devil on the Cross*, where Ngũgĩ employs similar strategies to describe the beauty of Warĩnga: “Your skin has a depth of blackness that is softer and more tender than the most expensive perfume oil ... Your hair is so black and soft and smooth that all men feel like sheltering from the sun in its shade ...” (225). Matigari’s admiration for Gũthera is clear to her, and she challenges him provocatively:

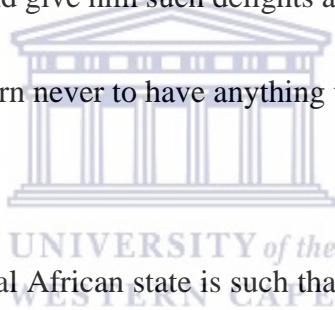
Why do you look at me like that, dad? You’ve even forgotten to eat your food and drink your beer. I usually drink lager. Go on! Don’t be mean! Aren’t you going to offer me anything to drink? Or how much do you want to pay for a little pleasure? Pleasures are very expensive, you know? But at this time of the month, the prices are very low. We even give favours on credit. You can pay at the end of the month ... Anyway we don’t mind where you get your money from or how” (28).

Gũthera’s exchange with Matigari in this initial meeting is charged with many ironies. She prostitutes herself to him at the same time that she presents herself as a daughter — she calls him “dad”. It is clear that she does not mean what she says, but is drawing attention to her precarious position in this postcolonial society where women’s sexuality becomes a commodity to be traded. She is signaling the dehumanisation of women through the way that a postcolonial gerontocracy exploits women. As we have seen in previous chapters, the socio-economic and political dimensions of the sugar daddy phenomenon preoccupies Ngũgĩ throughout his career. Gũthera’s

repartee underlines how the perversion of relationships in the corrupt postcolonial context is not just immoral, but also violates the most sacrosanct taboos:

Where have you been living, old man? Have you been living on the moon or in space, perhaps? Or are you just playing hard to get ... These days it does not matter whether it's your father or your son, whether it's your brother or your sister. The most important thing is money. Even if it's a boy like this one came to me with money in his pocket, I would give him such delights as he has never dreamt of ...

The only people I have sworn never to have anything to do with are policemen. (29)



The ethos of the postcolonial African state is such that economic violations are compared with incest. Güthera explains the rationale behind her engagement in prostitution. She identifies money as essential for survival in the independent but corrupt state. Güthera is pushed into prostitution after the death of her earthly father and, supposedly, a rejection by her Heavenly father. Güthera has to assume the responsibility of a guardian to her siblings after her father's death. Her father dies as a result of sacrificing his life for the independence of the country. Although her father was a staunch Christian, he believes that "[t]hose Ten Commandments are all good, but they are all contained in this one commandment: Love. And there is no greater love than this: that a man should give up his life for somebody else. Imagine a people ready to give up their lives for one another, for their country" (34–35). Güthera refuses to offer her purity in exchange for her father's release from prison following the caution by the superintendent: "[y]ou are carrying your father's

life between your legs” (35). Subsequently, the earthly father is killed and Gūthera has to fend for her siblings. She feels guilty about her inability to save her father: “[t]he thought that she might have perhaps saved her father’s life tormented her... And now I going to watch my sisters and brothers die of hunger? Will I let the blood of my father’s house stain my hands? (36). Having pleaded with the Christians to assist them, but to no avail, Gūthera decides to walk the street, for she can no longer stand the cry of her siblings, who are not privy to the circumstances surrounding the death of their father: “[w]hat shall we eat? When will father come back? Where did he go to?” (36). Surely, Gūthera’s interest in prostitution is heightened by her success on the first day when she “returned home with a packet of flour... From that day that she decided to walk the street, she was able to feed and clothe the other children” (36). Concomitantly, Gūthera admits that her troubles have led her from “the path of righteousness and have turned [her] into a hunter of men” (37). Thus we see that the wolfish environment created by a venal indigenous elite creates the conditions that force vulnerable women into prostitution. This condition Ngūgĩ implies is like the incest of the daughter with a father, or sister with younger brother. This also is a motif that recurs throughout Ngūgĩ’s career, as Evan Mwangi has also pointed out, referred to in an earlier chapter. It is revealing that for Gūthera a sexual relationship with a policeman is worse even than incest, highlighting the depths to which policemen have stooped in the victimisation of the people whom they are supposed to protect.

We later see that events take a turn that completely inverts the sugar daddy relationship between Matigari and Gūthera. This happens when Matigari saves Gūthera from humiliation at the hands of the policemen. The narrative presents Gūthera’s abuse by the policemen in the most brutal way:

She was kneeling on the floor. The dog would leap towards her: but each time its muzzle came close to her eyes, the policemen who held the lead restrained it.

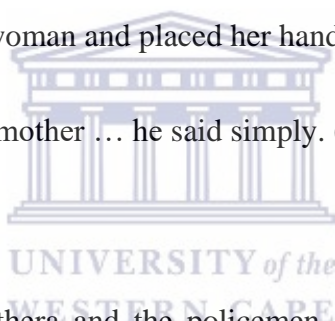
Güthera's wrapper lay on the ground. Each time she stood up to retreat, the dog jumped on her, barking and growling as though it smelled blood ...

A gush of urine rushed down her leg; she was staring death in the face.

A feeling of a sharp pain and anger flashed through Matigari... Matigari, without changing his pace, now pointed a finger at the policemen and told them, 'Leave her alone!'

Matigari walked up to the woman and placed her hand on her shoulder.

Get up ... Come, stand up, mother ... he said simply. (31–32)



In the horrific scene between Güthera and the policemen, Güthera is saved by Matigari. He expresses genuine love and care for Güthera, addressing Güthera as “mother”. Thus we see that the sugar daddy relationship that could have developed is replaced by a relationship where Matigari respects Güthera as a mother, even though he is older than she is. Calling Güthera “mother” emphasises the degree of contempt shown by the policemen towards women, who are all potential mothers. Since this is the first act of selfless courage Güthera has witnessed in her life, she attaches herself to Matigari and decides to assist him in his search for his family.

We see that Ngũgĩ depicts a maternal relationship between Güthera and Matigari that is transformed into the relationship of friendship with Güthera's sacrifice to get Matigari out of prison. Matigari raises her onto the pedestal of mother, but she lowers herself as prostitute in order

to save him. This is seen in the way she prostitutes herself with the police guard in her bid to allow Matigari to escape. She uses her body to divert the guard while Matigari and the other prisoners escape: “The young woman went and gave herself to one of the policemen, who, after he had had his fill was gripped by that sleep which comes over us men after such events. The young woman took the keys and gave them to a boy with whom she had arranged all this...But she was filled with grief. She had finally broken her eleventh commandment...” (95). She goes against her principles to save Matigari from prison. In the context of Gūthera’s life, debasing herself with a policeman is the greatest sacrifice, which is also the greatest act of friendship. Gūthera had vowed to herself: “I will never go to bed with a policeman...I will never open my legs for any policeman, these traitors, no matter how much they are prepared to pay for the favour” (37). She was ready to offer sex irrespective of the partner, even on credit, but swore never to indulge in a sexual relationship with policemen. She calls this her Eleventh Commandment. This is friendship, what A. C. Grayling describes as “the finest of human relationships, a lasting bond that transcends whatever accidental or utilitarian reasons might have brought two people together in the first place” (qtd. in Newhauser & Martin x). So the relationship that starts out as a potentially romantic one is sublimated into the relationship of friendship since the sexual element is projected onto the oppressor. Gūthera must sleep with the policeman to save Matigari. Gūthera together with Mūriūki masterminds Matigari’s release from prison.

From all indications, Gūthera attempts to escape various fathers and patriarchy. She desires a different form of relationship, namely that of friendship. Let’s consider Gūthera’s later confession and resolution:

From the moment you saved me from the dogs of prey, I have felt very discontented.

Yes, I have not been satisfied with the kind of life I have been leading. You see my

entire life has been dominated by men, be they our Father in heaven, my father on earth, the priest, or all the men who have bought my body and turned me into their mattress.

What I really want to say is that most of the things I have been doing so far have not sprung from my being able to choose. I have been wearing blinkers like a horse. Yes I have never done anything which came from free choice. I have been moved here and there by time and place. Except yesterday when I broke my eleven commandment. I could have chosen not to do it, but I didn't. I chose to do it freely for an end in which I believed.

... You see, I have known all along that the life I have been leading is not that of a human being. It has been more like an animal ... my life has not been any different from that of any animal, which breathes, eats, drinks and goes to sleep. Therefore, the most important thing is not just to know that my life has been without meaning. I would say that there is no woman who does not really know the pressures that we women live under.

... Is it enough to for me just to say that now I know? I want to do something to change whatever it is that makes people live like animals, especially us women. What can we as women do to change our lives? Or would we continue to follow the path

carved out for us by men? Aren't we in the majority anyway? Let's go. From now on,
 I want to be among the vanguard. I shall never be left behind again ... May our
 fears disappears with the staccato sounds of our guns! (140)

From the extract, Ngũgĩ presents Gũthera as a vulnerable person whose life has been exploited by men. She mentions our heavenly “Father” because she felt betrayed that He could not assist her in times of need, after all her faithfulness and commitment to him. Also her earthly father disappoints her when he selfishly decides to choose his path without considering or confiding in her. Gũthera feels used by all men in one way or another; however, she perceives her friendship relationship with Matigari as one of a kind, which stands tall and is worth sacrificing herself for as against the others, which are characterised by exploitation. Like Wanja in *Petals of Blood*, Gũthera claims that men “have bought my body and turned me into their mattress”. This implies that she prostitutes her body for money in order to survive. Both Wanja and Gũthera choose to make prostitution their profession in order to survive. Wanja builds a bawdyhouse where she employs young girls to engage in sex work. Gũthera decides to exchange sex for money to enable her take care of her siblings.

Clearly, the love in friendship is different from romantic love and leads to other forms of platonic love in which such love can be revolutionary. There is a clear distinction between romantic love and love in friendship. While romantic love involves sexual engagement, love in friendship involves no sexual element. By inference, the love of the patriot is seen as a revolutionary love. As Srećko Horvat notes in *Radicality of Love*:

The worst thing that can happen to love is habit. Love is — if it is really love — a form of eternal dynamism and at the same time fidelity to the first encounter...

A truly revolutionary moment is like love; it is a crack in the world it is the usual running of things in the dark that is layered all over in order to prevent anything New. (4)

Interestingly, Matigari and Gūthera's true friendship can be compared to the patriots whose love for their nation is truly pure in Horvat's view. Horvat attempts to connect true love to revolutionary moments and posits that love and revolution can be used interchangeably in the sense that both require self-devotion and self-sacrifice to gratify one's own desire. Matigari and Gūthera's friendship is seen as revolutionary because they commit themselves to fighting for each other just as a revolutionary leader will commit to fighting for the good of the nation. Their true friendship is seen at end of the story when Gūthera is wounded and urges Matigari to go without her:

Go, just go! ... Leave me behind. Let me die. Let me die". But Matigari lifted her in his arms and carried her towards the river...The dogs leaped on Matigari and Gūthera. They crowded around them. They tore all their clothes, their flesh. But not once, once did Matigari let go of Gūthera. Their blood mingled and it tracked into the soil, on the bank of the river... Matigari and Gūthera fell into the river. (173–74)

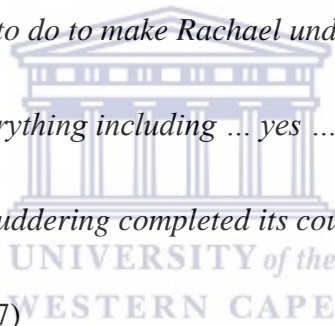
Here, Ngũgĩ dramatises intensely the love, as *philia*, between Matigari and Gũthera that is indicative of friendship without the erotic component of romance. Matigari refuses to abandon Gũthera since the bond between them through mutual sacrifice is unbreakable. The relationship of friendship between Matigari and Gũthera seems to represent a platonic “working out” of the tensions and obstacles that existed in earlier romantic relationships. Foremost among these tensions is the lack of a mutual commitment to a common goal, namely, the common goal of revolutionary justice, where the female beloved has an independence untainted by the need to trade herself for money. Instead, in this case, she gives herself as a sacrifice to friendship. Elements of the friendship presented in *Matigari* foreshadow the perfect love between Nyawĩra and Kamĩĩ in *Wizard of the Crow*, which is the focus of the next chapter. The exploration of friendship in *Matigari*, while an excursus for Ngũgĩ from the theme of romantic love, allows him to negotiate some of the problems that occurred in narrativisations of romantic love relationship in earlier novels. However, Ngũgĩ’s return to the romantic love relationship in *Wizard of the Crow* shows how the romantic love relationship, nevertheless, remains the most revolutionary personal relationship, and it is only with the exploration of friendship in *Matigari* that Ngũgĩ can work out existing tensions in previous conceptions of romantic love.

Chapter Five

Love in the Time of Dictatorship: The Reconciliation of Love and Politics in

Wizard of the Crow

There is always a difference between a thought and its description: what the Ruler had been dwelling on when lowering the fork to the table and wiping his lips with a corner of the napkin was not the fate of a Ruler who wept and so lost his throne but rather what he would have to do to make Rachael understand that he, the Ruler, had power, real power over everything including ... yes ... Time. He shuddered at the thought. Even before the shuddering completed its course, he had made up his mind. (Wizard of the Crow 7)



In his most recent novel, *Wizard of the Crow* (2004), written eighteen years after *Matigari* (1986), Ngũgĩ has written an epic novel, a composition that encompasses most of the main themes of his previous novels. Scholars and reviewers who have commented on and analysed this novel have tracked the recurrence of themes and motifs from Ngũgĩ's earlier works. For example, Simon Gikandi describes the story as both African folklore and an epic; however, he suggests that it is “an incomplete and fragmented epic, full of microcosmic stories” (Gikandi 169). For him, *Wizard of the Crow* is a repetition of Ngũgĩ's mid-career novels, especially *Petals of Blood* and *Devil on the Cross*. He discusses the narrative as foregrounding repetition, which is most evident in the

pairing of characters who share similar qualities. He describes the story as a rehearsal by Nyawĩra and Kamĩtĩ, the female revolutionary and the hesitant male idealist, of the roles played by Warĩinga and Gatuĩria in *Devil on the Cross* and by Wanja and Karega in *Petals of Blood* (168). The prominent African literature *Guardian Weekly* reviewer, Maya Jaggi, highlights the recurrence of the dictator figure, the delineaments of which we see in some of the earlier novels also. Highlighting historical similarities, Jaggi suggests that the country presented in the novel owes much to the Kenya of Ngũgĩ’s erstwhile persecutor, former president Daniel Arap Moi, a dictator, much like Ngũgĩ’s Ruler, “whose suits patched with big cats’ fur have pinstripes composed of tiny letters spelling ‘Might Is Right’” (“Decolonise the Mind” Maya Jaggi, n. pag).

The novel revolves around the reign of an unnamed dictator, the Ruler of Aburĩria, and his strange illness for which several theories exist. The Ruler, a former schoolteacher, metamorphoses into a statesman, the “Father of the nation” (6). He becomes so powerful, but also so paranoid, that his ministers are mainly charged with protecting his regime, rather than the affairs of the country. His Minister of Foreign Affairs, called Machokali, metaphorically enlarges his eyes with the intention of spotting “the enemies of the Ruler no matter how far their hiding places” (13). The Minister of State, Silver Sikiokuu, enlarges his ears “to be able to hear better” (14). Their tasks thus are to spy on the citizenry, rather than take care of the wellbeing of the nation. The Ruler’s absolute rule indirectly affects his marriage. Although he is married to Rachael, he hardly makes time for her as a result of the “burden of presiding over the nation” (7). This burden, of course, consists mainly of maintaining his own power over the nation. Ironically, the only occasion where the couple spends time together turns out to be fateful, resulting in their separation. On this special “date”, Rachael complains about the Ruler’s repeated sexual relationships with schoolgirls. This

challenge from his wife infuriates the Ruler. At this point, the love that is supposed to exist in the marriage between the Ruler and Rachael turns into hatred.

The epigraph to this chapter is the climax of the episode when the Ruler invites Rachael to a special dinner at the State House after the couple's having largely led separate lives. Rachael uses the opportunity to admonish her husband about his amorous relationships with young schoolgirls: "I know you take the title Father of the Nation seriously ... you know that I have not complained about all those women who make beds for you, no matter how many children you sire with them. But why schoolgirls? Are they not as young as the children you have fathered? Are they not really our children? You father them today and tomorrow you turn them into wives? Have you no tears of concern for our tomorrow?" (6). Rachael's interrogation angers the Ruler, who retorts that he is under no obligation to respond to Rachael's allegation about his sexual escapades with young girls. We see an almost cinematic description of the Ruler's reaction after Rachael's utterance. The Ruler is extremely shocked at Rachael's nerve, so much so that he loses his appetite for the food he is eating, symbolised by the dropping of his fork and the "wiping of his lips with the corner of the napkin" (7). He decides to punish Rachael to make her understand that "he, the Ruler, had power, real power over everything" (7), which includes the power to control even time.

It is clear that in *Wizard of the Crow*, Ngũgĩ explores the link between marriage, where love is supposed to reign supreme, and political dominance among authoritarian postcolonial, especially, in this case, African, leaders. Ngũgĩ shows the ways in which husbands in marriage can become dictators in the context of personal relationships as leaders become dictators in political relationships with the nation at large. The husband as a dictator thinks he has absolute freedom to have what pleases him and believes he has absolute control over his wife. The Ruler's national authority gives him an edge over his wife, Rachael, but his personal authority as patriarch in the

relationship also informs his sense of power as the leader of the nation. He projects himself as the single most important person in Rachael's life. Metaphorically, the Ruler compares himself to God, as the beginning and the end of Rachael's life, her creator and potential destroyer: "What were you before I made you my wife? he asked, and answered himself, A primary school teacher. I am the past and the present you have been and I *am your tomorrow take it or leave it*, he added in English as he turned his back on her" (8–9). In the marital relationship, the Ruler's power is mainly manifested in the form of sexual capacity. Regardless of whether his wife satisfies him or not, he needs to prove his power through sex. He thus capitalises on his position and authority to sleep indiscriminately with women, both married and unmarried, but especially young girls since they give him a sense of his immortality. For him, no one, not even his wife, can restrict him from extramarital affairs, as he rhetorically remarks: "[s]ince when could a male, let alone a Ruler, be denied the right to feel his way around women's thighs, whether other men's wives or schoolgirls?" (6). The Ruler's authoritarian power, coupled with his extramarital affairs, makes a mockery of his marriage to Rachael.

