

FROM MAGIC SURREALISM TO SOCIAL REALISM: A RE-READING

NGUGI WA THIONGO'S *WIZARD OF THE CROW*

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ABSTRACT

The African continent has been a continent with a chequered history and unpleasant experiences; a continent that has endured several pains and injustices from other continents which have exerted a greater influence in her shaping and making, especially her present physiognomy on the world scene. First is her experience with slavery that robbed her of great men and women of enviable skills and manpower. Again, is colonialism that destroyed her culture and left her in pains of humiliation and perpetual search for what is left behind that will guide her in the perfect direction and sooth her wounds forever. Problems of leadership, poverty, neo-colonialism, dictatorship, corruption, ethnic rivalry and all sorts of afflictions characterize the map and identification of the continent and though unarguably one of the richest continents in the world, Africa still remains undeveloped and poor when compared with the rest of the world. In congruence with this, Africa writers across the globe have taken it upon themselves the laborious task of addressing several nuances of injustices and past errors in their creative works. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o is a household name in literature. He is best known for his revolutionary writings and literature of resistance which has in no small measures affected greatly and impacted positively too, the political situation of his country. In his novel, *Wizard of the Crow*, we witness a radical departure from the common themes and problems of his Kenyan society to a rather seismic shift to incorporate on a larger scale the problems of his African continent in all her miasma of corruption and socio-political decay. Ngugi in his ever radical and revolutionary pose typified the seemingly way forward for the continent in the manner of resistive and eruptive struggle from all classes of societies and nations in Africa. This paper studied his over novel, *Wizard of the Crow*. The study critically examined and highlighted the significant import of Ngugi's ideas and radial viewpoints in his quest as a patriotic writer to save and one day end the battle for the soul of the African continent in the hand of cabals, perverted and beastly dictators and neo-colonial imperialists.

KEYWORDS: Magic Surrealism, Realism, Economic Collapse, Social Decay, Depression, Gateway

INTRODUCTION

Literature has over time become an important aspect of human life in the quest to adapt and understand our enigmatic world better. It has become pertinent and crucial to man in his efforts to make the most important assessment of the values of his past, his present and articulate his future. In the words of Obi, "literature has become an important means of understanding and interpreting human beings and aspects of society such as politic, religion, economics, social conflicts, class struggles and human condition through the medium of language" (487). Nnolim Charles emphasizes that:

Literature as art deploys language embellished with pleasurable accessories, to paraphrase Aristotle and it is around the embellished use of language that the creative energy of the story deploys itself. And to invest the story

with meaning, there must be some truth about life, something to chew over, some theme, some moral, some philosophy of life and some metaphor of life that tugs at the edges of symbol. As in all art, literature is useful, for as art, it is not a waste of time. (3).

Thus, the role of literature to man can never be over emphasized neither can its importance and value it brings to human life be exhausted. Writers are the soul of a society and reflect in their writings the hard socio-political, economic as well as religious realities of the people. One could quickly add here, magical realities of the people as regards to the level of magic realism, witchery, sorcery and belief in the powers of African traditional values whether real or not, richly manifested in every turn and twist of the novel *Wizard of the Crow*. Writers across cultures, continents and languages have embraced the goal of literature to express their feelings and ideas about their world. This in no small measure have led to various transformation and reformation acts in the time past, and because society is living, as not dead, dynamic and not static writers have continued to use the medium of literature to reorder and redirect society and achieve stability and firmness for values when necessary. This is part of what triggered a critical re-reading of one of the longest literary works in African Literature, *Wizard of the Crow* by Ngugi Wa Thiong'o. We hope to examine in this essay, Ngugi views and standpoints in the miasma of affairs in his continent and his visions for the new Africa of our dreams.

Ngugi Wa Thiong'o: The Artist and Society in a Crossroad

In this section we shall briefly examine Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, his writings and visions as an artist in his society. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o like earlier stated remains a household name in African literature and unarguably one of the most read African writers across the world. Known for his radical and revolutionary writing, Ngugi has written so many works wherein he engineers his Kenyan society to stand up as a unit, an insurmountable force in the face of political instability, corruption, slavery, colonialism and all sorts of inhumanities and injustices to achieve equity, fairness and political freedom for not one but all the Kenyan citizens both the living and the dead and for the generation yet unborn. This in so many occasions have cost him his freedom as he has drafted some of his best novels in the confinement of the prison walls but undeterred. Ngugi writes to proclaim a crucial message that the state belongs to the people and never some cabals and evil set of politicians sworn to satisfy the various yearnings of their western over-lords; to do their bidding to the detriment of the socio-economic well being of their people.