This is a trend that we are familiar with from Ngũgĩ's other novels, where the author often presents older men as patriarchal and exploitative figures. Ngũgĩ presents the Ruler as a replica, but an intensified replica, of the patriarchs in the earlier novels *Petals of Blood* and *Devil on the Cross* who engage in extramarital affairs as "sugar daddies" and relegate their wives to the background. For example, in *Devil on the Cross*, Boss Kĩhara takes advantage of his position, affluence and social status to enter into relationships with young girls. He does not even have the tact to keep his liaisons secret from his wife. In fact, the relationships with these young women become symbols of his status. Boss Kĩhara prides himself to such an extent that he wants "everyone in Nairobi to turn round and whistle with envy, saying: That is Boss Kĩhara's sugar girl" (*Devil*

22). Likewise in *Petals of Blood*, there is an exposé of gerontocratic love relationships where older men engage in intimate affairs with young girls. A good example in this novel is the relationship between Wanja and Kimeria. In the case of the Ruler in *Wizard of the Crow*, he is unwilling to compromise his “right” to extramarital sexual encounters with young women. He rhetorically and sarcastically retorts to Rachael: “did I really hear you say that I have been forcing myself on schoolchildren?” (7). We see the arrogance of a dictator whose lack of recognition of his duties in the personal relationship is carried over into the lack of recognition of the obligations of leadership.

The lasciviousness-as-power of the dictator resonates with Achille Mbembe’s chapter “The Aesthetics of Vulgarity” in the book *On the Postcolony*, which identifies an interesting aspect of power in the postcolony as “having a marked taste for lecherous living” (106). Mbembe notes that “[t]he male ruler’s pride in possessing an active penis has to be dramatized, through sexual rights over subordinates, the keeping of concubines, and so on. The unconditional subordination of women to the principle of male pleasure remains one pillar upholding the reproduction of the phallocratic system” (110). As discussed earlier, Ngũgĩ presents the Ruler’s lustfulness for women and schoolgirls, and access to them, as a mark of his authority. We read that the Ruler’s anger may be pacified by sex with young girls. For example, when the Ruler gets angry with the Minister of State, Sikiokuu, and decides to ignore him, Sikiokuu compensates him first with his wife, and then with his two daughters: “... Sikiokuu sent his third wife. The Ruler ignored her. Finally, he sent his two daughters. It was then that the Ruler softened and started to see Sikiokuu again ...” (23). The Ruler’s superiority is revealed in his attempt at comparing himself to the white man, who in his view “renews his youth with spring chicken” (6). Metaphorically, the Ruler compares the young schoolgirls with “spring chicken” and, by inference, his relationship with the schoolgirls has the potency of reinvigorating him physically. Here we see absolute power manifesting as the

absolute right to sex, where the monogamous marriage, purportedly based on love, is able to exert no control whatsoever on intimacy-as-power.

But Ngũgĩ also maps patriarchal authority in relationships beyond intimacy-as-power also. Patriarchal authority exercises itself in many varied ways in *Wizard of the Crow*, significantly through the power to incarcerate. The dictator's total incarceration of his wife after her challenge to him regarding his extra-marital affairs is personal, but also political. Symbolically, Rachael's confinement is like Ngũgĩ's own detention during the regime of Daniel Arap Moi in late 1977, which ordered his detention in Kamĩĩ Maximum Security Prison without charges or a trial. Ngũgĩ's offense had been his attempt to mobilise and spearhead a community theatre in his home village, and his co-authorship, with Ngũgĩ wa Mirii, of a play in the Gikuyu language, *Ngaahika Ndeenda (I Will Marry When I Want)*. The play was banned and the theatre in Kamĩĩĩthu was demolished. In *Moving to the Centre*, Ngũgĩ narrates how he was arrested by President Moi: "... three trucks-loads of armed policemen were sent by the Moi-Kau regime to Kamĩĩĩthu Community Cultural Centre in Limuru, Kenya and razed the peoples' open-air theatre to the ground" (45). In discussing the usefulness of history in Ngũgĩ's works, W. O. Maloba writes that the writing of the play for Kamĩĩĩthu Community Centre, which was near Ngũgĩ's home in Kenya, was intended to "inspire and politicize the masses" and to present Ngũgĩ's belief that "art can be marshaled as a revolutionary weapon" (74). Likewise in *Detained: A Writer's Prison Diary* (1981), Ngũgĩ narrates his prison experience, which was harsh and frustrating but gave him the opportunity to compose the novel *Devil on the Cross*. Like Ngũgĩ himself, Rachael is imprisoned, but in this case, she is imprisoned in an opulent mansion where:

[a]ll the clocks in the house were frozen at the second, the minute, and the hour that

she had raised the question of schoolgirls; the calendars pointed to the day and the year. The clocks tick-tocked but their hands did not move. The mechanical calendar always flipped to the same date. The food provided was the same as at the last supper, the clothes the same as she had worn that night. The bedding and curtains were identical to those where she had once lived. The television and radio kept repeating programs that were on during the last supper. Everything in the new mansion reproduced the exact same moment. A record player was programmed to play only one hymn ... The idea of the endless repetition of this hymn pleased [the Ruler] so much that he had amplifiers placed at the four corners of the seven-acre plantation. (8)

The extract highlights the imagery of stillness, which becomes the cruelest punishment of Rachael. Rachael's isolation and loneliness replicate the isolation of Ngũgĩ's solitary confinement in Kamĩĩ Maximum Security Prison. The first description of stillness is of time "frozen at the second, the minute, and the hour". Time is rarely still; it is constantly moving with changes in events. The depiction of the clock as static – "[t]he clocks tick-tocked but their hands did not move" – is symbolic of the end of the world. For Rachael, stillness captures the fact that time stands still at the moment of her resistance to tyrannical personal power: "the clothes the same as she had worn that night...Everything in the new mansion reproduced the exact same moment". There is no movement, no development, just stagnation as Rachael "await[s] his [the Ruler's] second coming" (8). The Ruler is presented as a Christ-like figure who will pronounce his judgement on his Second Coming.

Christians believe that the Second Coming of Jesus as described in Revelations 19: 11–16 is a narration of the appearance of Jesus Christ and his mission: to judge (and wage war). Likewise

the Ruler will determine whether or not to set Rachael free. The Ruler renders Rachael completely powerless while he becomes more powerful in his rule of Aburĩria. According to Robert Colson, the Ruler’s punishment of Rachael may be seen as “[an] act of imprisonment [which] is a microcosm of the Ruler’s attempts to lock Aburĩria into a ‘frozen present’ where he rules endlessly” (138). Ian P. Macdonald suggests furthermore that: “The Ruler’s cessation of time for Rachel reinscribes existing relationships of power — of the Ruler over Rachael and over the state of Aburĩria itself, which, being equated with him, infers a form of self-control, the apex of Western frontier individuality” (64). He is presented as a dictator and an exploiter of people because of his political power, expressed on a personal level in his relationship with his wife.

Although patriarchal authority expressed through personal relationships achieves its clearest and most obvious form in *Wizard of the Crow*, it is an idea that runs through all Ngũgĩ’s novels. An implicit critique may be tracked through the earlier novels of the ways in which men behave patriarchally and exploitatively in intimate relationships. This starts with the early novels, where Ngũgĩ presents patriarchal figures in both novels. In *The River Between*, patriarchal exploitative traits are revealed in the love and marriage relationship between Nyambura’s parents Joshua and his wife Miriamu. Ngũgĩ presents a male-controlling figure in Joshua through the way he is presented as relating to his wife. We see that Joshua wields power over his wife and children. He objects to his daughter Muthoni’s decision to be circumcised and denounces her subsequently. Similar treatment is meted out to Nyambura, who also chooses to marry her father’s enemy, Waiyaki. Miriamu is relegated to the background and follows the dictates of Joshua to the detriment of her own conscience.

Likewise in *Weep Not, Child*, the patriarchal figure is portrayed in the character Ngotho, Njoroge’s father. Ngotho plays the role of a dictator in his household and reigns over his two wives

and children. Ngotho refuses to adhere to his second wife's caution about the purported strike: "I must be a man in my own house ... I shall do whatever I like. I have never taken orders from a woman" (52) and subjects her to a severe beating. The minor characters Jacobo and Howlands are also presented as tyrants in their relationships and dealings with their wives in *Weep Not, Child*. In *A Grain of Wheat*, Gikonyo is an archetype of the male figure who capitalises on a woman's love for him to subjugate and exploit her. In this case the woman is Mumbi, who, unlike Rachael, is more forbearing. Ngũgĩ strongly highlights patriarchal and exploitative male figures in both *Petals of Blood* and *Devil on the Cross* in the relationships between older men and young girls. Similarly in *Matigari*, the patriarchal male figure is depicted in the figuring of the President, His Excellency Ole Excellence, and his cohorts, Robert Williams and John Boy Junior, who exploit their workers in the Leather and Plastics factory but offer contributions in the form of cash donations to the presidential fund for handicapped children.

In this chapter, I will show how in *Wizard of the Crow* the patriarchal, exploitative male figure is symbolised by the figure of the dictator, where national dictatorship may be compared with the dictatorship of the husband in the monogamous relationship, which is supposed to be based on love. I will juxtapose the relationship of the Ruler, and his wife, Rachael, with the relationship of the couple who are presented as a foil to the Ruler and his wife, namely Kamĩtĩ and Nyawĩra. Kamĩtĩ is an idealistic, highly spiritual graduate who, by a series of coincidences, becomes the respected shamanic healer, the Wizard of the Crow. Nyawĩra is the more practical activist who heads the Movement for the Voice of the People that challenges the Ruler's despotic regime. Unlike the Ruler and his wife, whose relationship is shown at its end, the development and cementing of the relationship between Kamĩtĩ and Nyawĩra is narrated in the novel. Their relationship comes to represent the ideal romantic relationship that fulfills each of the parties in

the relationship and fulfills a socio-political role. In this respect, the relationship between Kamĩĩ and Nyawĩra represents the climax of Ngũgĩ's exploration of the ideal heterosexual romantic love relationship as the cornerstone of a socially just nation.

The Dictatorship of Love: Relationships Under Authoritarianism

As Ngũgĩ's "signature" dictatorship novel, the question of dictatorship has dominated the scholarship of *Wizard of the Crow*. Most critics recognise Ngũgĩ's deliberate attempt to satirise the despotic rule of past and current presidents of Kenya, and of other African nations. Robert Spencer, for example, examines the novel as an African dictator novel and traces the historical backgrounds of African leaders who employ autocratic rule. He identifies the role of neo-colonial forces and opines that "Africa has remained prey to the interference of external powers intent on perpetuating its subordination and therefore on nurturing pliant and authoritarian regimes" (148). Spencer describes *Wizard of the Crow* as a dictator novel rather than a novel about dictatorship. The narrative succeeds in projecting how leaders "perform power in such a way as to unveil the state itself as the principal miscreant" (154). Like Spencer, Robert L. Colson argues that the novel chronicles domination: "the political regime of the ruling government and the ruler's struggle for dominion over the people" (135). Colson presents a reading of the novel that highlights its use of rumour, multiple storytellers and various forms of narration as acts of resistance to the control of the Ruler (134).

Ndĩgĩrĩgĩ Gĩchingiri also examines what bolsters autocratic rule through the symbolism of the names of the characters in the novel (193). For Gĩchingiri, Ngũgĩ ridicules the greed for power and wealth by uncommitted intellectuals, and shows how "this greed is concretized in their names and titles. Their functioning as instruments of state surveillance is also suggested in their names"

(209). In this way, Ngũgĩ concretises the collusion of the national elite in the consolidation of the power of the dictator. Gikandi's "The Postcolonial Wizard" describes the novel as a "nomadic narrative, informed by the misfortune of the dictatorship that has destroyed the cultural homes, landscapes, and peoples that were important" (167). Tendayi Sithole examines Ngũgĩ's attempt to suggest that "power is exercised in an arbitrary fashion over the citizens of Aburiria who are marginalised and dispossessed" (90). For him, the Ruler "rules by fear, and fear also affects the Ruler" (93). Dictatorship — its creation and exercise — is the central theme of the scholarship of the *Wizard of the Crow*.

The epic story presented in *Wizard of the Crow* joins a growing number of other African dictatorship novels such as Nuruddin Farah's trilogy *Variations on the Theme of an African Dictatorship*, Sembene Ousmane's *The Last of the Empire* (1981), and Chinua Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987), among others. It also joins the cohort of world dictatorship novels, of which the Latin-American examples are best known. These include the Guatemalan Miguel Asturias's novel titled *Mister President* (1946), the Mexican Carlos Fuentes' *The Death of Artemio Cruz* (1962) and the Cuban Alejo Carpentier's *Reasons of State* (1974). But probably most well-known is Colombian writer Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *The Autumn of the Patriarch* (1975). The dictatorship of the General in this novel is very similar to the reign of the Ruler in Ngũgĩ's novel, especially in the focus on the dictator's proof of prowess through sexual relations with subordinate young women.

However, several other questions have also been identified for study in this novel, of which mention will be briefly made. Raphael Dalleo, for example, analyses the postcolonial pedagogical imperatives of the novel that present the complexity of the situation that foregrounds the "contingency not resolution" (151). Looking at the practical teaching of the novel, William

Slaymaker, by contrast, discusses the pedagogical difficulty of teaching of *Wizard of the Crow* to an undergraduate African literature survey or “Third World” novel survey course, or a class that focuses on the postcolonial narrative. He suggests that “a filmic re-inscription, a set of scenarios, of *Wizard of the Crow* could be effective and easier for undergraduates to digest than reviews and summaries from divergent sources” (12). Brady Smith explores “the ecology of the grotesque” (167) in the novel, and both Smith and Joseph McLaren describe the novel as presenting a “satirical magical realism” (Smith 176, McLaren 152). Like Smith, Senayon Olaoluwa views the novel through an ecocritical lens, while Oscar M. Maina explores magical realist modes in *Wizard of the Crow*. Mike Kuria looks specifically at Ngũgĩ’s employment of “African orality in its combination of fantasy and realism” (61). He emphasises the use of myth, legend and history that allows the narrative to achieve its aims (61).

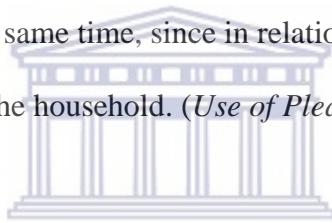
Overviewing the scholarship of *Wizard of the Crow*, it is clear that critics have not really considered dictatorship in a personal context, which is the focus of this chapter. The focus on the personal dimension of dictatorship is, however, different from the sense of the personal as suggested by Samuel Decalo. In his article “African Personal Dictatorships”, Decalo explores the emergence of African dictatorships in countries such as Uganda, Equatorial Guinea, and the Central African Republic. Decalo defines a personalist dictatorship as “an authoritarian system of social repression set by an individual – civilian or military – in which, whether social or political structures are *pro forma* retained or not, all policy dictates derive from him, and all of society is viewed as his personal fief” (Decalo 212). Decalo asserts that personal dictators create “a vast societal void within which they often enact their personal fantasies and whims, a vacuum that is particularly destabilizing for successor regimes” (212). In this chapter, the personal dimension will be explored in relation to authoritarianism as it presents itself in the personal relationship of

marriage, which in Ngũgĩ's project should be based on romantic love. This is different from the exploration in Decalo, which considers the personal whims, desires and fantasies of glory of dictators more generally. Marriage as a personal relationship is presented most clearly in the relationship between the Ruler and his wife, Rachael, as was discussed above. Here the monster-husband completely betrays the love-marriage ideal. The monster-husband also doubles as the tyrannical ruler of the nation. The Ruler rules both his home and the nation motivated by greed and supported by deception and outright cruelty and violence. The Ruler portrays himself as all powerful because he is in control of the affairs of the nation, in particular, he has the power over life and even death: "When he saw that his signature on paper or a word from his mouth could bring about the immediate cessation of a life, he there and then truly believed in his omnipotence. He was now sovereign" (233). We see the omnipotence of the Ruler in the novel as possessing the classic features of the dictator in other African and world literature.

Understanding patriarchy is essential to the understanding of dictatorship, especially in the *Wizard of the Crow*, where the question of patriarchy is foregrounded in the focus on the betrayed ideal of the love-marriage. Patriarchy may be defined as "a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women" (Walby 214). Dictatorship exists alongside patriarchy and there is a mutual dependence of patriarchy and dictatorship in order for each of them to operate efficiently. Male supremacy uses authoritarianism, while dictatorship employs patriarchy in its operation. In her study, "Love in a State of Fear: Reflections on Intimate Relations in Nuruddin Farah's Dictatorship Novels", F. Fiona Moolla explores dictatorship in Somalia and states that "modern dictatorship represents the traditional authority of patriarchs or fathers writ large" (124). Clearly both dictatorial and patriarchal systems form integral part of the other, since both seek to order society in unjust hierarchical ways based on the claim and exercise of power.

As Michel Foucault argues, the patriarchal family of nineteenth- and twentieth-century bourgeois Europe. In his book *The Use of Pleasure*, Foucault argues that the ancient Greeks perceived the role of the father as head of his family as directly parallel to the function of the ruler of a city-state. For Foucault, Greek culture established a “continuity and homogeneity between the government of a state and that of a household” (171). The culture prescribes the mandates of the husband as well as the head of the state or nation:

The husband’s self-restraint pertains to an art of governing – governing in general, governing oneself, and governing a wife who must be kept under control and respected at the same time, since in relation to her husband she is the obedient mistress of the household. (*Use of Pleasure* 165)



Buttressing Foucault’s assertion, Kate Millet describes the functioning of patriarchal institutions as dependent between the family, the society and the state. Millet also traces the root of patriarchal institutions to traditional and classical Greek beliefs. Traditionally, patriarchy granted the father nearly total ownership of his wife or wives and children, including powers of physical abuse and even those of murder and sale. Classically, as the head of the family, the father is both begetter and owner in a system in which kinship is property (Millet 33). Millet asserts that Western patriarchy has often been softened by the concepts of courtly and romantic love (36). However, the concept of romantic love also affords a means of emotional manipulation, which the male is free to exploit, since love is the only circumstance in which the female is (ideologically) pardoned for sexual activity (37). This pattern, where romantic love is used as a form that paradoxically reinscribes the subordination of the woman through “putting woman on a pedestal”,

is not one that has purchase in the contexts about which Ngũgĩ writes. Romantic love in the context of marriage and the family in Ngũgĩ's work remains an ideal to be aspired to, and which represents in microcosm the ideal form of the nation. The links between patriarchy and national leadership are made even clearer by Max Weber (1947), who refers to the modern nation-state as a "system of government in which men ruled societies through their position as heads of households" (qtd. in Walby 214). Kenyan society of the twentieth century is similarly based upon a patriarchal hierarchy that Ngũgĩ attempts to portray in *Wizard of the Crow*. Ngũgĩ presents the marriage between the Ruler and the wife, Rachael, as a relationship controlled by patriarchy.