Africa is a continent blessed with not just natural endowments but huge manpower as well as gifted and talented literary artists who through their writings and efforts have repositioned Africa literature in its rightful position. Chinua Achebe still rank among them as he vehemently took it up with the Europeans the challenge and debunked their claims of culture superiority and was able to prove to them with his *Things Fall Apart* and other works that Africans did not hear of culture for the first time from the Europeans. Others include Wole Soyinka, Cyprian Ekwensi, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o and a host of other writers who wrote to reflect their African societies, their world-views, cultures and unique ways of life which colonialism dealt a great blow on.

Following the decline of colonialism, Africa has never fared much better as neo-colonialism imperialism and its attendant political maneuvering continue to wreak the soul of the continent. This has led Africa to become a continent characterized by war, horror, unimaginable and unspeakable events. Our leaders have only helped to inflame the chaos, wars and tragedies in the bid to achieve their avaricious and selfish desires. All around us are facts and data about the most unjust killings, massacres and wastage of human and natural resources as a result of power tussles, ethnic rivalries and

several inconsequential reasons that can never be equated to the value of millions of lives that have been lost in the most gruesome way. The African continent has become a continent of horror and untold hardship from which other continents have a lot to exploit, learn and make merry as the case may be. Kofi Anyidoho expresses this line of thought thus:

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

Africa as a continent has suffered monument injustices in the hands of colonialism and much yet to be suffered as the evils of the past continue to haunt the realities of the present a major threat to the golden prospects of the future:

Ugwuanyi Dele Maxwell writers thus

The colonial experiences of most Africa countries have refused to go after many decades since the colonial masters left. This is as a result of the myriad of social, political and economic problems still facing the continent. Independence promise a lot of good things for the masses and this bought about their active participation in the struggle for independence alongside nationalist fighters in some African countries ... what has been responsible for this situation in must African countries that have been ravaged by abject poverty, corruption, war, political and economic instability, under-development etc. Literature in Africa, which has been described as functional and committed, has been used by various writers to reflect this ugly situation which most African countries have found themselves (218).

True is the above as African writers struggle to write out their people from the heaps of corruption, bad governance, violence, mediocrity, exploitation, bribery and unjust killing, ethnic rivalry which rank among other socio-political, economic and religious injustices that militate against the desired growth of the continent. African writers have embraced this calling with passion, commitment and patriotism with hope that sooner than later the much awaited light will emerge from the tunnel which we all believe where are at the very end of. African writers drawing from the knowledge of the monumental political failures in the annals and making of the continent and a prophetic assessment of the future tend to make their writings more political in outlook. This is as expected in a continent where a greater part of her problems emanates from bad leadership and dictatorial nature of many of her leaders. The African writers evident in bulk of many literary works that have been produced from the continent have shown that they have more than what it takes to address the problems of the countries while waiting endlessly for the desired result and outcome that will change the African scene forever. It is from this light and perspective that we shall examine Ngugi Wa Thiong'o and his works to unfold the manifesting radical political thoughts and revolutionary stance posed by the writer if we must repossess our land and achieve our collective African dream.

To say that Ngugi is a revolutionary writer is like emphasizing the obvious for almost all his writings have a radical and revolutionary stance for his Kenyan people. His *Weep Not Child* is famous with the resistive *mau-mau* fight against colonialism and loss of land. His *Devil on the Cross* echoes the same tone of bitter war and anger against the western world and black African collaborators who amass the wealth of their people to satisfy themselves and their western political progenitors. But in all these, never has Ngugi been so radical, revolutionary and vociferous in both outlook and