The Ruler's punishment by imprisonment of Rachael when she questions his neglect and betrayal of her as wife is cruelly patriarchal. The Ruler's actions suggest that he does not conceive of Rachael as having any life of her own in the sense that he expects Rachael to remain and wait for "his second coming" (8). Rachael does not challenge the Ruler again, but pretends to be well, and accepts her new situation: "Rachael, aware of this insatiable desire for humiliating the already fallen, had sworn that she would never let him see her tears or hear of them, not even from her children or the numerous spies" (10). Rachael's posture suggests an image of a woman who resists in indirect ways after a failed direct resistance.

However, the Ruler does not always appear obviously patriarchal. He advances women whom he sees as having the potential to further his consolidation of power and wealth. Such a woman is Jane Kanyori, the wife of Kaniũirũ. Kaniũirũ is the ex-husband of Nyawĩra, the heroine who vehemently opposes the Ruler. He is later appointed as deputy chairman of Marching to Heaven. Jane Kanyori is the only person who knows of Kaniũirũ's wealth. She condones and connives with Kaniũirũ's corruption: "... she could help by not asking too many questions about the signatures of anybody in whose name he wanted to open an account" (344). Subsequently, the

Ruler appoints Jane as “new controller of the Central Bank” (717). He appoints her as “a new female technocrat to the position of monetary authority” (717). The Ruler’s appointment is based on the fact that he perceives Jane Kanyori as “a bigger crook” (716) than Kaniũirũ. In this way, we see that not all women are like Rachael. Sometimes women serve patriarchy and may be assigned a position of power and authority in a patriarchal cultural institution.

In a patriarchal system, it is obvious that not all men are powerful. Some men are ruled by their fellow men, and some are ruled over by their women. Kaniũirũ and Jane Kanyori’s love and marriage represent a case in point. Their friendship begins when Jane Kanyori is a student and Kaniũirũ is teaching at Eldares Polytechnic. Later, Kaniũirũ exploits Jane in her position as a teller at the Aburirian Bank of Commerce and Industry. Kaniũirũ’s relationship with Jane centres on “taking her out to lunch or coffee and even sending her Christmas and birthday cards” (344). Kaniũirũ delights in the fact that Jane does not have a university degree and thinks that he can easily manipulate her and get away with it. Hoping to get married to Kaniũirũ, Jane appears to submit to all forms of domination and exploitation. But it becomes clear that Jane has had the upper hand all along. She carefully documents the financial irregularities in which Kaniũirũ gets involved and blackmails him to marry her when he begins to ignore her. This begins the turning point where patriarchal power shifts positions from male to female. To Kaniũirũ’s bewilderment, Jane packs her luggage and presents herself at his house, and presses him to marry her:

John, I know you are shy, the type of male who finds it hard to say truly what is in his heart. So I made it easy for you. Oh, John, do you know what I did?

Shall I marry him? I asked myself, responding to the question locked up inside

of you. I wrote YES and NO on two separate pieces of paper, put them in a bowl, shook it, shut my eyes, then picked YES!” (711)

Reversing the practice in most cultures whereby men, or their families, propose to women, or their families, Jane opportunistically takes the initiative, knowing that she has “dirt” on the Minister of Defense. Although she goes on to describe herself and Kaniūirū as a “husband-and-wife team” (711), it is clear that she is the smarter partner, who is assuming patriarchal power despite her gender. In a sense, she is the female embodiment of the wily manipulation and greed that is concentrated in the dictator himself. We see a return of the theme of the tainting of love by materialism when Jane perversely combines the love of money with the ideal of disinterested love. She says to Kaniūirū: “My heart flew to you the day you trusted me with your secrets and all the money. That’s why I never asked you for a penny for all the work I did for you. Being your confidante was its own reward” (711–12). The irony of their marriage is that Kaniūirū marries her for fear of losing his money, power and position as the Minister of Defense. Kaniūirū’s mistake was to underrate Jane because of her lack of education. Ngūgĩ thus presents Jane as a female “patriarch” who is able to manipulate men to her advantage. She tells Kaniūirū that her betrothal to him began long before they were legally joined in marriage: “[t]o be honest with you, I married you a long time ago. What remains is for us to exchange rings and sign papers at the district commissioner’s first thing tomorrow” (713). She also undermines Kaniūirū’s first marriage in her pursuit of power and wealth: “marry and file for divorce at the same time. But remember that divorce comes with a property settlement. A minister’s wife must be kept in the lifestyle she has become accustomed to” (714). Jane, thus, despite being a woman, acts patriarchally, conflating the manipulative greed of the postcolonial dictator with love and marriage. In the end Kaniūirū,

describing Jane, announces “my Delilah is actually my second wife ... She can deceive the Devil himself” (716–17). Ngũgĩ makes biblical allusion to Samson’s wife, Delilah, whose manipulation and betrayal exposed Samson to his enemies. Like Samson, Kaniũirũ had made Jane his confidante, and Jane capitalises on the information and uses it as a weapon to trap Kaniũirũ.

But the relationship between Kaniũirũ and Jane is not the only marriage described in the *Wizard of the Crow*. The relationship of the Ruler with his wife, Rachael, is clearly paralleled by the relationship of Tajirika, the Ruler’s weak functionary, and his wife, Vinjinia. During the early part of their relationship, both Tajirika and Vinjinia were employed as primary school teachers, with Vinjinia more financially secure than Tajirika. While Vinjinia was permanently employed, Tajirika was only a substitute teacher whose emasculation is signaled by the fact that he relieves “women teachers going on maternity leave” (450). Their marriage is modelled on Christian principles as these shaped marriage in Europe in the early modern period where “ideal love [is] closely connected to the moral values of Christianity” (Giddens 39). Todd S. Beall explores seven principles of marriage in his study “Seven Principles from Genesis for Marriage and Family”. Beall’s second principle which states that “marriage is a union of a man and a woman to become one flesh” in that the man and the woman join together in physical and spiritual intimacy as the two become one is analogous to Ngũgĩ’s depiction of Tajirika and Vinjinia’s Christian marriage. As Tajirika declares: “Vinjinia and I are one of the happiest couples in the world...Ours is a Christian home, and we belong to the middle class” (436). They initially enjoy a peaceful marriage because of Vinjinia’s submission and tolerance of Tajirika’s infidelities. As an obedient woman in the household, Vinjinia gives up her teaching appointment to support her husband and children: “Vinjinia was a homebody, basically Tajirika’s housekeeper” (140). However, Tajirika’s patriarchal attitude manifests as soon as his economic situation improves. He refuses to appreciate

Vinjinia and pays her back with ingratitude. He reduces Vinjinia's wifely role to the kitchen and tells her "Okay, you can resume your place in the kitchen" (423). Tajirika begins to oppress his wife after gaining power, class and money: "Yet the wealthier they became, the greater their dispiritedness as they entered into discords that intensified into domestic violence" (451). Tajirika, increasingly threatened by the activism of women outside of the cloister he has created in his home, begins to act defensively. Tajirika accuses his wife of lies: "Vinjinia's supposed competence and wifely rectitude were nothing but hypocrisy" (423). He resorts to beating Vinjinia with excessive cruelty day and night, believing that "beating her was his male prerogative" (426). This is a figure we are familiar with from an earlier novel. Like Ngotho in *The River Between*, who beats his wife, Nyokabi, as a way of exercising control over his household, Tajirika expresses his anxieties with social instability by victimising his wife. Like Nyokabi, Ngotho's wife, Vinjinia, decides not to quit her marriage in spite of the violence meted out to her. She perceives marriage as a union of no escape: "The beast has a name. It is called husband. Night and day. Quarrels without reason. Fights without a truce. Marriage is a prison. Prison for life, more so when a couple has children. Even our religions sanction the prison for life for a woman" (429). Thus, even when the patriarch is stupid and weak like Tajirika, unlike the patriarch who is strong and powerful like the Ruler, the woman in the love-marriage that is supposed to be egalitarian, appears to end up imprisoned. Vinjinia is figuratively incarcerated in the patriarchal dictatorial home as Rachael is in the patriarchal dictatorial state represented by the Ruler's mansion.

Throughout Ngũgĩ's career, he has attempted to present utopian romantic relationships; however, tensions are created in each of the relationships and readers are kept in suspense at the end of the novels since issues are never satisfactorily resolved when it comes to the romantic relationship which is central to Ngũgĩ's project across his career. In the early novels, *The River*

Between and *Weep Not, Child*, the ideal love between the heroes and the heroines is obstructed by external factors. In *The River Between*, Waiyaki and Nyambura's love relationship fails to succeed due to the tension from family as a consequence of religious differences. In *Weep Not, Child* Njoroge and Mwhaki are brought together by formal education; however, their love fails as a result of tension from the feuding families due to their social, religious and political differences. There is also a failed romance in *A Grain of Wheat* in which the ideal love between Mumbi and Gikonyo is obstructed by betrayal through adultery. Out of gratitude, Mumbi allows Karanja to make love to her while her husband, Gikonyo, is in the detention camp. Although Mumbi regrets her actions, Gikonyo perceives it as a betrayal of their love and marriage. Romantic love also fails through betrayal in both *Petals of Blood* and *Devil on the Cross*. In *Petals of Blood*, Ngũgĩ presents several love relationships, but the most important one between Wanja and Karega fails because of Munira's jealousy that leads to their separation. Similarly, in *Devil on the Cross*, Warĩnga and Gatuĩria's love relationship is thwarted by interference from an egoistic father who desires to sacrifice his son's love and pursue his own interest. In *Wizard of the Crow*, by contrast, we see the meeting, "courtship" and commitment for the first time of a romantic relationship that microcosmically models ideal socio-political relationships, perfected in the exploration of friendship in *Matigari*. This is the relationship between Kamĩtĩ, the eponymous "Wizard of the Crow", and Nyawĩra, the "Limping Witch", a relationship to which the chapter now turns.

The Dictatorship of Love and Love Overcoming Dictatorship

Kamĩtĩ and Nyawĩra's friendship and love represent an ideal relationship characterised by respect, companionship and sacrifice, and, most importantly, a commitment to a common political goal. Their first meeting occurs at the office where Nyawĩra works as an assistant to Tajirika.

Kamĩtĩ comes to the office seeking employment. Kamĩtĩ is, however, unsuccessful in his interview with Tajirika. Nyawĩra sympathises with Kamĩtĩ and befriends him. They clearly connect and enjoy each other’s company: “for the first time Kamĩtĩ felt the heaviness inside him lighten” (63). Kamĩtĩ’s excitement in his encounter with Nyawĩra echoes with Gikonyo’s delight in his love affair with Mumbi in *A Grain of Wheat*. But while the Gikonyo-Mumbi ideal love-marriage is obstructed by betrayal through adultery, which seems unresolved at the end of the novel, we see the relationship between Kamĩtĩ and Nyawĩra fulfill its potential (108). Nyawĩra and Kamĩtĩ’s meeting is the classic love encounter described by Anthony Giddens as “implying instantaneous attraction — ‘love at first sight’” where “[t]he ‘first glance’ is a communicative gesture, an intuitive grasp of qualities of the other. It is the process of attraction to someone who can make one’s life, as it is said, complete” (40). We see this sense of the love relationship bringing fulfillment and completion in the development of the association between Kamĩtĩ and Nyawĩra.

The couple is brought together again coincidentally when they disguise themselves as beggars at the ironically named Paradise Hotel, where the Ruler organises a dinner for the visitors from the Global Bank. This all-important meeting between the Ruler and his visitors is to discuss a loan facility that the Ruler intends to secure from the Global Bank to erect the magnificent edifice called Marching to Heaven. We read that Marching to Heaven is presented as a “birthday gift” to the Ruler. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Machokali, through flattery reveals that the Aburirian populace plans to put up a building that “had never been attempted in history except once by the children of Israel and they failed miserably to complete the House of Babel” (16). While the Ruler’s expectations from the Global Bank delegates is to provide finance for Marching to Heaven, the citizens expect the delegates to bring “a lot of cash to give to the poor” (73). Included among these poor people are the beggars who always loiter around the hotels all hours of day and night.

Kamĩtĩ disguises himself as a beggar simply to elicit the sympathy of the wealthy people who attend the meeting. But, in addition, he has actually fallen upon such hard times that he does need to beg to survive. Nyawĩra disguises herself so that her real identity is not known. She is there as an activist to protest against the Ruler’s new plans for collusion between the national and international elite that will impoverish the ordinary people even further.

Fate brings Kamĩtĩ and Nyawĩra together again as they are chased by three police officers since they pose as beggars and succeed in disrupting the Ruler’s meeting by chanting slogans: “Marching to Heaven Is Marching to Hell. Your Strings of Loans Are Chains of Slavery: Your Loans Are the Cause of Begging. We Beggars Beg the End of Begging. The March to Heaven Is Led by Dangerous snakes” (74). Eventually, Kamĩtĩ and Nyawĩra run to the streets of Santalucia, where they “were ensconced in a house, crouched near a window, straining to hear the slightest sound outside” (76). They narrowly escape being caught by the policemen when Kamĩtĩ attempts to deceive the police by tying bones and rags together on a cardboard with an inscription, “WARNING! THIS PROPERTY BELONGS TO A WIZARD WHOSE POWER BRINGS DOWN HAWKS AND CROWS FROM THE SKY. TOUCH THIS HOUSE AT YOUR PERIL. SGD. WIZARD OF THE CROW” (77). The policeman is tricked into believing that the two beggars, Kamĩtĩ and Nyawĩra, are devils, “djinnns of the prairie” (77) who are agents of the Wizard of the Crow. On the part of Kamĩtĩ, he only plays at witchcraft powers as he used to do as part of his childhood games. This also marks the beginning of Kamĩtĩ’s fame and power under the name Wizard of the Crow. As we shall explain later, Nyawĩra also plays the role of the Wizard of the Crow and also assumes the name, “the Limping Witch” or Crippled Witch (626).

The legend of the Wizard of the Crow begins with the policeman, Constable Arigaigai Gatherer (AG), who reveals the mystery surrounding a strange beggar, Kamĩtĩ: “I saw a man in rags

look at me with eyes burning brighter than those of a tiger in the dark. I felt his eyes forcing me to follow him as he moved away ... What was more amazing was that he was not running ...yet no matter how hard I ran after him, the distance between us remained the same” (96–97). Having believed the magic of the Wizard of the Crow, Constable Arigaigai Gatherer goes back to the house of the Wizard of the Crow for consultation. At this point, Kamĩĩ takes on this identity not realizing its consequences: “I am the Wizard of the Crow. Who is that standing in the shadow of my magic? How dare you break my circle of magic? Go, clean those feet first before ...” (98). Kamĩĩ develops his identity fully as Wizard of the Crow when he succeeds in his predictions to Constable Arigaigai Gatherer, who later confirms to Nyawĩra that the “Wizard of the Crow is more than human” (126).

It is in Nyawĩra’s house, where the couple hide out, that the love relationship between Kamĩĩ and Nyawĩra develops. At an early stage, Kamĩĩ and Nyawĩra seem compatible in the way they enjoy each other’s company as they converse about their past lives and enjoy meals together. Nyawĩra freely recounts the circumstances surrounding her abortive/failed marriage with her ex-husband, Kaniũirũ. She expresses elation regarding her freedom from her previous marriage that was like a form of imprisonment. In her restored independence, “Nyawĩra now found herself on a new road to freedom” (82). Again Ngũgĩ dramatises the union between Kamĩĩ and Nyawĩra as the completion of one half of a person by the other half through the relationship of love. In fact, Kamĩĩ attributes their meeting to divine intervention: “What happens in life is fate ... Fortune, good and bad, comes from God” (87).

Kamĩĩ regards the beloved, Nyawĩra, with the greatest of admiration for her adaptability and energy: “this woman was chameleon-like. One moment she was a faithful secretary, then a player in the politics of poverty, even a singing religious fanatic” (87). The representation of Nyawĩra confirms Kamĩĩ’s respect for the multi-tasking roles of women: “In the office, she is a

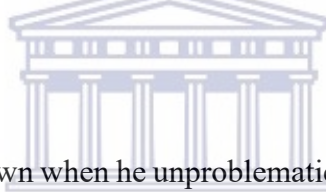
secretary, on the roadside, a comforter. In the evening, she is a beggar among beggars. Later, when they escape to the countryside, she effortlessly outruns him and three police officers [and]...when telling stories, she had constantly been changing her voice in her mimicking of various characters” (90). Admiration transforms into positive fear, however, since for Kamĩĩ “there was something about her [Nyawĩra] that did not add up” (90). Kamĩĩ seems terrified at the almost mystical power Nyawĩra seems to wield: “Would she change into an antelope, a gazelle of the prairie, or a cat? Or the mermaid that she was? She seemed indeed human, but with these women one could not be sure” (90).

The combination of admiration and fearful respect for the power of the woman creates a tension in Kamĩĩ that translates into desire. The couple is presented as two competitors in an athletic game of love, culminating in its consummation: “they circled each other, Kamĩĩ trying to catch her, she just managing to slip away. Then suddenly he flew toward her and they fell on the bed” (91). As in earlier novels reflecting the strong Lawrentian influence of Ngũgĩ’s formative reading, sex is presented as important in the love relationship for the psychic fulfillment it promises. Both Kamĩĩ’s and Nyawĩra’s previous relationships had not had the electric charge of the relationship with each other. Their previous relationships had been in such a slump that sex had taken a back seat in their lives. But suddenly they realise that “something important had been missing in [their lives]... Now they felt themselves drawn to each other by a power they could not resist” (91).