exposition than in his over 800 page tome novel, *Wizard of Crow*. The novel is a combination of many ideas, problems and experiences not peculiar to one African nation but many, if not all African nations. For the first time Ngugi abandoned just the cause of his Kenyan people to incorporate in a larger extent the plight of his African people, represented in the fictitious town of free republic of Aburiria. Aburiria could be just any country in Africa under the oppressive whims and caprices of their dictatorial and selfish political leaders. The novel is but a bitter and heartfelt exposition on the very core of the problem that has continued to wreak the African continent and will continue to prevent her from measuring up to other continents, relegated as a third world continent, if nothing urgent and crucial is done to forestall the agonizing situation. Ngugi in the novel, perhaps obviously tired of recreating the day to day lives of the people which has not much urgent and desired effect, seems to turn his attention to magic as an elixir, a catalyst that will galvanize the change will all are in dire need of. The novel is highly symbolic for the fear of the magic of the wizard of the crow could lead to our own inner fears and through the mirror ritual we too could abandon our "if and if only", a symbolic of our insatiable passion for western civilization and way of life; the quest to be more western and 'whiter than the whites' themselves refusing to embrace the warmth and idyllic passions of Africa, the glory of her black nature and salvage her soul. His novel is a surreal attempt in prose writing, a story very strange, weird, more like a dream than reality, with ideas and images mixed and co-joined together in a strange way never witnessed in his writings nor that of any African writer ever before. He obviously must have adopted the 20th century style and movement in art and literature, surrealism in which images and events that are not so connected are put together in a strange and somewhat impossible way, like a dream. But in all, it is a symbolic manifestation of the real and surprising intricacies of human lives worthy of a deeper attention. Through magic, Ngugi hopes to spurn the magic of redemption in the free Republic of Aburiria which synonymously could mean the free Republic of African continent devoid of political maneuvering, dictatorship and all the hydra-headed and alarming intrigues that have become a symbol of many African states.

Ugwanyi Dele Maxwell Posits Thus

The novel which may well be considered as the hallmark or watershed of Ngugi's writing depicts in its deepest sense the various political, economic and social intricacies that have conditioned and plagued the postcolonial African states quest towards real development. Ngugi is at his best in the use of metaphysics which he has, to a very great extent; succeeded in introducing into the resistance theme of African literature coupled with this, is the incisiveness and exposure of the leadership personalities in post colonial Africa. It (the novel) represents a rather worrisome internal bickering and visionless leadership that have characterized various governments across the continent of Africa (226).

In the same vein, Kanaventi Dominic writes about the novel thus

Ngugi manages to expose the corruption of contemporary Africa, the encroachment of African authoritarianism and dictatorship; the cruelty and brutality of the once loved-by-everybody African leaders, and how western aid is abused to prop up the worst dictatorships to survive with their brutality in Africa. In fact it exhibits the irony of how the west appears not to see or notice the corruption, while the people watch hopelessly as their corrupt leaders are wined and dined by the western powers. The story is an expose of the writer than white African dictators who betray the cause of the war against white colonialism, who betray the spirit of African nationalism, who will never agree to relinquish power once they have tasted the splendour of presidential palaces, the honey and the caviar, while their people's children's skins peel off through starvation and kwashiorkor. (1).

As Maya Jaggi in the Guardian Writes

Yet for all its grotesque hyperbole, *Wizard of the Crow* struck me as truthful in its dissection of power, and remarkably free of bitterness. At more than 700 pages, its flaws, of obsessive reiteration and prolixity, arise partly from its bold experimentation with oral forms, and from giving rein to the pathologies of the corrupt at the expense of more intimate dilemmas of those who challenge them. But the poisonousness of its target never infects the author's vision, nor his faith in people's power to resist. Perhaps that in itself is a triumph (3).

Many scholars and critics have written extensively on Ngugi and his *Wizard of Crow* yet much remains to be said, as the novel could be literally viewed as an African bible, where one can obtain glaring pictures of injustice, corruption, the lust for power, poverty, suffering and unemployment, neo-colonialism, the 'if and if only maniac', that is, the quest to be whiter than the white; unrealistic ambitions and the entire march to nothingness and backwardness in the guise of 'Marching to Heaven' epitomized in the novel which many of our leaders as a result of excessive greed are obviously commanding and leading us to. It is to all these we shall now turn to for a more holistic appreciation of the novel *Wizard of the Crow*.

Political Quagmire-The Miasma of Socio-Economic Depression: The Failure, Our Lesson in *Wizard of the Crow*

The novel *Wizard of the Crow* is set in the fictional free Republic of Aburiria which symbolically could be many African states under the shackles of dictatorship and oppressive political leadership which held the people in perpetual and untold economic hardships. The novel is a political novel which hinges on the politics of African nations and the major causes of many of the problems that replete the continent. This idea is generally reflected in the writings and belief of many African writers as their writings is often a politically motivated work of art. According to Nnolim Charles:

The West African novel is, from its inception, an exercise in politically creative commitment in prose. I define, therefore, in the broadest term, as political any novel in which the author's concerns with public themes extend beyond the concerns of the individual self and embrace the collective destiny of nations or the masses. Politics enters the novel at those times when the fate or destiny of peoples or classes are locked in the death throes of survival, when continuity in a people's way of life is threatened; when alien forces by way of military forces or colonial invasion endanger a people's future or make the future uncertain; and in our body politics, when the culture of corruption descend to devour a people's cherished ethical, religious or moral values (82).

Man is a political animal according to Aristotle. African writers all over the continent have been greatly influenced by the political events and situations of their nations. Ngugi Wa Thiongo in East Africa is one of such writers. In the words of Bernth Lindfors on Ngugi, he expresses thus:

Ngugi was one of the first East Africans to wake up and write a serious indictment of the turn his nation had taken. He was followed by others who exposed post political intrigues and social corruption in sharply satirical novels. As in West African fiction, the tendency now was to go beyond blaming Europe for introducing the cultural confusion that culminated in the collapse of modern Africa and begin accusing Africa of collaborating in its own destruction. The critical eye has turned inward (27).

One would wonder what Lindfors would have said after examining the most satirical of all Ngugi's novels *Wizard of the Crow*. In the novel, Ngugi located the breakage and failure in the black system to the political structure of the

African people with a fictional free Republic of Aburiria. In the novel, the Ruler is a despot of the highest order who could best be compared with Idi Amin of Uganda, Mobutu Sese Seku, General Sani Abacha of Nigeria, Muammar Al Gaddafi of Libya among other renowned dictators Africa have seen and many still in power, nursing their bad and unrealistic political reforms and policies that bring nothing but backwardness and poverty to their people. The Ruler of Aburiria is a despot, the kind many African states are yet to see. He ceased over power to reenact his reign of terror that lasted years enough to wreak perpetual havoc on the country. He is the country and the country is him. According to Ngugi in the novel:

He has sat on the throne so long that even he could not remember when his reign began. His role has no beginning and no end; and judging from the facts one may well believe the claim. Children had been born and had given birth to others and those others too others and so on, and his rule had survived all generations. Aburiria had never had and could never have another ruler, because had not this man's reign begun before the world began and would end only after the world has ended? (5)

The Ruler is not interested in the well-being of the people, his interest is to rise to the apogee of his ruler ship and he does not leave any stone unturned in silencing anybody who stands in his way to his desires. He survives with the blood of his victims and delight in chaos, suffering and poverty that will always ensure absolute loyalty from the people to him. He is always surrounded by sycophants in the guise of ministers who comically as Ngugi painted out enlarge their ears and eyes, as in the case of Machokali and Sisiooku to sing him praise and blind his eyes from the monumental suffering of the people and the stench of his evil regime. Ngugi captures the ruler in one of his daily rituals of feeding on the sight of the skeletal parts of his political enemies he had conquered with the zeal to drink and suck more blood. Ngugi describes him thus:

What were you after? He would ask the skulls as if they could hear him: This fly whisk, this scepter, this crown? He would pause as if expecting an answer, and when the skulls failed to respond he would burst out in guffaws as if daring them to contradict what he was about to say: I plucked out your tongues and tore your lips to show you that a politician without a mouth is no politician at all. You fucking bastards, it is your own greed and boundless ambitions that let you here. Did you seriously think that you had a chance to over throw me? Let me tell you. The person who would even dare has not been born, and if he has, he still will have to change himself into a spirit and grow a beard and human hair on his feet. You did not know that, did you?. (11)

There is no kind of evil that the Ruler does not possess. So much was the level of political intrigue going on that led to the revolutionary movement known as the Movement for the Voice of the People which Nyawira was the chairperson, a movement Kamiti, the wizard of the crow later became part of in their bid to dethrone dictatorship. But sad enough not much was the end product of their efforts for though the Ruler died in a palace coup perpetuated and well executed by Tajirika, he, Tajirika was to become another dictator as he proclaimed himself, the new ruler of Aburiria, Emperor Titus Flavius Vespasianus Whitehead. It was obvious that the years of terror is about to witness another turn and twist and Nyariwa and Kamiti and all the entire members of the Voice of the Movement of the People will do much of what Ngugi in his helplessness and sorry state had to abandon in the hands of fate. Nyariwa had sadly expressed towards the end of the novel in a sad disposition thus:

You see, despite our insurgency so far, we have not been able to hold the agents of the regime accountable for murdering our people. Nyariwa added: There will surely come a day when we shall make it impossible for these

armed ogres to go about their work of terror without suffering consequences. We shall then fight on our terrain, which is the people who must know and believe that we aim only to defend them and protect their right to a better life (759).