While sex had previously been presented in almost mystical terms, in *Wizard of the Crow*, a didactic concern now presents itself in connection with sex. For the first time in Ngũgĩ’s novels, precautions against the contraction and transmission of sexually transmitted diseases is presented as significant in the emotional dimension of the love relationship. Care between partners and

equality in the relationship are shown through Nyawĩra’s liberty to demand that Kamĩtĩ use a condom:

they fell on the bed ... Slowly and gently, young man, Nyawĩra told him. Some men rush as if they are late for an appointment. A woman is not a service station ... Put it on now ... Don’t you have condoms? ... Condoms? Oh, no! he said ... You would want to enter me without protection? ... Don’t you know about the virus? Pregnancy is life. The virus means death ... And even if you know about yourself, how do you know that I am not carrying AIDS, syphilis, gonorrhoea, or any STD?” (91 - 92)



Kamĩtĩ’s respect for Nyawĩra is shown when he unproblematically accedes to his partner’s request.

More importantly, Kamĩtĩ and Nyawĩra’s love relationship survives because they are resolute in their attitudes. Nyawĩra is seen as a strong-willed person, like Wanja and Warĩinga in *Petals of Blood* and *Devil on the Cross* respectively, who symbolically act as allegories of the nation. However, Ngũgĩ portrays Nyawĩra differently from Wanja and Warĩinga. Unlike Wanja and Warĩinga, Nyawĩra is not sexually exploited initially, and resists domination from men throughout her life. A case in point is when Nyawĩra, in her first marriage, realises her husband’s selfish intentions for marrying her: “[w]as it me you wanted to marry, or my father’s money” (82). She is able to act decisively, opting for a divorce in less than a year. (The first marriage will be detailed further later as a contrast with the relationship of Kamĩtĩ and Nyawĩra.)

In the roles of each of the parties to the relationship and in their day-to-day negotiation of the practicalities of life, there is an element of gratification of dreams and desires. Nyawĩra is drawn to Kamĩtĩ since he represents a gentle masculinity that does not need to test power to establish hierarchy. There is an expression of intense affection and readiness to support Nyawĩra from Kamĩtĩ, even if it means doing work that traditionally is thought of as women’s work. For example, Kamĩtĩ is willing to tidy up the house and prepare “a broth of tomatoes and spinach” (120). Nyawĩra’s love for Kamĩtĩ deepens with time since “she had to admit that Kamĩtĩ had also touched her life. She could not tell what it was, but since meeting him she did not see life quite the same way” (196). From the clear ways in which the text constructs Kamĩtĩ as the opposite of the Ruler, it is evident to the reader that what draws Nyawĩra to the Wizard of the Crow is the fact that he is everything that the Ruler is not. In comparing Kamĩtĩ to the Ruler, Nyawĩra perceives Kamĩtĩ as a divine gift: “you said that the good and the bad come to us ready-made from Heaven above” (87). Unlike Kamĩtĩ, the Ruler is metaphorically compared to “a Devil worshipper” who “does so in the name of the Animal of the Earth” (88). Nyawĩra describes the Ruler as the serpent “that deceived Adam and Eve” (88). Christians believe that Adam and Eve are the first man and woman created by God; however, they lost their relationship with God as a result of the serpent that lured Eve into eating the forbidden fruit. The use of the biblical allusion depicts the Ruler as a deceiver who plays similar role as the serpent that deceived Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. The Ruler it is clear betrays the confidence reposed in him by his lover, Rachael, in ways that Kamĩtĩ does not. Kamĩtĩ embodies a positive masculinity as opposed to the Ruler’s greedy, power-hungry masculinity. Nyawĩra reveals her deep love and longing for Kamĩtĩ in a letter written when he disappears in the crackdown that ensues as a result of resistance to the Ruler: “[t]he hours of the day and the hours of the night seem all the same to me ... no matter how I try I cannot find words

to say how I feel when I came home that night and found that you were gone. I think about you day and night” (197). Kamĩtĩ’s disappearance affects Nyawĩra to the extent that the sound of music from her guitar, which used to soothe her in the past, could not any longer: “the sounds were deepening instead of alleviating her sorrows” (200). Nyawĩra’s melancholy carries all the hallmarks of classic lovesickness.

There is a strong bond between Kamĩtĩ and Nyawĩra that suggests they complete each other in a unique love between two people who are meant for each other, as explained by Giddens above. In some ways, the one is the other — they swap identities. The Wizard (Kamĩtĩ) and the Limping Witch or Crippled Witch (Nyawĩra) are presented as a composite or merged figure. Nyawĩra assumes the names the Limping Witch or Crippled Witch when she poses as a crippled sorcerer with her left leg shorter than her right and could only limp (625): “[s]he had no diving charms, only a walking stick and an ungainly wrap” (626). As the narrator reveals, the Limping Witch was able to do “what no other sorcerer, despite their spears, knives, needles, razor blades, and threats, had been able to do” (628). Initially, Nyawĩra poses as the Wizard of the Crow and receives Constable A.G., who addresses her as “My Lord Wizard of the Crow” (126). At this point, Nyawĩra assumes the role of the Wizard to the extent that A.G. “knelt before her, his head slightly bowed in humility... Nyawĩra is forced to ask, “What more do you want?” (128). Again, when Kamĩtĩ travels to New York, Nyawĩra accepts the role of the Wizard and assists their clients in the shrine of the Wizard of the Crow. A case in point is Vinjina, who consults the Wizard’s shrine to seek for arbitration in her marriage following Tajirika’s battering. Nyawĩra declares that “[she] only poison[s] evil in pursuit of the good” (430). She admonishes Vinjina to “leave the matter in the hands of the Wizard of the Crow” (430). Nyawĩra, in her capacity as Wizard of the Crow, resolves the marriage conflict between Tajirika and Vinjina. We see that both figures, the Wizard and the

Limping Witch, are able to deliver performances that heal. For example, Tajirika falls sick after his appointment as the chair of Marching to Heaven and accepts bribes of three sacks of Burĩ notes. Tajirika is overwhelmed by the money he receives the first day and becomes hysterical in the course of narrating the day's activities to Vinjinia. Vinjinia recalls that "she found him staring at himself in the mirror, repeating the word *if*" (173). Tajirika becomes a prisoner to silence because of his "obsession with being the richest man in Aburĩria, Africa and the whole world" (174). Through divination, Kamĩtĩ reveals to Vinjinia the cause of Tajirika's ailment: "Woman, your husband's thoughts are stuck in his head so that his wishes cannot be denied or fulfilled. His wishes are shards of words stuck in his throat" (175). Kamĩtĩ heals Tajirika of his bewitchment after receiving envelopes with money. Nyawĩra disguises herself as the limping witch following Kamĩtĩ's imprisonment by the Ruler. Having arrested Kamĩtĩ, the Ruler and Tajirika, the new governor of Central Bank, interrogate Kamĩtĩ for burying bags of Burĩ notes received from Tajirika and concerning his identity: "Are you the Wizard of the Crow?" (602). Suddenly, Kamĩtĩ begins to "wheeze as if suffering from asthmatic attack. Then out popped one distinct word: *if*" (602). Nyawĩra, the limping witch, miraculously heals Kamĩtĩ of his inability to speak: "Now I have ordered the Devil in you to speak to me through you ... Speak Devil!" (628). Nyawĩra is able to seduce Kamĩtĩ by "the allure of the Limping Witch" as "the Devil" inside Kamĩtĩ begs for release (628). We see that the power of love shared between Kamĩtĩ and Nyawĩra evinces as mysterious which empowers them to perform miracles.

The highpoint of the relationship between Kamĩtĩ and Nyawĩra is the consummation of their love when they meet again after Kamĩtĩ's disappearance. Nyawĩra finds Kamĩtĩ's letter, which clearly explains his disappearance and directs her to his whereabouts. Out of an irresistible love, Nyawĩra goes in search of Kamĩtĩ and finds him in the bush. In an almost cinematic scene, the

narrator describes the sensation they both felt immediately on touching each other: “[a]t the touch, Nyawĩra felt her body tremble from head to foot while Kamĩtĩ felt blood rush to his fingertips, his entire body awash in a sensation he had not felt for a long time” (203). Clearly, this occasion is more special than other occasions on which they meet. This is because it presents an overpowering love that is evident in the expression of their longing for each other and is reflected in their love-making:

Love was everywhere: in the tree branches where the nests of weaverbirds hung; in the fern where the widowbird had left two long black tail feathers; in the murmurings of the Eldares river as it flowed eastward before turning into a roaring waterfall; in the sun’s rays, which pierced through the waterfall, splitting into seven colors of the rainbow; in the still waters of a small lake made by the river where Kamĩtĩ and Nyawĩra now swam and bathed and chased each other, splashing water on each other; in the blackjacks, the goose-grass and other plants, the flowers and seeds of which stuck to their wet clothes; in the movement of porcupines and hedgehogs; in the wings of the helmeted and crested guinea fowls, francolins that scampered away after stealing glances at the couple; in the honeybees and butterflies hopping from flower to flower; in the cooing of the doves; in the mating calls of the river frogs from among the reeds and water lilies. (205–06)

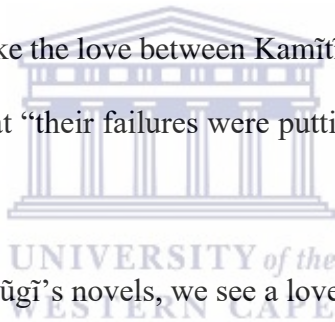
As was the case in previous novels, physical consummation of love is often set in nature, and often is charged with a lot more than mere physical pleasure. The consummation of the love of Waiyaki and Mumbi in *The River Between* takes place in the sacred grove, which gives consummation the

“epic” proportions of a new myth of origin, reincarnating the founding of the Gikuyu by Gikuyu and Mumbi. Wanja and Karega’s celebration of their love takes place in the fields, mountains, plains and wind (*Petals* 224–25), suggesting the ways this couple is at one with the land. In this passage where Kamĩtĩ and Nyawĩra consummate their love, all of nature rejoices and celebrates with them. Natural movements and cycles are a testament to their love, as are the activities of the insects, birds and animals, and the mere existence of the plants and vegetation. The perfect love of Kamĩtĩ and Nyawĩra is described in terms reminiscent of the references to the Golden Age in ancient Greek literature, and the ways in which the Golden Age is alluded to in Christian mythology and in European literature. The Golden Age is defined by the harmony of all forms of existence without greed or exploitation.

Clearly, Ngũgĩ presents Kamĩtĩ differently to other men who are patriarchal exploiters in the novel, and especially contrasts him with the Ruler. In the Ruler’s relationship with his wife, the woman ends up incarcerated in the home as jail. In Kamĩtĩ’s relationship with Nyawĩra, Nyawĩra’s freedom at every level is emphasised. But Ngũgĩ also contrasts the Kamĩtĩ-Nyawĩra relationship with other relationships, for example Nyawĩra’s first marriage. Kaniũirũ, Nyawĩra’s first husband is an egoistic patriarch who intends to use marriage as a means to exploit Nyawĩra. Although Kaniũirũ “did not come from a wealthy family” (80), he associates with the rich for his selfish interest. He claims to be an orphan who lives with his grandmother. Kaniũirũ’s intention about the relationship differs from that of Nyawĩra, for whom it should be “a pure and blissful union” (80). He intends to use marriage as a means of domination and exploitation, for his eyes were on the “alluring looks of Nyawĩra’s wealth and property” (80), rather than on Nyawĩra herself. He would “rise from the depths of poverty and misery through his wife to the heaven of leisure and well-being” (80). While Nyawĩra dreams of a simple wedding, “not a display of

affluence”, Kaniũirũ dreams of a magnificent wedding with “ten bridesmaids and ten best men, a huge wedding ceremony with a hundred Mercedes-Benzes, bumper to bumper, shuttling dignitaries to the reception ... gladly having to endure speech after speech from all dignitaries, this endless prelude to the moment he and Nyawĩra would slice through a ten-layer wedding cake” (81). Thus Kaniũirũ does not see the relationship as a form of self- and social realisation as it is for Kamĩtĩ and Nyawĩra.

The ideal love of Kamĩtĩ and Nyawĩra may also be contrasted with the relationship of Kamĩtĩ with Wariara. Their relationship starts out positively, but deteriorates in the face of economic hardship from which their status as graduates cannot protect them in the unjust postcolonial state of Aburĩria. Unlike the love between Kamĩtĩ and Nyawĩra, their love diminishes in the face of adversity. We see that “their failures were putting a strain on their relationship and they were drifting apart (67).



For the first time thus in Ngũgĩ’s novels, we see a love relationship that fulfills each of the parties and endures all forms of hardship and adversity. This love is strong since it is the love of two ethical and free individuals, but it is also a love that is part of bigger social struggles, as we shall see. From the discussion so far, Ngũgĩ depicts love as a strong bond between individuals from diverse backgrounds. However, the love between Kamĩtĩ and Nyawĩra, which initially is presented as a private matter, takes an additional dimension when it incorporates politics. At the end of the novel, Nyawĩra baptises Kamĩtĩ into her politics by introducing him to the Central Committee of the Movement for the Voice of the People. Kamĩtĩ looks perplexed about the whole episode, especially when Nyawĩra is introduced as the “chairperson of the Central Committee of the Movement, for the Voice of the People and commander in chief of Aburĩrian People’s Resistance” (758). Having been exposed to Nyawĩra’s clandestine dealings, Kamĩtĩ begins to

appreciate the real struggle and describes it as “[a] global conversation of the deities” (760). Nyawĩra frees Kamĩtĩ’s mind from what he calls “little disappointment” (760) and explains the basis of their perfect love:

It is true that we are very close. We have gone through a lot together. That is a bond of politics and it is as it should be. Yours and mine is a bond of love. And it is also as it should be. But today our relationship is much stronger because of the bond of love we have now added that of politics. Mind you, I would be lying if I said I was not happy to see you wriggle with a little jealousy. Thank you. But jealousy beyond acceptable limits is bad love, for it means that wherever you see me talking or laughing with a guy or coming home late you will be stricken with grief and pointless suspicions. A little jealousy warms love. But too much of it harms love. (763)

It is clear that perfect love encompasses sacrifice, commitment and determination to work together. To a large extent, Kamĩtĩ and Nyawĩra’s love is strengthened by a “bond of politics”, whether consciously or unconsciously. This presupposes that their perfect love in struggle is a combination of a bond of love and politics. For Nyawĩra, jealousy in love is perceived from both positive and

negative outlooks. Oxymoronically, jealousy “warms” and “harms” love. We infer that Kamĩĩ and Nyawĩra’s perfect love triumphs in two ways: firstly in their willingness to fight for the interests of the less privileged, and thus act as the voice of the voiceless, and, secondly, their love is a triumph since it is supported by their consciences. It is through concern for the people that their love was discovered and developed. Therefore, perfect love thrives on the social and political contexts of the individuals involved in the love relationship.

An overview of the romantic relationships discussed in the previous chapters reveals that all the love relationships in Ngũgĩ’s earlier novels fail as a result of both internal and external factors. In Chapter One, romantic love depicted in the early novels, *The River Between* and *Weep, Not Child*, attempts to break the boundary of class, race, religion and politics as in the case of the Latin American novels analysed by Doris Sommer; however, love fails between the heroes and the heroines because of the interference from religion, politics and ethnicity. In Chapter Two, I argued that there is the depiction of betrayal in both political and personal contexts across Ngũgĩ’s works. In *A Grain of Wheat* and *Devil on the Cross*, where love and betrayals are strongly highlighted, romantic love fails as a result of political and personal betrayals (adultery in marriage) that arise between the heroes and the heroines. In Chapter Three, the issue of material concerns in love relationships comes up as striking in *Petals of Blood*. In neocolonial Kenya, love is sold for money, leading to good and bad materialism, but crucially, ideal love for Ngũgĩ needs to be divested entirely of material questions. In Chapter Four, I considered how the focus on romantic love is diverted to friendship when Ngũgĩ foregrounds friendship between a man and a woman in *Matigari*. The focus on friendship allows the clarification of the idea that what cements the personal relationship is the identification of a concept of the common good in a revolutionary vision. By contrast, Kamĩĩ and Nyawĩra’s love emerges as the only perfect love that triumphs in

the face of challenges as a consequence of the reconciliation of individual desire and political concerns.



Conclusion

The thesis has shown through a detailed reading of each of Ngũgĩ's novels that romantic love has been a sustained interest throughout his career. The early novels show scenarios in which love is posited as a possible means to cross divides of ethnicity, religion, class and ideology to form the bonds needed to consolidate a unified postcolonial nation. However, in both *The River Between* and *Weep Not, Child*, the power of love is not adequate to overcome the deep divisions of the communities presented in the novels. The love plot is a common plot in the novel generally, where the triumph over obstacles to love is shown in marriage in the conclusion — the happy ending. In both these early novels, the obstructions are so great that marriage at the end of the two novels is not a possibility. In the novels of Ngũgĩ's mid-career, we see that the love-marriage across social divides now is potentially achieved, but that love does not endure in marriage because of betrayal. The romantic relationships in these novels, *A Grain of Wheat* and *Devil on the Cross*, to a certain extent are allegories of the nation. Betrayal of love in marriage represents the betrayal of the hopes and aspirations of the postcolonial nation-state. One of the most significant betrayals is the betrayal of the ideal of love through rampant materialism, shown especially in *Petals of Blood*. Here Ngũgĩ's commitment to an abstract idea of love that is stripped of all connections with utility, or practical considerations, forces a conclusion to the novel that is unconvincing. The brothel that comes to symbolize materialism must be razed to the ground to divest the love relationship from any link with material concerns, even though material questions subtend romantic relationships in most cultures, even where they are rejected or denied. *Matigari* presents an excursus to the theme of love that has preoccupied Ngũgĩ throughout his career since the relationship of friendship is explored instead. Through the narrative about friendship, Ngũgĩ finally is able to resolve the problems that existed in all the erotic relationships he has written about to

this point. Friendship teaches the lesson of a loyalty of each of the friends to each other, but also very importantly to the greater cause of social justice. Friendship teaches the friends to love the social cause. It is only when intimate partners love the greater cause as much as they love each other that the ideal union in love may be achieved. Thus Ngũgĩ is able to write about a love that is fulfilled only in his last published novel, once he has identified the bigger ethical context of the romantic love relationship. In *Wizard of the Crow*, for the first time in Ngũgĩ's novels, we see the lovers united in a perfect union where each partner is fully realised in each other and in a politics of social justice.

The thesis has also shown how Ngũgĩ does not appear to be conscious of his investment in the relationship of romantic love. The author does not ever in any of his many volumes of essays, or in his autobiographical writings, reflect on the importance of eros in his creative and political project. This is not true, however, of his early short fiction and plays, which do not get much critical attention, but which do present all the most important ideas about romantic love in “germ,” which then subsequently is expanded in the novels. The conclusion of the thesis will identify these early themes, showing how they are later developed, and showing how absolutely fundamental romantic love has been in Ngũgĩ's creative consciousness.

If one looks back at Ngũgĩ's career, his very first short story, titled “My Childhood”, which was published in the *Alliance High Magazine* as “I Try Witchcraft” (1957), focused on romantic love and the ways in which it often courts the supernatural in the lover's desperation to achieve union with the other. The story is developed around a local belief that a loved one could be summoned simply by whispering their name into an empty clay pot. Similarly, one of his earliest plays, “The Wound in the Heart” (1962), which was rejected for the Kampala National Theatre annual drama festival, highlights by its title the theme of intimacy and emotion. Many of the stories

in the collection *Secret Lives* (1993) also revolve around issues of romantic love. “Mugumo” considers what happens when love is lost in a polygamous marriage, and frustrations are expressed through violence. In “A Meeting in the Dark”, from the same collection, an early exploration of betrayal in love is presented, a question that will be analysed in more detail in the later novels. In this story, the lovers, Wamuhu and John, come together across class barriers, but John strangles the pregnant Wamuhu when she refuses to accept money to hide the paternity of the child.

Ngũgĩ is not well known as a poet, but he has written poetry in Gikũyũ. Again, eros is the subject of many of the poems, including a group of eight poems addressed to Ngũgĩ’s wife, Njeri, one example of which is “Makundo ma Wendo” (1994), which translates as “Knots/Sips of Love”. The sub-themes cut across love and jealousy, economic insecurity and love, mistrust, promiscuity, extra-marital affairs and the like. The second collection of “Makundo ma Wendo” centres on poems of yearning for one’s love. Also, “Nyumba ya Wendo” (1994) is a four-line poem which is a plea from a lover who invites the beloved to join him/her to build a house of love full of happiness. In another six-line poem, “Ikinya Wendo” (1994), the persona expresses the extraordinariness of his/her lover as compared to his/her other love relationships. Also, “Wendo Kĩmera-inĩ kĩa Heho” (1994) is a poem in which the speaker praises his/her lover for the warmth of love because of their relationship.

The Black Hermit, Ngũgĩ’s play that premiered at the African Writers Conference at Makerere in 1962, is an especially interesting encapsulation of many of the themes that he would later explore. In this play, Ngũgĩ considers some of the complications of levirate in a postcolonial context. The levirate refers to the practice where on the death of a husband, the widow is taken as wife by the husband’s brother. This practice ensures continuation of the family, and is not specific to African cultures. It occurs also in Semitic cultures, for example. In *The Black Hermit*, the

brother, Remi, loves the widow, Thoni, even before she marries her husband. Remi thinks that destiny has brought them together again through the death of his brother, Thoni's late husband. Remi rises to anger, however, when he realises that Thoni is still in love with her dead husband, his brother. The rivalry between Remi and his dead brother drives Remi to relocate to the city, and abandoning Thoni to her fate without a husband. The play ends tragically with Thoni's suicide and Remi's guilt for his contribution to the personal problems that led to her death. This play thus shows the complexities that occur when romantic love unsettles the customs that ensure cohesion and continuity of the family. In the play *Ngaahika Ndeenda (I Will Marry When I Want)* (1982), the tension between Christian and African traditional religious approaches to family relations is again considered. It is ironic that a play that foregrounds love and marriage so sharply gets Ngũgĩ arrested. This is because Ngũgĩ attempts to use romantic love to unite the feuding families; however, his good intention receives negative reactions. We read about love and betrayal between lovers from different backgrounds. John Muhuuni, the son of Ahab Kioi, is in an amorous relationship with Gathoni, Kiguunda's teenage daughter. Gathoni refuses to heed her parents because of love. She accepts money from John Muhuuni and accompanies him to Mombasa against her parents' wishes. John eventually breaks up the relationship and also refuses responsibility for her pregnancy. John's betrayal creates tension between the families of the Kiguundas and Kiois. The play echoes Kenya's history on the class lines that are underpinned by exploitation and betrayal of love.

The overview of Ngũgĩ's early work highlights the ways in which romantic love has been the foundation of Ngũgĩ's creativity. Stories about romantic love have allowed Ngũgĩ to analyse transformations in society due to colonisation and modernity. The erotic relationship appears to capture better than any other relationship the complexity and the explosiveness of the changes in

society at a personal level. The earliest works also show how even though love has the potential to bring people from different positions together, more often than not, the outcome of these romantic relationships is tragic. Nevertheless, Ngũgĩ remains invested in the romantic love relationship since it seems to be the personal relationship that best figures utopian social relationships in the modern, socially just nation-state envisaged by Ngũgĩ.



Works Consulted

- Abraham, Leena. "Bhai-Behen, True Love, Time Pass: Friendships and Sexual Partnerships among Youth in an Indian Metropolis." *Culture, Health & Sexuality*. 4.3 (2002): 337–53. Web. 25th May 2016.
- Abrahams, Peter Henry. *Tell Freedom USA*: Alfred A. Knopf. 1954. Print.
- Achebe, Chinua. *Anthills of the Savannah*. London: Heinemann. 1987. Print
- _____. *Things Fall Apart*. London: Heinemann. 1986. Print.
- Accilien, Cécile. In *Rethinking Marriage in Francophone African and Caribbean Literatures*. U.S: Lexington Books. 2008. Print.
- Adams, Rebecca G. and Rosemary Blieszner 1994. "An Integrative Conceptual Framework for Friendship". *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*. 11.2: 163–184. Web 17th May 2019.
- Adeoti, Gbemisola. "Demystifying the Future in Africa's (Un)vanishing Past: A Study of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's Novels". *Africa Development*, XLI. 2. (2016). 1–22. Web. 19th May 2019.
- Adichie, Ngozi Chimamanda. *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Canada: Knopf. 2006. Print.
- _____. *Americanah*. USA: Alfred A. Knopf. 2013. Print.
- Afejuku, Tony. "Autobiography as History and Political Testament: Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Detained*." *World Literature Written in English*. 30.1 (1990): 78–87. Web. 13th November 2018.

Afolayan, Sola. “Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o and his ‘Mathe-logic’ of Revolution in *Matigari*:

Re-introducing Militia Struggle”. *International Journal of English and Literature*. 6.3 (2015). 58–66. Web. 19th May 2019.

Aidoo, Ama Ata. Ed. *African Love Stories: An Anthology*. Ayebia Publishing. 2006. Print.

_____. *Changes: a Love Story*. New York: Feminist Press. 1993. Print.

_____. *Our Sister Killjoy*. London: Longman. 1977. Print.

_____. *The Dilemma of a Ghost*. London: Longman. 1965. Print.

Alejo, Carpentier. *Reasons of State*. USA: Alfred A. Knopf. 1976. Print.

Amooti wa Irumba Ngũgĩ on Ngũgĩ In *Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o Speaks*. 1979 (1990) 99. Print.

Angmor, Charles. *Contemporary Literature in Ghana 1911–1978: A Critical Evaluation*.

Accra: Woeli Publishing Services. 1996. Print.

Aizenberg, Edna. “The Untruths of the Nation: *Petals of Blood* and Fuentes’s *The Death of Artemio Cruz*.” *Research in African Literatures*. 21.4 (1990): 85–103. Web. 13th August 2016.

Allan, Graham. “Commentary: Friendships and Emotions”. *Sociological Research Online*.

16 (1) 15 2011 Web 17th May 2019.

_____. *Friendship: Developing a Sociological Perspective*. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf. 1989. Print.

Allen, R. E. trans. *The Dialogues of Plato, Volume 2: The Symposium*. USA: Yale University Press. 1993. Print.

- Amoko, Apollo Obonyo. "The Resemblance of Colonial Mimicry: A Revisionary Reading of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *The River Between*." *Research in African Literatures*. 36.1 (2005): 34–50.
- _____. *Postcolonialism in the Wake of the Nairobi Revolution: Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and the Idea of African Literature*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 2010. Print.
- Amory, Deborah P. "'Homosexuality' in Africa: Issues and Debates" Cambridge University Press: *A Journal of Opinion*. 25. 1, Commentaries in African Studies. (1997), 5–10. 30th May 2019.
- Amuta, Chidi. *The Theory of African Literature: Implications for Practical Criticism*. London: Zed. 1989. Print.
- Amuzu, Koku. *Beyond Ideology: Literary Technique in Ngũgĩ's *Petals of Blood* and *Devil on the Cross**. Montreux, Switzerland: Minerva. 1997. Print.
- April A. Gordon, *Transforming Capitalism and Patriarchy: Gender and development in Africa*. USA: Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc. 1996. Print.
- Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics* trans. W.D. Ross. Batoche Books Kitchener. 1999.
- Arnfred, Signe. *Re-thinking Sexuality in Africa*, ed. Signe Arnfred. Uppsala: The Nordic Africa Institute, Sweden. 2004. Print.
- _____. "Sex, Food, and Female Power: Discussion of Data Material from Northern Mozambique." *Sexualities*. 10(2): (2007). 141–158. Web. 20th April 2019.
- Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory*

and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures. London: Routledge. 1989. Print.

Ashley Currier & Thérèse Migraine-George (2017) “Lesbian”/ female same-sex sexualities

in Africa, *Journal of Lesbian Studies*. 21:2, 133–150. 20th April 2019.

Asturias, Miguel Angel. *Mister President*. Spain: Ediciones Catedra. 1946. Print.

Athiemoolam, Logamurthie. “The Pitfalls of National Consciousness as Depicted in *Matigari*

by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o”. *Journal of Language and Literature*. 18.1 (2018) 9–19. Web. 19th May 2019.

Atieno-Odhiambo, E.S. “The Formative Years 1945–55” *Decolonization & Independence in*

Kenya 1940–93 Eds. B. A. Ogot & W.R. Ochieng’. London: James Curry. 1999. Print.

Bailey, Diana. *Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, The River Between: A Critical View*. London:

Collins. 1985. Print.

Balogun, F. Odun. “Ngũgĩ’s *Devil on the Cross*: The Novel as Hagiography of a

Marxist.” *Ufahamu: Journal of the African Artist Association*. 16.1 (1986): 1–24. Web. 20th June 2016.

_____ *Ngũgĩ and African Postcolonial Narrative: The Novel as Oral Narrative in Multi-Genre Performance*. St-Hyacinthe, QC: World Heritage Press. 1997. Print.

_____ “Ngũgĩ’s *Matigari* and the Refiguration of the Novel as Genre” In *The Word of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o* Edited by Charles Cantalupo. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, Inc. 1995, 185–196. Print.

_____ “*Matigari*: An African Novel as Oral Narrative Performance”. *Oral Tradition*. 10.1

(1995): 129–65. Web. 19th May 2019.

Banning, Anne “Mother-son incest: Confronting a Prejudice”. *Child Abuse & Neglect*. 13

(1989): 563–70. Web. 10th June 2019.

Barber, Karin, ed. *Readings in African Popular Culture*. Bloomington: Indiana

University Press. 1997. Print.

Bardolphe, Jacqueline. “Ngũgĩ’s wa Thiong’o’s *A Grain of Wheat* and *Petals of Blood* as

Readings of Conrad’s *Under Western Eyes* and *Victory*.” *The Conradian*. 12.1 (1987):

32–49. Web. 20th June 2016.

Bauman, Zygmunt. *Liquid Love: On the Frailty of Human Bonds*. Cambridge: Polity.

2003. Print.

Beall, Todd S. “Seven Principles of Christian Marriage: In the

Beginning”. answersingensis.org/family/marriage. 2016. Web. 8th September 2019.

Beck, Ulrich and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim. *The Normal Chaos of Love*. Trans. Mark

Ritter & Jane Wiebel. 1990. Cambridge: Policy Press. 1995. Print.

Beigel, Hugo G. “Romantic Love.” *American Sociological Review*. 16.3 (1951): 326–34.

Web. 25th May 2016.

Bledsoe, Caroline H. *Women and Marriage in Kpelle Society*. California: Stanford

University Press. 1980. Print.

Bennett, George and Alison Smith. "Kenya: From 'White Man's Country' to Kenyatta's State 1945–1963" *History of East Africa* Eds. D.A. Low and Alison Smith Vol.111 Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1976. Print.

Benson, T. G, ed. *Kikuyu-English Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2001. Print.

Biersteker, Ann. "Matigari ma Njiuungi: What Grows from Leftover Seeds of "Chat"" In *The Word of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o* Edited by Charles Cantalupo. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, Inc. 1995 141–158. Print.

Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. *The Empire writes back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures*. London and New York: Routledge. 1989. Print.

Björkman, Ingrid. *Mother, Sing for Me: People's Theatre in Kenya*. London and Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Zed Books. 1989. Print.

Blake, William. "London" in *Songs of Experience*. London: Penguin. 1794. Print.

Booker, M. Keith. *The African Novel in English*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1998. Print.

Boehmer, Elleke. *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphor 2nd Ed*. New York: Oxford University Press. 2005. Print.

_____. "The Master's Dance to the Master's Voice". *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*. 26: 1 (1991):188–97. Web. 25th June 2018.

Bongmba, Elias. "On Love: Literary Images of A Phenomenology of Love in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *The River Between*." *Literature and Theology*. 15.4 (2001): 373-95. Web. JSTOR. 21st June 2016.

- Bouhadiba, Malika. “Magical Realism for Revolutionary Didactic Purposes in Ngũgĩ’s *Matigari*”. *Arab World English Journal*. (AWEJ), 7.1 (2016). 194–202. Web. 19th May 2019.
- Breidlid, Anders. “Ngũgĩ’s *Matigari*, a Non-Materialist Discourse and PostModernism” *The Australian Journal of Trans-national Writing*. 1 (2005). Web. 19th May 2019.
- Brown, David. Maughan. “*Matigari* and the Rehabilitation of Religion.” *Research in African Literatures*. 22.4 (1991): 173–180. Web. 13th August 2016.
- Brown, Nicholas. *Utopian Generations: The Political Horizon of Twentieth-Century Literature*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. 2005. Print.
- _____. “Revolution and Recidivism: The Problem of Kenyan History in the Plays of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o”. *Research in African Literatures, Drama and Performance*. 30. 4 (1999): 56-73. Web. 19th February 2017.
- Burke, Fred G. “Political Evolution in Kenya” *The transformation of East Africa: Studies in Political Anthropology*, Ed Stanley Diamond & Fred G. Burke. New York, London: Basic Books Inc., Publishers. 1966. Print.
- Burns, Angie. Looking for Love in intimate Heterosexual Relationships. *Feminism & Psychology*. (2000): 10:481-485. Web. 25th May 2016.
- Caminero-Santangelo, Byron. *African Fiction and Joseph Conrad: Reading Postcolonial Intertextuality*. Albany: State University of New York Press. 2005. Print.
- Campbell, Colin. “‘All You Need Is Love’: From Romance to Romanticism: The

- Beatles, Romantic Love and Cultural Change.” *Etnofoor*. 19.1 (2006): 111-23. Web. 25th May 2016.
- Cantalupo, Charles, ed. *Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o: Text and Contexts*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press. 1995a. Print.
- _____. ed. *The World of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press. 1995. Print.
- Carrier, Joseph M., and Stephen O. Murray. “Woman-woman Marriage in Africa.” In *Boy-wives and Female Husbands: Studies in African Homosexualities*, edited by Will Roscoe and Stephen O. Murray, New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 1998. 255–66. Print.
- Capellanus, Andreas. *The Art of Courtly Love*. Columbia: University Press. 1990. Print.
- Chant, Sylvia and Alice Evans. “Looking for the one(s): Young Love and Urban Poverty in the Gambia”. *Environment and Industrialization*. 22.2 (2010) 353-369. Web. 10th June 2016.
- Chesaina, Ciarunji. *Ninani yu Majaribuni katika Mzalendo Kimathi?* Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1982. Print.
- Chesaina, Jane C. “East Africa Ngũgĩ’s wa Thiong’o’s *The River Between* and the African Oral Tradition.” In *Teaching of African Literature in Schools, Vol. 1*. Edited by Eddah Gachukia and Kichamu Akivaga, 62–76. Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau. 1978. Print.
- Chitando, Ezra & Pauline Mateveke. Africanizing the discourse on homosexuality: challenges and prospects. *Critical African Studies*. 9:1 (2017) 124-140. 30th April 2019.

- Chukukere, Gloria Chineze. "Buchi Emecheta: The Yoke of Womanhood" in *Gender Voices and Choices: Redefining Women in Contemporary African Fiction* Ed. Oyèrónké Oyewùmí. United States: Palgrave Macmillan. 2011. Print.
- Cole, Jennifer. "Love, Money, and Economies of Intimacy in Tamatave, Madagascar" *Love in Africa* ed. Cole Jennifer & Lynn M. Thomas. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press. 2009. Print.
- Colson, Robert L. "Arresting Time, Resisting Arrest: Narrative Time and the African Dictator in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Wizard of the Crow*." *Research in African Literatures*. 42.1 (2011): 133–153. Web. 20th June 2016.
- Cook, David. *African Literature: A Critical Overview*. London: Longman, 1980. Print.
- Cook, David and Michael Okenimkpe. *Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o: An Exploration of his Writings*. Oxford: James Currey. 1997. Print.
- Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness*. United Kingdom: Blackwood's Magazine. 1902. Print.
- Coppinger, Robert M., and Rosenblatt Paul C. "Romantic Love and Subsistence Dependence of Spouses." *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*. 24.3 (1968): 310–19. Web. 25th May 2016.
- Crehan, Stewart. "The Politics of the Signifier: Ngũgĩ's wa Thiong'o's *Petals of Blood*." *World Literature Written in English*. 26.1 (1986): 1–24. Web. 13th August 2016.
- Crossman, Ashley. "Materialism" (www.thoughtco) Updated March 02, 2017. Web. 28th June 2017.

Dalleo, Raphael. “Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s *Wizard of the Crow* and Postcolonial Pedagogy.” *Research in African Literatures*. 43.2 (2012): 138–154. Web. 20th

June 2016.

De Munck, Victor C., Andrey Korotayev, Janina de Munck, and Darya Khaltourina

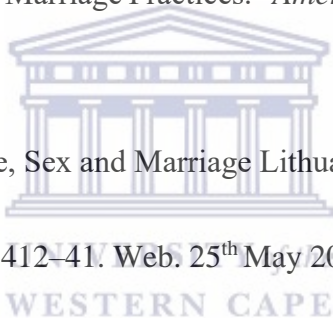
“Cross-Cultural Analysis of Models of Romantic Love Among U.S. Residents, Russians, and Lithuanians” *Cross-Cultural Research*. 45(2) 128–154 2011 SAGE Publications. Web 9th March 2019.

De Munck, Victor C. “Love and Marriage in a Sri Lankan Muslim Community: Toward

a Reevaluation of Dravidian Marriage Practices.” *American Ethnologist*. 23.4 (1996): 698–716. Web. 25th May 2016.

De Munck, Victor. “Romantic Love, Sex and Marriage Lithuania Style.” *Journal of*

Baltic Studies. 37.4 (2006): 412–41. Web. 25th May 2016.



De Rougemont, Denis. *Love in the Western World* Trans. Montgomery Begon.

Princeton, New York: Princeton University Press. 1983. Print.

Dell, Heather S. ““Ordinary” Sex, Prostitutes, and Middle-Class Wives: Liberalization

and National Identity in India”. *Sex in Development: Science, Sexuality, and Morality in Global Perspective* Eds. Vincanne Adams and Stacy Leigh Pigg. Durham & London: Duke University Press. 2005. Print.

Dlamini, Busangokwakhe. “Homosexuality in the African Context” *Agenda: Empowering*

Women for Gender Equity, 67. *African Feminisms, Homosexuality*. 2.3(2006): 128–36. 30th April 2019.

Dinan, Carmel. "Sugar daddies and gold-diggers: The white-collar single women in Accra,"

in *Female and Male in West Africa* ed. C. Oppong. 1983. 344–66. Print.

Downing, Angela. "Language and Theme in The Novels Of James Ngũgĩ (Ngũgĩ

wa Thiong'o). *Atlantis*. 2. 2 (1981): 74–87. Web. 28 July 2016.

D. Salituma Wamalwa. "The Engaged Artist: The Social Vision of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o" *Africa*

Today. 33.1 (1986): 9–18. Web.

Duder, C. J. D. "Love and the Lions: The Image of White Settlement in Kenya in Popular

Fiction, 1919–1939." *African Affairs*. 90. 360, 1991. 427–438. Web. *JSTOR*,

18th October 2017.

Duerden, Dennis. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o: James Ngũgĩ in *Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o Speaks*

Interviews eds Reinhard Sander and Bernth Linfors. 1964 (1972) 1.

Edorhe, P. F. "*Weep Not, Child*": *Notes and Essays*. Ibadan, Nigeria: Onibonoje, 1970. Print.

Ekwensi, Cyprian. *People of the City*. Nigeria: African Writers Series. 1954. Print.

Emecheta, Buchi. *Joy of Motherhood*. Allison & Busby. 1979. Print.

Engels, Friedrich. "Letters on Historical Materialism" *The Marx-Engels Reader* 2nd ed

Robert C. Tucker. New York & London: W.W.Norton & Company. 1978. Print.

Epprecht, Marc. *Heterosexual Africa? The History of an idea from the age of exploration to*

the age of AIDS. USA: Ohio University Press. 2008.

_____. "Sexuality, Africa, History". *The American Historical Review*. 114. 5 (2009),

1258–1272. 15th April 2019.

- _____ “Sexuality Research as ‘Dirty Work’? An Africanist Perspective.” *Sexualities* 17.5/6. (2014) 662–668. Web. 20th April 2019.
- Evans, Jennifer. “Mother Africa and the Heroic Whore: Female Images in *Petals of Blood*.” *Contemporary African Literature*. Edited by Hal Wylie, Eileen Julien, and Russell J. Linnemann, 57–65. Washington, DC: Three Continents Press. 1983. Print.
- _____ “Women and Resistance in Ngũgĩ’s *Devil on the Cross*.” *Africa Literature Today*. 15 (1987): 131–139. Web. 13th August 2016.
- Eve, Michael “Is friendship a sociological topic?” *European Journal of Sociology*: Cambridge University Press. *Mysticism and ascetism*. 43.3 (2002), 386–409. Web 17th May 2019.
- Falola, Toyin & Amponsah, Nana Akua. *Women roles in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Greenwood: Santa Barbara, California. (2012); 13–25. Web. 20th June 2016.
- Falola, Toyin & House-Soremekun Bessie. *Gender, Sexuality and Mothering in Africa*. Africa World Press. 2011. Print.
- Fair, Laura. “Making Love in the Indian Ocean: Hindi Films, Zanzibari Audiences and the Construction of Romance in the 1950 and 1960s” In *Love in Africa*. Cole Jennifer and Thomas Lynn M. (eds.), University of Chicago Press: Chicago and London. 2009. Print.
- Farah, Nuruddin. *From a Crooked Rib*. London: Heinemann. 1977. Print.
- _____ “Variations on the Theme of an African Dictatorship: Patriarchy, Gender, and

Political Oppression in Somalia”. *Critique Studies in Contemporary Fiction*. 38.3 (2012): 205–220. Web. 2nd December 2018.

Finnegan, Ruth. *Oral Literature in Africa*. United Kingdom and United States: Open Book Publishers. CIC Ltd. 2012. Print.

Fisher, Helen. “The Madness of the Gods.” *Poetry*. 1974 (2011): 308–09. Web. 13th June 2016.

Foucault, Michel. *The Use of Pleasure*. Trans. Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage-Random. 1986. Print.

Forna, Aminatta. *The Memory of Love*. USA: Bloomsbury Publishing. 2010. Print.

Fuentes, Carlos. *The Death of Artemio Cruz*. Spain: Fondo de Cultura Económica. 1962. Print.

Gachukia, Eddah. *Notes on Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s The River Between*. Nairobi, Kenya: Heinemann Educational. 1975. Print.

_____ “The Role of Women in Ngũgĩ’s Novels.” *Busara*. 3.4 (1971): 30–33.

Giddens, Anthony. *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love and Eroticism in Modern Societies*. Cambridge: Policy Press. 1992. Print.

Gikandi, Simon. “Ngũgĩ’s Conversion: Writing and the Politics of Language”. *Research in African Literatures*. 23 (1992): 130–44. Web. 20th June 2016.

_____ *Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. 2000. Print.

_____ “Moments of Melancholy: Ngũgĩ and the Discourse of Emotions” in *The Word of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o* ed. Charles Cantalupo. 59–72. Print.

_____. *Reading the African Novel*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. 1987. Print.

_____. “The Epistemology of Translation: Ngũgĩ, *Matigari*, and the Politics of Language.” *Research in African Literatures*. 22.4 (1991): 161–167. Web. 20th June 2016.

_____. “The Postcolonial Wizard: A Review of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s *Wizard of the Crow* (2006).” *Transition*. 98.1 (2008): 156–169. Web. 20th June 2016.

Girard, Rene. *Deceit, Desire and the Novel: Self and Other in Literary Structure*, trans.

Yvonne Freccero. Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press. 1966. Print.

Gĩtĩtĩ, Gĩtahi. “Recuperating a ‘Disappearing’ Art-Form: Resonances of ‘Gĩcaandĩ’ in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s *Devil on the Cross*.” In *The World of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o*. Edited by Charles Cantalupo, 109–128. Trenton, NJ: Africa World. 1995. Print.

Grayling, A. C. *Friendship*. United State: Yale University Press. 2013. Print.

Greco, Silvana, Mary Holmes and Jordan Mckenzi. “Friendship and Happiness from a Sociological Perspective” Springer Science and Business Media Dordrecht. 2015.
Web 17th May 2019.

Gugelberger, Georg M., ed. *Marxism and African Literature*. London: J. Currey, 1985. Print.

Gugler, Josef. “How Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o Shifted from Class Analysis to a Neo-Colonialist Perspective”. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*. 32. 2 (1994), 329–39. Web. 1st July 2018.

Gupta, Giri Raj. “Love, Arranged Marriage, and the Indian Social Structure.” *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*. 7.1 (1976): 75–85. Web. 5th March 2019.

- Gurnah, Abdulrazak. "Matigari: A Tract of Resistance." *Research in African Literatures*. 22.4 (1991): 169–72. Web. 25th May 2016.
- Halstead, J. Mark. "Teaching about Love." *British Journal of Educational Studies*. 53.3 (2005): 290–305. Web. 25th May 2016.
- Haram, Liv. "Prostitutes or Modern Women? Negotiating Respectability in Northern Tanzanian" *Rethinking Sexuality in Africa* ed. Signe Arnfred. Uppsala: The Nordic Africa Institute, Sweden. 2004. Print.
- Harrow, Kenneth. "Ngũgĩ's wa Thiong'o's *A Grain of Wheat*: Season of Irony." In *Critical Essays on Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o*. Ed. Peter Nazareth, 169–86. New York: Twayne. 2000. Print.
- Hay, Margaret Jean. "Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *A Grain of Wheat*." In *African Novels in the Classroom*. Edited by Margaret Jean Hay, 191–202. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner. 2000. Print.
- Hill-Lubin, Mildred A. "The Relationship of African-Americans and Africans: A Recurring Theme in the Works of Ata Aidoo." *Présence Africaine Nouvelle Série*. 124 (1982): 190–201. Web. JSTOR. 23rd June 2016.
- Hofmeyr, Isabel, Joyce Nyairo & James Ogude. Specificities: 'Who can Bwogo Me?' Popular Culture in Kenya, *Social Identities*. 9:3 (2003): 373–82 Web. 18th October 2017.
- Hooper, Glenn. "Ngũgĩ's *Matigari* and the Politics of Literature" *Allernation*. 5.1 (1998): 13–31. Web. 19th May 2019.

Horvat, Srećko. *Radicality of Love*. United Kingdom: Polity Press. 2016. Print.

Hunter, Mark. *Love in the Time of Aids: Inequality, Gender and Rights in South Africa*.

USA: Indiana University Press. 2010. Print.

____ “Failing Men: Modern Masculinities amid Unemployment” in *Love in the Time of Aids: Inequality, Gender, and Rights in South Africa*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 2010. Print.

____ “Providing Love: Sex and Exchange in the Twentieth-Century South Africa” *Love in Africa* ed. Cole Jennifer & Lynn M. Thomas. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press. 2009. Print.

____ “The Materiality of Everyday Sex: Thinking beyond ‘prostitution’”, *African Studies*. 61:1 (2002): 99–120. Web. 6th September 2018.

Ibrahim, Abubakar Adam. *Season of Crimson Blossoms*. Jos Nigeria: Parrésia Publishers.

2015. Print.

Illouz, Eva. *Consuming the Romantic Utopia: Love and the Cultural Contradictions*

of Capitalism. Berkeley: University of California Press. 1997. Print.

Imbuga, Francis D. *Aminata*. Kenya: East African Educational Publishers. 1988. Print.

____ *Betrayal in the City* Kenya: East African Educational Publishers. 1976. Print.

Jabbi, Bu-Buakei. “Conrad’s Influence on Betrayal in *A Grain of Wheat*.” *Research in African Literatures*. 11.1 (1980): 50–83. Web. 20th June 2016.

_____. “The Structure of Symbolism in *A Grain of Wheat*.” *Research in African Literatures*. 16.2 (1985): 210–242. Web. 20th June 2016.

Jaggi, Maya “Decolonise the Mind: Maya Jaggi applauds a vivid satire on an African kleptocracy from Ngũgĩ waThiong’o, *Wizard of the Crow*” *The Guardian Weekly* Web. 9th September 2006.

Jankowiak, William R., and Fischer Edward F. “A Cross-Cultural Perspective on Romantic Love.” *Ethnology*. 31.2 (1992): 149–55. Web. 20th May 2016.

Jankowiak, William, and Gerth Helen. “Can You Love More Than One Person at the Same Time? A Research Report.” *Anthropologica*. 54.1 (2012): 95–105. Web. 20th May 2016.

Jankowiak, William R. *Romantic Passion: a Universal Experience?* New York: Columbia University Press. 1995. Print.

JanMohamed, Abdul. *Manichean Aesthetics: The Politics of Literature in Colonial* Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press. 1983. Print.

Julien, Eileen. *African Novels and the Question of Orality*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 1992. Print.

Kamenju, Grant. “*Petals of Blood* as a Mirror of African Revolution” Gugelberger, Georg M. ed. *Marxism and African Literature*. London: J. Currey, 1985. Print.

Karagöz1, Cengiz. “The Local Elites In *Matigari* by Ngũgĩ’s wa Thiong’o”. *BJSS Balkan Journal of Social Sciences*. 4.7 (2015). n. pag. Web. 19th May 2019.

Karandashev, Victor. A Cultural Perspective on Romantic Love. *Online Readings*

in *Psychology and Culture*. 5.4 (2015).1–21. Web 5th March 2019.

Kasanga, Luanga A., and Mambo Kalume. “The Use of Indigenized Forms of English in Ngũgĩ’s *Devil on the Cross*: A Linguistic and Sociolinguistic Analysis.” *African Languages and Cultures*. 9.1 (1996): 43–69. Web. 10th June 2016.

Kenyatta, Jomo. *Facing Mount Kenya*. London: Mercury Books. 1961. Print.

Kendall, Kathryn Limakatso. “Women in Lesotho and the (Western) Construction of Homophobia.” In *Female Desires: Same-sex Relations and Transgender Practices across Cultures*, edited by Evelyn Blackwood and Saskia E. Wieringa, 157–178. New York: Columbia University Press. 1999. Print.

_____. *Lesbian Expression in Lesotho: Homophobia is the White Folk’s Disease*. University of Natal: Pietermaritzburg. 1996. Print.

Killam, G. D. *An Introduction to the Writing of Ngũgĩ*. London: Heinemann Educational. 1980. Print.

_____. ed. *Critical Perspectives on Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o*. Washington: Three Continents Press. 1984. Print.

_____. ed. *African Writers on African Writing*. London: Heinemann. 1973. Print.

_____. “Kenya” in *Literature of World In English*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. 1974. Print.

Knipp, Thomas. “Two Novels from Kenya: J. Ngũgĩ” in *Critical Perspectives on Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o* Ed. G. D. Killam. 3. London: Three Continents Press. 1984. Print.

Krishnamurthy, Sarala. “An Exploration of the Theme of Guilt and Redemption in *The*

Guide by R.K. Narayan and *A Grain of Wheat* by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o”. *NAWA Journal of Language and Communication*. (2007): 105–11. Web. 10th April 2018.

Kuria, Mike. “Speaking in tongues: Ngũgĩ’s gift to workers and peasants

through mũrogiwakagogo”. *Journal of Literary Studies*. 27:3 (2011): 56–73, Web 24th August 2018.

Kurland, Milton. “Romantic Love and Economic Considerations: A Cultural Comparison.”

The Journal of Educational Sociology. 27.2 (1953): 72–9. Web. 23rd May 2016.

Kurtz, John Roger. *Urban Obsession, Urban Fears: The Postcolonial Kenyan Novel* Oxford and Trenton, NJ: James Currey and Africa World Press. 1998. Print.

Lambert, H. E. *Kikuyu Social and Political Institutions*. London: Oxford University Press. 1956. Print.



Lawson, Christine. “Clinical Assessment of Mother-Son Sexual Abuse”. *Clinical Social*

Work Journal. 19 (1991): 391–403. Web. 10th June 2019.

_____ Mother-son sexual abuse: Rare or underreported? A critique of research. *Child Abuse & Neglect*. 17 (1993): 261–269. Web. 10th June 2019.

Lawrence, D. H. *The Rainbow*. United Kingdom: Modern Library. 1915. Print.

Leakey, Louis. *Mau Mau and the Kikuyu*. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd. 1952. Print.

Leech, Geoffrey. *Style in Fiction*. London: Longman. 1990. Print.

Ligaga, Dinah. “Kwani? Exploring New Literary Spaces in Kenya” *Africa Insight*. 35.

2 | (2005): 46–52. Web. 18th October 2017.

Lindholm, Charles. “Love as an experience of transcendence” In William R.

Jankowiak (Ed.), *Romantic love: A universal experience?* (57–71) New York: Columbia University Press. (1995). Print.

_____ “Romantic Love and Anthropology.” *Etnofoor*. 19.1 (2006): 5–21.

Lindfors, Bernth, and Bala Kothandaraman, eds. *The Writer as Activist: South*

Asian Perspectives on Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press. 2001. Print.

Liyong, Taban lo. *Corpse Lovers and Corpse Haters: (Direct Discourse and Lyrical Verse*

and Trance Visions): Poems Compos Composed when Dictator Idi Amin Dada Ruled Uganda. Limpopo, South Africa: Timbila Poetry Project. 2005. Print.

Love in Africa. Eds. Jennifer Cole and Lynn M. Thomas. Chicago: University of Chicago Publishers. 2009. Print.

Lovesey, Oliver. ed. *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o*. New York: MLA. 2012. Print.

_____ “‘Initiation for the Nation’: Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s Writing for Children.” In *Voices of the Other: Children’s Literature and the Postcolonial Context*. Edited by Roderick McGillis, 193–209. New York: Routledge. 2010. Print.

_____ *Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o*. New York: Twayne Publishers. 2000. Print.

Luhmann, Niklas. *Love as Passion: The Codification of Intimacy*. Trans. Jeremy Gaines and Doris L. Jones. Cambridge: Policy Press. 1986. Print.

Macdonald, Ian P. “The Cybogue Manifesto: Time, Utopia, and Globality in Ngũgĩ’s

- Wizard of the Crow*”. *Research in African Literatures*. 47. 1 (2016): 57–75. Web 24th August 2018.
- Macharia, Keguro. “‘How Does a Girl Grow into a Woman?’: Girlhood in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s *The River Between*.” *Research in African Literatures*. 43.2 (2012): 1–17. Web. 10th June 2016.
- Macfarlane, A.J. “Love and Capitalism.” *Cambridge Anthropology*. 11.2 (1986): 22–39. Web. 23rd May 2016.
- Maddy, Yulisa Amadu, and Donnarae MacCann. “Escape or Rebel? The Case for Anticolonialist Education in *Weep Not, Child*.” In *Critical Essays on Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o*. Ed. Peter Nazareth, 80–92. New York: Twayne. 2000. Print.
- Magee, William H. “Instrument of Growth: The Courtship and Marriage Plot in Jane Austen’s Novels.” *The Journal of Narrative Technique*. 17. 2. (1987) 198–208. Web. Jstor. 5th April 2017.
- Maina, Oscar M. “Mirroring the Subtext: Postmodernism in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s *Wizard of the Crow*” *Journal of Language, Technology & Entrepreneurship in Africa*. 1.1 (2008): 67–74. Web. 24th August 2018.
- Maloba, W. O. “Ngũgĩ and Kenya’s History.” In *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o*. Edited by Oliver Lovesey, 60–75. New York: MLA. 2012.
- Margolin, Leslie. “The Effects of Mother-Son Incest”. *Springer Link*. 8.2 (1985): 104–14. 10th June 2019.
- Márquez, Gabriel García. *The Autumn of the Patriarch*. Spain: Plaza & Janes. 1975. Print.

- Martini, Jürgen. “Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o: East African Novelist” *Critical Perspectives on Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o* ed G. D. Killam. USA: Three Continents Press. 1984. Print.
- Martini, Jürgen, Anna Rutherford, Kirsten Holst Petersen, Vibeke Stenderup & Bent Thomsen. “Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o: Interview” in *Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o Speaks Interviews* eds Reinhard Sander and Bernth Linfors. 1980 (1981) 115–61. Print.
- Marx, Karl & Frederick Engels. *The German Ideology: Part One* ed. C. J. Arthur. London: Lawrence & Wishart. 1997. Print.
- Masquelier, Adeline. “Lessons from Rubí: Love, Poverty, and the Educational Value of Televised Dramas in Niger.” In *Love in Africa*. Cole Jennifer and Thomas Lynn M. (eds.), University of Chicago Press: Chicago and London. 2009. Print.
- Mathuray, Mark. “Resuming a Broken Dialogue: Prophecy, Nationalist Strategies, and Religious Discourses in Ngũgĩ’s Early Work.” *Research in African Literatures*. 40.2 (2009): 40–62. Web. 20th July 2016.
- Maughan-Brown, David. “Not Yet the Freedom,” 42 in *his Land, Freedom and Fiction: History and Ideology in Kenya*. London: Zed. 1985. 230–58. Print
- Mazrui, Alamin and Lupenga Mphande. *Orality and the Literature of Combat: Ngũgĩ and the Legacy of Fanon*. In *The Word of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o* Edited by Charles Cantalupo. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, Inc. 1995 159–83. Print.
- _____. “The Historical Imperative in African Activist Literature.” *Ufahamu* 18.2 (1990): 47–58.
- Mazrui Ali A. “On the Concept of “We Are All Africans””. *The American Political Science Review*. 57. 1 (1963) 88–97. Web 4th October 2018.

Mbembe, Achille. *On the Postcolony*. University of California Press. 2001. Print.

Mbiti, S. John. *Love and Marriage in Africa*. London: Longman. 1973. Print.

McLaren, Joseph. "From the National to the Global: Satirical Magic Realism

in Ngũgĩ's *Wizard of the Crow*." *The Global South*. 2.2 (2008): 150–158. Web. 13th August 2016.

_____. "Ideology and Form: The Critical Reception of *Petals of Blood*." *Paintbrush: A Journal of Poetry and Translation*. 20.39 and 40 (1993): 73–91. Web. 13th August 2016.

Michaud, André-Paul. "Nature as Agency in Ngũgĩ's *The River Between*." In *Critical*

Essays on Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. Edited by Peter Nazareth, 48–63. New York: Twayne. 2000. Print.

Middleton, John and Kershaw, Greet. *The Kikuyu and Kamba of Kenya*. London: The Sidney Press Ltd. 1965. Print.



Millet, Kate. *Sexual Politics*. New York: University of Illinois Press. 1970. Print.

Modern Loves: The Anthropology of Romantic Courtship and Companionate Marriage eds.

Hirsch, Jennifer S. and Holly Wardlow. USA: University of Michigan Press. 2006. Print.

Mohamed, Salah Kaci. "A Lawrencean Imagination for a View of Fiction: The Impact of

D. H. Lawrence on Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o". New York: Peter Lang Publishing. (2015) 1–32. Web. 5th April 2017.

Monkman, Leslie. "Kenya and the New Jerusalem in *A Grain of Wheat*," *African*

Literature Today. 7 (1975): 111–16. Web. 16th October 2018.

Moorcroft, Sue. *Love Writing: How to Make Money Writing Romantic or Erotic Fiction*.

UK: Accent Press Ltd. 2010.

Moolla, Fiona. "Foundational Fictions: Variations of the Marriage Plot in Flora Nwapa's

Early Anglophone-Igbo Novels" In *Routledge Handbook of African Literature* edited

by Carli Coetzee and Moradewun Adejunmobi. London: Routledge. 2019. 290–304. Print.

_____ "Love in a State of Fear: Reflections on Intimate Relations in Nuruddin

Farah's Dictatorship Novels", *Journal of The African Literature Association*. 10.1

(2016): 118–130. Web. 19th August 2016.

Moore, Henrietta. "Subjectivity, Sexuality and Social Inequalities" In *International*

Handbook of Gender and Poverty: Concepts, Research, Policy, ed Sylvia Chant Edward

Elgar, Cheltenham, (2010): 35–40. Print.

Mudaly, Ronicka. "The power of love: Young South Africans reconceptualising Love

and Sexual Relationships". *Agenda*. 27:2 (2013): 38–46. Web. 20th June 2016.

Muhomah, Catherine. "A failed romance: reading masculinity and love in David Karanja's

The Girl was Mine". *Africa Insight*. 35. 1 (2005): 26–32. Web. 18th October 2017.

_____ "What Do Women Want?: Versions Of Masculinity In Kenyan Romantic Fiction".

English Studies In Africa. 45:2 (2002): 77–90. Web. 18th October 2017.

Mutongi, Kenda. "Dear Dolly"s' Advice: Representations of Youth, Courtship, and

Sexualities in Africa, 1960–1980. *Love in Africa*. Cole Jennifer and Thomas Lynn M.

(eds.), University of Chicago Press: Chicago and London. 2009. 83–106. Print.

Mwangi, Evan. "Gender, Unreliable Oral Narration, and the Untranslated Preface in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Devil on the Cross*." *Research in African Literatures*. 38.4 (2007): 28–46. Web. 20th July 2016.

_____. "Romance in Times of Mega Corruption" *Daily Nation*. 12th February 2016. Web. 30th May 2019.

_____. "The Gendered Politics of Untranslated Language and Aporia in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Petals of Blood*." *Research in African Literatures*. 35.4 (2004): 66–74. Web. 20th July 2016.

_____. "Gender and the Erotics of Nationalism in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's Drama." *TDR: The Drama Review*. 53.2 (2009): 90–112.

Narang, Harish. *Politics as Fiction: The Novels of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o*. New Delhi: Creative Books. 1995. Print.

_____. "Prospero and the Land of Calibans: A *Grain of Wheat*" Ed. Peter Nazareth, 123-140. New York: Twayne. 2000. Print.

Natascha Klocker & Elyse Stanes 'Reel love' across ethnic

boundaries? The extent and significance of inter-ethnic intimacy in Australian cinema, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. 36:12 (2013): 2035-2054. Web. 15th August 2018.

Naugle, David. "The Platonic Concept of Love: The Symposium" In *An Interpretation of Plato's Symposium*. dbu.edu/naugle/pdf/platonic.

Nazareth, Peter. ed. *Critical Essays on Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o*. New York: Twayne. 2000. Print.

_____. In *Marxism and African Literature* ed. Gerog M. Gugelberger,

Georg. London: J. Currey. 1985. Print.

_____ “Is *A Grain of Wheat* a Socialist Novel?” In his *An African View of Literature*

Evanston: Northwestern University Press. 1974. 128–54. Print.

Ndĩgĩrĩgĩ, Gĩchingiri “Character Names and Types in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s *Devil on the Cross* and *Wizard of the Crow*” *A Journal of African Studies*. 38.3 (2015): 189–216.

Web 24th August 2018.

Ndĩgĩrĩgĩ, Josphat Gichingiri. *Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s Drama and the Kamĩrũthũ Popular*

Theater Experiment. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press. 2007. Print.

Ngara, Emmanuel. *Stylistic Criticism and the African Novel: A Study of the Language,*

Art and Content of African Fiction. London: Heinemann. 1982. Print.

Ngũgĩ, James. *A Grain of Wheat*. London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd. 1967. Print.

_____ *The Black Hermit*. Nairobi, London, Ibadan: Heinemann Educational

Books. 1968. Print.

_____ *The River Between*. England and Wales: Heinemann (Pearson Education) Ltd.

1965. Print.

_____ *Weep Not, child*. England and Wales: Heinemann (Pearson Education) Ltd.

1964. Print.

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o. “Ama Ata Aidoo: A Personal Tribute.” In *Essays in Honour of Ama*

Ata Aidoo at 70: A Reader in African Cultural Studies. Edited by Anne V. Adams, 426–28. Banbury, UK: Ayebia, 2012. Print.

- _____ “A Meeting in the Dark.” In *Secret Lives and Other Stories*. By Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, 55–70. Nairobi, Kenya: East African Educational Publishers. 1993b. Print.
- _____ “A Mercedes Funeral.” In *Secret Lives and Other Stories*. By Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, 113–137. Nairobi, Kenya: East African Educational Publishers. 1993c. Print.
- _____ “And the Rain Came Down” In *Secret Lives and Othr Stories*. By Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o. Nairobi, Kenya: East African Educational Publishers. 1993. Print.
- _____ *Barrel of a Pen: Resistance to Repression in Neo-Colonial Kenya*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press. 1983. Print.
- _____ *Birth of A Dream Weaver: A Writer’s Awakening*. London: Harvill Secker. 2016. Print.
- _____ *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. London: James Currey. 1986. Print.
- _____ *Detained: A Writers Prison Diary*. Nairobi, Kenya: Heinemann. 1981. Print.
- _____ *Devil on the Cross*. London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd. 1982. Print.
- _____ *Dreams in a Time of War*. New York: Pantheon. 2010. Print.
- _____ “For Peace, Justice, and Culture: The Intellectual in the Twenty-First Century.” *Profession*. (2006): 33–39.
- _____ *Globalectics: Theory and the Politics of Knowing*. New York: Columbia University Press. 2012.
- _____ “Gone with the Drought.” In *Secret Lives and Other Stories*. By Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, 15–20. Nairobi, Kenya: East African Educational Publishers. 1993a. Print.

- _____ “Goodbye Africa” In *Secret Lives and Other Stories*. By Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o. Nairobi, Kenya: East African Educational Publishers. 1993. Print.
- _____ *Homecoming: Essays on African and Caribbean Literature, Culture and Politics*. London: Heinemann. 1972. Print.
- _____ “Ikinya ria Wendo.” *Mũtiiri* 1.3 (1994d): 56. Print.
- _____ *In the House of the Interpreter*. London: Harvill Secker. 2012. Print.
- _____ *In the Name of the Mother: Reflections on Writers and Empire*. Nairobi: Educational Publishers Ltd. 2013. Print.
- _____ “Introduction.” In *Because the Dawn Breaks!: Poems Dedicated to the Grenadian People*. By Merle Collins, vii–xv. London: Karia. 1985. Print.
- _____ *I Try Witchcraft Alliance High Magazine* (1957)
- _____ “Kiingeretha: Ruthiomi rwa Thi Yoothe? Kaba Githwairi.” *Yale Journal of Criticism*. 4.1 (1990): 269–293.
- _____ “Makundo ma Wendo.” *Mũtiiri* 1.1 (1994a): 79–88. Print.
- _____ “Makundo ma Wendo.” *Mũtiiri* 1.2 (1994b): 85–95. Print.
- _____ *Matigari*. London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd. 1986. Print.
- _____ “Minutes of Glory.” In *Secret Lives and Other Stories*. By Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, 82–96. Nairobi, Kenya: East African Educational Publishers. 1993d. Print.
- _____ *Moving the Centre: The Struggle for Cultural Freedoms*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. 1993. Print.
- _____ “Mugumo” In *Secret Lives and Other Stories*. By Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, 2–8.

- Nairobi, Kenya: East African Educational Publishers. 1993f. Print.
- _____ “Ngũgĩ on Karen Blixen.” *Viva*, March 1981, 18.
- _____ *Njamba Nene and the Flying Bus*. Translated by Wangũi wa Goro.
- Nairobi, Kenya: Heinemann Educational. 1986a. Print.
- _____ *Njamba Nene na Cibũ Kĩng’ang’i*. Nairobi, Kenya: Heinemann Kenya.
- 1986b. Print.
- _____ *Njamba Nene’s Pistol*. Nairobi, Kenya: Heinemann Educational. 1986c. Print.
- _____ “Nyumba ya Wendo” *Mũtiiri* 1.3 (1994c): 55. Print.
- _____ *Penpoints, Gunpoints, and Dreams: Toward a Critical Theory of the Arts and the State in Africa*. Oxford: Clarendon. 1998. Print.
- _____ *Petals of Blood*. London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd. 1977. Print.
- _____ “Preface.” In *A Fine Madness*. By Mashingaidze Gomo, 1–3. Banbury, UK: Ayebia Clarke. 2010. Print.
- _____ “Preface: Looking for *Nadu*.” In *Fault Lines*. By Meena Alexander, xi–xii. New York: Feminist Press. 2003. Print.
- _____ “Recovering the Original.” In *The Genius of Language*. Edited by Wendy Lesser, 102–110. New York: Anchor. 2004. Print.
- _____ “Rũrĩmĩ na karamu: Ithoga harĩ athamaki a Abirika.” *Journal of African Cultural Studies*. 25.2 (2013): 158–163.
- _____ *Secret Lives and Other Stories*. Nairobi, Kenya: East African Educational

Publishers. 1993g. Print.

_____ *Secure the Base: Making Africa Visible in the Globe*. London, New York

Calcutta: Seagull Book. 2016. Print.

_____ *Something Torn and New: An African Renaissance*. New York: Basic Civitas. 2009.

_____ “The Black Bird” In *Secret Lives and Other Stories*. By Ngũgĩ wa

Thiong’o. Nairobi, Kenya: East African Educational Publishers. 1993. Print.

_____ *The Black Hermit*. East Africa: Heinemann African Writers Series. 1968. Print.

_____ “The Martyr” In *Secret Lives and Other Stories*. By Ngũgĩ wa

Thiong’o. Nairobi, Kenya: East African Educational Publishers. 1993. Print.

_____ “The Mubenzi Tribesman” In *Secret Lives and Other Stories*. By Ngũgĩ wa

Thiong’o, 138–144. Nairobi, Kenya: East African Educational Publishers. 1993e. Print.

_____ “The Rebels.” In *This Time Tomorrow*. By Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, 1–16. Nairobi:

Kenya Literature Bureau. 1970a. Print.

_____ “The Return.” In *Secret Lives and Other Stories*. By Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o,

49–54. Nairobi, Kenya: East African Educational Publishers. 1993h. Print.

_____ “This Time Tomorrow.” In *This Time Tomorrow*. By Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o,

29–50. Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau. 1970b. Print.

_____ *This Time Tomorrow*. Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau. 1970d. Print.

_____ “This Wound in the Heart.” In *This Time Tomorrow*. By Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o,

17–28. Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau. 1970c. Print.

- _____ “Wedding on the Cross” In *Secret Lives and Other Stories*. By Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o. Nairobi, Kenya: East African Educational Publishers. 1993. Print.
- _____ “Wendo Kĩmera-inĩ kĩa Heho.” *Mũtiiri* 1.3 (1994e): 57. Print.
- _____ *Wizard of the Crow*. New York: Anchor Books, Random House Inc. 2007. Print.
- _____ “Women in Cultural Work: The Fate of the Kamĩrĩĩthũ People’s Theatre in Kenya.” *Development Dialogue*. 1–2 (1982): 115–133.
- _____ *Writers in Politics: Essays*. Nairobi, Kenya: Heinemann, 1981. Print.
- Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o and Maya Jaggi. “Matigari as Myth and History: An Interview” *Third World Quarterly*, 11. 4, *Ethnicity in World Politics*. (1989): 241–51. Web. 28th July 2016.
- Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o and Micere Githae Mugo. *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*. London: Heinemann Educational. 1976. Print.
- Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o and Ngũgĩ wa Miriĩ. *I Will Marry When I Want*. Nairobi, Kenya: Heinemann. 1982. Print.
- Nicholls, Brendon. *Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, Gender, and the Ethics of Postcolonial Reading*. United Kingdom: Imprint Ashgate Publishing Limited. 2010. Print.
- _____ “The Topography of ‘Woman’ in Ngũgĩ’s *Weep Not, Child*.” *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*. 40 (2005): 81–101. Web. 20th July 2016.
- Njogu, Kimani. “Decolonizing the Child.” In *The World of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o*. Edited by Charles Cantalupo, 129–140. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press. 1995a. Print.
- _____ “Living Secretly and Spinning Tales: Ngũgĩ’s *Secret Lives and Other*

- Stories.*” In *Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o: Texts and Contexts*. Edited by Charles Cantalupo, 335–347. Trenton, NJ: African World Press. 1995b. Print.
- Nkosi, Lewis. “Reading *Matigari*: The New Novel of Post-Independence”. In *The Word of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o* Edited by Charles Cantalupo. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, Inc. 1995 197–205. Print.
- Norrridge, Zoë. “Sex as Synecdoche: Intimate Languages of Violence in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun* and Aminatta Forna’s *The Memory of Love*.” *Research in African Literatures*. 43.2 (2012): 18–39. Web. JSTOR. 25th June 2016.
- Nyanzi, Stella. “Dismantling reified African culture through localised homosexualities in Uganda, Culture, Health & Sexuality”. Taylor and Francis. 15.8, (2013) 952–67. 30th April 2019.
- Nwapa, Flora. *Idu*. London: Heinemann Educational Book Ltd. 1970. Print.
- Obiechina, Emmanuel. *An African Popular Literature: A Study of Onitsha Market Pamphlets*. London: Cambridge University Press. 1973. Print.
- Obumsele, Ebele. “A Grain of Wheat: Ngũgĩ’s Debt to Conrad,” *Benin Review*. 1 (1974): 80–91. Web. 20th June 2016.
- Ochieng’ William R. *Decolonization & Independence in Kenya 1940- 93* Ed. B. A. Ogot & W. R. Ochieng’ London: James Curry. 1999. Print.
- Odhiambo, Atieno E. S. “Rebutting Theory with Correct Theory: A Comment on *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*.” *Kenya Historical Review*. 5.1 (1977): 385–88. Web. 20th February 2017.

- Odhiambo, Tom. "Kenyan Popular Fiction in English and the Melodramas of the Underdogs" *Research in African Literatures*. (2008): 39.4 72–82. Web. 18th October 2017.
- _____. "Specificities: Troubled Love and Marriage as Work in Kenyan Popular Fiction", *Social Identities*. 9:3 (2003): 423–36. Web. 17th October 2017.
- Ogot, B.A. "The Decisive Years 1956-63" *Decolonization & Independence in Kenya 1940–93* Ed. B. A. Ogot & W. R. Ochieng'. London: James Curry. 1999. Print.
- Ojaide, Tanure. "New Trends in Modern African Poetry." *Research in African Literatures*. 26.1 (1995): 4–19. Web. JSTOR. 28th June 2016.
- Ogembo, Jack O. "The Language of Post- Ngũgĩ Fiction." In *Creative Use of Language in Kenya*. Edited by Kwadzo Senanu and Drid Williams, 94–105. Nairobi, Kenya: Jomo Kenyatta Foundation. 1995. Print.
- Ogude, James A. "Allegory and the Grotesque Image of the Body: Ngũgĩ's Portrayal of Depraved Characters in *Devil on the Cross*." *World Literature Written in English*. 36.2 (1997): 77–91. Web. 18th August 2018.
- _____. *Ngũgĩ's Novel and African History: Narrating the Nation*. London: Pluto Press. 1991. Print.
- Ojaide, Tanure. "Examining Canonization in Modern African Literature" *Asiatic*.3.1 (2009)1–20. Web 20th February 2019.
- Okafor, Kerz. "Ngũgĩ's Women: Positive Factors of Social Regeneration." In

Feminism in African Literature: Essays on Criticism. Edited by Helen Chukwuma, 131–43. Enugu, Nigeria: New Generation Books. 1994. Print.

Okechi, Okafor Samuel. “Globalization and the Indigenous Concept of Sexuality in

African Tradition: Charting a New Course for Sexual Right and Safe Society”. *CPQ Women and Child Health*. 1:2 (2018): 1-9. Web. 22nd April 2019.

Okpewho, Isidore. “Understanding African Marriage: Towards a Convergence of

Okri, Ben. *Dangerous Love*. United Kingdom: Weidenfeld & Nicolson. 1996. Print.

“Literature and Sociology” in *Transformations of African Marriage* eds. David Parkin and David Nyamwaya: Manchester University Press: Oxford Road, UK. 1987. Print.

Olaoluwa, Senayon. “There was a Tim”. *European Journal of English Studies*.

16:2, (2012) 125–36. Web 23th August 2018.

Olaussen, Maria. ““About Lovers in Accra”: Urban Intimacy in Ama Ata Aidoo's *Changes: A Love Story*.” *Research in African Literatures*. 33.2 (2002): 61–80. Web. JSTOR.

25th June 2016.

O’Neill, Maggie. “Prostitute Women Now” *Rethinking Prostitution: Purchasing Sex*

in 1990s ed. Scambler Graham and Annette Scambler. London & New York: Routledge. 1997. Print.

Ongaro, Shannon Marie. *The Historical Power of the Imagination: Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong’o*

and The Production of Place. Bozeman, Montana: Montana State University. 2004. Print.

Opoku-Agyemang, Naana Jane. “Gender-Role Perceptions in the Akan Folktale.” *Research in African Literatures*. 30.1 (1999): 116-39. Web. JSTOR. 28th June 2016.

Osei-Nyame, Kwadwo Jr. “Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s *Matigari* and the Politics of

Decolonisation”. *Ariel: A Review of International English Literature*. 30:3 (1999): 127–40. Web. 19th May 2019.

Osei-Nyame, Kwadwo. “The Wizard of the Crow: Ngũgĩ in Conversation with Kwadwo

Osei-Nyame.” In *Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o: An Anthology of Recent Criticism*. Edited by Mala Pandurang, 26–40. New Delhi: Pencraft International. 2007. Print.

Ousmane, Sembene. *The Last of the Empire*. London: Heinemann. 1981. Print.

Palmer, Eustace. *An Introduction to the African Novel*. London: Heinemann. 1972.

_____. “Ngũgĩ’s *Petals of Blood*”. *African Literature Today*. 10 (1979).

_____. *The Growth of the African Novel*. London: Heinemann. 1979. Print.

Pandurang, Mala, ed. *Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o: An Anthology of Recent Criticism*. New Delhi: Pencraft International. 2007. Print.

Parkin, David and David Nyamwaya eds. *Transformations of African Marriage*.

Manchester: Manchester University Press. 1987. Print.

Paszat, Emma. “Why ‘Uganda’s anti-homosexuality bill’? Rethinking the ‘coherent’ state”.

Third World Quarterly. 38:9, (2017) 2027–2044. 30th April 2019.

Peicke, Sigrid. *In den Frauen liegt die Zukunft: Frauengestalten im Werk des*

kenianischen Schriftstellers Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o. Frankfurt: Nexus-Verlag.

1981. Print.

- Peperkamp, Esther. "When God Is Love: Reflections on Christian and Romantic Sentiments in Catholic Poland." *Etnofoor*. 19.1 (2006): 91–110. Web. 23rd May 2016.
- Peterson, Derek R. *Creative Writing: Translation, Bookkeeping, and the Work of Imagination in Colonial Kenya*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. 2004. Print.
- Pringle, Robert W. "Profumo Affair". Encyclopaedia Britannica. 19th May 2019.
- Radcliffe-Brown, A. R., and C. Daryll Forde. *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*. London, New York: Published for the International African Institute by the Oxford University Press. 1962. Print.
- Raditlhalo, S. I. "Nationalism and Ethnicity in Selected Colonial and Post-Colonial Novels by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o." *English in Africa*. 27.1 (2000): 75–104. Web. 20th June 2016.
- Rao, Rahul. "Re-membering Mwanga: same-sex intimacy, memory and belonging in postcolonial Uganda". *Journal of Eastern African Studies*. 9:1 (2015) 1–19. Web. 30th April 2019.
- Reddy, Indrasena K. *The Novels of Achebe and Ngũgĩ: A Study in the Dialectics of Commitment*. New Delhi: Prestige Books. 1994. Print.
- Robolin, Stéphane. "Gendered Hauntings: "The Joys of Motherhood," Interpretive Acts, and Postcolonial Theory". *Research in African Literatures*. 35. 3 (2004): 76–92 Web. 23rd July 2018.
- Robson, Clifford B. *Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o*. London: Macmillan. 1979. Print.
- Rodrigues, Ângela Lamas. "Beyond Nativism: An Interview with Ngũgĩ

- wa Thiong'o." *Research in African Literatures*. 35.3 (2004): 161–167. Web. 18th August 2018.
- Rohmann, Elke, Andrea Führer, and Hans-Werner Bierhoff. "Relationship Satisfaction Across European Cultures: The Role of Love Styles". *Cross-Cultural Research*, 50 (2016) 178 –211 © 2016 SAGE Publications. Web 5th March 2019.
- Roof, Judith. *Come As You Are: Sexuality and Narrative*. New York: Columbia University. 1996. Print.
- Roos, Bonnie. "Re-Historicizing the Conflicted Figure of Woman in Ngũgĩ's *Petals of Blood*" *Research in African Literatures*. 33.2 (2002): 154–70. Web. 23rd June 2016.
- Rosenblatt, Paul C. "Marital Residence and the Functions of Romantic Love." *Ethnology*. 6.4 (1967): 471–80. Web. 23rd May 2016.
- Roulston, Christine. *Narrating Marriage in Eighteenth Century England and France*. London: Ashgate Publishing Ltd. 2010. Print.
- Saheed Aderinto. "Modernizing Love: Gender, Romantic Passion and Youth". *Literary Culture in Colonial Nigeria*. *Africa*. 85 (2015): 478–500. Web. 20th June 2016.
- Saliou Dione, Mamadou Diop. "The Rhetoric of Irony in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Devil on Cross* (1987) and *Matigari* (1980)". *International Journal of Language and Linguistics*. 6. 6 (2018): 223–30. Web. 19th May 2019.
- Sander, Reinhard, and Bernth Lindfors, ed. *Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o Speaks: Interviews with the Kenyan Writer*. Oxford: James Currey. 2006. Print.

Santas, Gerasimos. "Plato's Theory of Eros in the Symposium: Abstract" Wiley: Noûs.

13.1 (1979): 67–75. Web. 23rd October 2018.

Schneider, David M. "The Meaning of Incest" The Journal of the Polynesian Society,

85. 2 (1976): 149–69. 10th June 2019.

Sekyi-Otu, Ato. "The Refusal of Agency: The Founding Narrative and Waiyaki's

Tragedy in *The River Between*." *Research in African Literatures*. 16.2 (1985): 157–77.

Web. 13th August 2016.

Shakespeare, Williams. *Romeo and Juliet*. Italy. 1597. Print.

Sharma, Govind N. Sharma, Govind Narain. "Ngũgĩ's Apocalypse: Marxism, Christianity

and African Utopian in *Petals of Blood*" *Critical Perspectives on Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o ed*

G. D. Killan. USA: Three Continents Press. 1984. Print.

_____. "Ngũgĩ's *Detained* as a Modern *Consolatio*." *Research in African Literatures*.

19.4 (1988): 520–28. Web 13th November 2018.

Sherrod, Barbara. "*Pride and Prejudice*: A Classic Love Story" A Publication of

Jane Austen Society of North America. Fort Collins, CO. (1989) 66–69.

Web www.jasna.org/persuasions/printed/number11/sherrod.htm. Jstor. 5th April 2017.

Shorter, Aylward. *East African Societies*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. 1974. Print.

Shorter, Edward. *The Making of the Modern Family*. New York: Basic Books. 1975. Print.

Shreve, Anita. "Interview" in *Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o Speaks Interviews* Eds. Reinhard Sander

and Bernth Lindfors. United States of America: James Currey Ltd. 2006. Print.

Sicherman, Carol. *Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o: A Bibliography of Primary and Secondary Sources, 1957–1987*. London: Hans Zell. 1989. Print.

_____ “Ngũgĩ’s Colonial Education: ‘The Subversion . . . of the African Mind.’” *African Studies Review*. 38.3 (1995): 11–41. Web. 7th October 2018.

_____ *Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o: The Making of a Rebel: A Sourcebook in Kenyan Literature and Resistance*. London: Hans Zell. 1990. Print.

Sigurbjorg, Sigurjonsdottir. “Voices of Many Together in Two: Whiteman’s America and Ngũgĩ’s Kenya”. In *Critical Essays on Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o*. Edited by Peter Nazareth, 93–122. New York: Twayne. 2000. Print.

Simatei, Tirop Peter. “Colonial Violence, Postcolonial Violations: Violence, Landscape, and Memory in Kenyan Fiction.” *Research in African Literatures*. 36.2 (2005): 85–94. Web. 20th June 2016.

_____ “Ideology in Children’s Fiction: A Reading of Njamba Nene Stories.” In *Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o: An Anthology of Recent Criticism*. Edited by Mala Pandurang, 146–52. New Delhi: Pencraft International. 2007. Print.

_____ *The Novel and the Politics of Nation Building in East Africa*. Bayreuth, Germany: University of Bayreuth. 2001. Print.

Simpson, Waleska Saltori. “What Fashion of Loving Was She Ever Going to Consider Adequate?” Subverting the “Love Story” in Ama Ata Aidoo's *Changes*.” *English in Africa*. 34.1 (2007): 155–71. Web. JSTOR. 25th June 2016.

Sithole, Tendayi. “Violence: The (Un)real, Power and Excess in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o’s

- Wizard of the Crow*". *Journal of Literary Studies*. 30.2 (2014) 86–103. Web 23th August 2018.
- Slaymaker, William. "Digesting Crow: Reading and Teaching Ngũgĩ's *Wizard of the Crow*." *Research in African Literatures*. 42.4 (2011): 8–19. Web. 20th June 2016.
- Smith, Brady. "Wizard, Superwonders, and a Fictional African State: Money and the Ecology of the Grotesque in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Wizard of the Crow*" *Research in African Literatures*. 46.3 (2015): 165–89. Web. August 10, 2016.
- Smith, Jordan Daniel. "Managing Men, Marriage and Modern Love" In *Love in Africa*. Cole Jennifer and Thomas Lynn M. (eds.), University of Chicago Press: Chicago and London. 2009. 158–80. Print.
- Soile, Sola. "Myth and History in Ngũgĩ's *Weep Not, Child*." *Ife African Studies*. 1.2 (1974): 77–91. Web. 13th August 2016.
- Sommer, Doris. *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 1991. Print.
- Sono, Themba, ed. *African Marriage and Family Under Stress*. Pretoria: Centre for Development Analysis. (1994). Print.
- Soyinka, Wole. *The Interpreters*. London: Heinemann. 1965. Print.
- Spencer, Robert. "Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and the African dictator novel" *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*. 47.2 (2012): 145–58. Web. 16th July 2017.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in Cary Nelson and Larry

- Grossberg, eds. *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press. 1988: 271–313. Print.
- Spronk, Rachel. “Media and the Therapeutic Ethos of Romantic Love in Middle-Class Nairobi,” In *Love in Africa*. Cole Jennifer and Thomas Lynn M. (eds.), University of Chicago Press: Chicago and London. 2009. Print.
- Steinberg, Robert J. “A Triangular Theory of Love”. *Psychological Review*. 93. 2 (1986): 119–35. Web 10th March 2019.
- Stobie, Cheryl. “The Queer Celebratory in Ashraf Jamal’s *Love Themes for the Wilderness*.” *English in Africa* 34 No. 2 (2007): 5–18. Web. ECHOST. 25th June 2016.
- Strathern, Marilyn. *The Gender of the Gift: Problems with Women and Problems with Society in Melanesia*. Oxford: University of California Press. 1988. Print.
- Stratton, Florence. *Contemporary African Literature and the Politics of Gender*. New York: Routledge. 1994. Print.
- Stone, Christopher and Joseph Philbrick. “Attitudes towards love among Xhosa university students in South Africa”. *Journal of Social Psychology*. 129.4 (1989): 573–75. Web. 15th June 2016.
- Stone, Lawrence. *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800*. New York: Harper and Row. 1977. Print.
- Sutherland, Efua T. *The Marriage of Anansewaa*. London: Longman Group Ltd. 1964. Print.

Swidler, Ann. *Talk of Love: How Culture Matters*. Chicago and London: The University Of Chicago Press. 2001. Print.

Tanner, Paul Anthony. *Adultery in the Novel: Contract and Transgression*. Baltimore & London: The John Hopkins University Press. 1979. Print.

Thomas, Lynn. "Love, Sex, and the Modern Girl in 1930s Southern Africa," In *Love in Africa*. Cole Jennifer and Thomas Lynn M. (eds.), University of Chicago Press: Chicago and London. 2009. Print.

Tibebu, Getnet. *Post-Colonial Trajectories in Ngũgĩ's Matigari*. Thesis, Master of Arts in Foreign Literature. Addis Ababa University Addis Ababa, Ethiopia June, 2012. Print.

Timm, Christine M. "Music as a Point of Resistance in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's Matigari" *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies*. 20.2. (1992) 3–17. Web. 19th May 2019.

Tobias, Steven. "The Poetics of Revolution: Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Matigari*." *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*. 38.3 (1997): 163–76. Web. 8th November 2018.

Trakakis, N.N. "What's Love Got to Do with It?" *Roczniki Filozoficzne / Annales De Philosophie / Annals of Philosophy*. 63.3 (2015): 43–54. Web. 23rd May 2016.

Treister, Cyril. "An Addition To The Genre Of The Proletariat Novel" *Critical Perspectives on Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o ed G. D. Killan*. USA: Three Continents Press. 1984. Print.

Trzebinski, Errol. "The Karen Blixen Debate: 'Ngũgĩ's Racist Attitudes.'" *Viva* (1981):

21, 23.

Uko, Iniobong. Female Sexuality in Contemporary African Literature: From Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* to Aidoo's *Changes*. *A Journal of Contemporary Research*. 8.3 (2011), 112-121. Web. 10th March 2019.

Uskalis, Eriks. "Exchange and language in public spheres: Constructions of democracy and citizenship in Ngũgĩ's *Devil on the Cross*". *Critical Survey*. 8. 3 (1996), 286-295. Web. 13th August 2016.

Walby, Sylvia.. *Theorizing Patriarchy*. Blackwell Publishers Ltd.: Oxford, UK and Cambridge USA. 1990. Print.

Wahab, Amar. "Homosexuality/Homophobia Is Un-African"?: Un-Mapping Transnational Discourses in the Context of Uganda's Anti-Homosexuality Bill/Act, *Journal of Homosexuality*. 63:5 (2016): 685–718. 30th April 2019.

Williams, Patrick. "Ngũgĩ and Sembène: Teaching the Text of History." In *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o*. Edited by Oliver Lovesey, 76–85. New York: MLA, 2012. Print.

_____. *Ngũgĩ's wa Thiong'o*. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1999. Print.

Valentine's Day Anthology Eds. Emma Shercliff and Bibi Bakare-Yusuf. Nigeria: Ankara Press. www.ankarapress.com. 2015. Print.

Williams, Raymond. *Keywords: a Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. New York: Oxford. UP. 1973. Print.

Vaughan, Megan. "The History of Romantic Love in Sub-sahara Africa: between interest and emotion" Raleigh Lecture on History: Proceedings of the British Academy - britac.ac.uk. 2011. 1–23. Print.

Vaughan, Michael "African Fiction and Popular Struggle: The Case of *A Grain of Wheat*," *English in Africa*. 8 (1981): 23–52. Web. 12th June 2016.

Verheijen, Janneke. "Mass Media and Gender Equality The Empowering Message of Romantic Love in Telenovelas" *Etnofoor*. 19.1 (2006): 23–39. Web. 23rd May 2016.

Zeitzen, Miriam Koktvedgaard. *Polygamy: A Cross-Cultural Analysis*. Oxford, New York: Berg. 2008. Print.

Zuhmboshi, Eric Nsuh. "Describing the Politics of Sovereignty in Postcolonial Africa:

Rereading Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o's *Matigari* and Alobwed'Epie's *The Death Certificate*". *Research in African Literatures*. 49.3 (2018): 18–34. Web. 19th May 2019.



WESTERN CAPE