This is the hope of Nyawira which is the hope of Ngugi on the day which one will wonder when it shall come to Africa. It is the long awaited day the people through a revolutionary struggle will dethrone dictatorship and reclaim the land the way they did colonialism. The horrors of dictatorship in Africa is a cycle, an unending cycle of doom, for the moment a dictator is atop the throne unleashing his style of terror, another dictator is waiting patiently with envy and greed to cling on power and have his own pound of flesh as if the citizens had a hand in the making and breeding of this dictators. This is the typical case of Tajirika in the novel who was favored and pampered by the Ruler unknown to him that power was his destination. Finally he maneuvered the power through a palace coup and declared himself Emperor and saw to the dead of 'Baby D'. In the site of Marching to Heaven, Tajirika ordered for the construction of a modern coliseum. The truth Ngugi wants us to see and learn is that another Tajirika will always be waiting. It is a cycle, the fiasco continues and Africa is doomed if nothing urgently is done. Only in the likes of Nyawira and Kamiti which symbolizes me and you lies the beacon of hope for Africa. Ngugi in the novel exemplifies the cause of our woes and failures from which he hopes we learn a lot, and make such failures, our lessons for a greater tomorrow. He engineers us to be the Nyariwa's and Kamitis of our nations, using even sorcery and all forms of practices when necessary if that is what it will take to save the soul of African continent in the hands of evil dictators in the guise of political leaders.

The Queuing Mania – An Interplay of the Forces of Academic and Social Decay in our Society

Another issue worthy of note in the novel *Wizard of the Crow* is the symbolic existence of the Queuing Mania described as the Queuing Daemons in the book two of the novel. Though the queue on a surface level represents the ordinary queue of the business men and politicians who stood in front of Tajirika's office, the chairman of Eldares Construction Company to lobby for jobs and contracts after he was pronounced the chairman of the Marching to Heaven. Also is another queue as a result of The 'Tempa job' a job created by Tajirika and his secretary Nyawira to help him handle the unexpected proceedings coming from his newly established position. This is the surface picture of the queue which later diverted to the house of the wizard of the crow after the wizard, Kamiti following his discovery by the police officer, Constable Arigaigai Gatherer known as A.G. This is the origin of the queue mania but on a deeper level, the queue which continues to rise everyday and seems to defile any solution to stop it exponential curve of unemployment in the African continent. The queue symbolizes the alarming rate of unemployment in the continent which has defiled every remedy and solution to abate and eradicate it as a result of greed and uncoordinated policies of our leader.

The queue has started the day after Kamiti had gone to Tajirika's office in search of a job. With his curiosity, poverty, hunger and quest for job he did not read the words on the signpost which says "No vacancy, come tomorrow". He succeeded in gaining audience and interview with his prospective employer Tajirika, only to have his all hopes dashed down at a point he thought he had impressed his employer and landed a job. After a long academic feast, Tajirika had led him outside to the signpost that says 'No vacancy today, come tomorrow and had left him in his shame. Kamiti had felt so disappointed and felt like giving up life. He could not understand how with his BA and MBA he could not land any job no matter how menial. He had wondered after his disgrace with Tajirika thus:

How far up the ladder of education had Tajirika climbed, Kamiti wondered or was it business that had educated him to be a heartless interviewer of needy job seekers? Kamiti had often given serious thought to starting a business with his B.A and MBA; he sure had the necessary educational background, but starting a business required capital and land...and had even stopped writing to his parents. Write to them and tell them stories of the number of times he had been thrown out of offices like a stray dog? Tell them that all those degrees for which they had paid with years of toil and frugal living could not secure him even bus fare why did he not allow the garbage collectors to bury his body? (60)

Kamiti also recalled the memory of his lover, Wariara who he had lost because he had no job and Wariara had no job too. Both thought they could one day make it together. Kamiti recounted his experience and heartbreak thus:

Years after leaving school she still had not landed a job despite her high school diploma now boosted by a secretarial course-typing, shorthand, and computer literary, so the next time they act, Wariara was still looking for job. The newly arrived Kamiti was bubbling with hope and told her not to worry. He thought that with two university degrees in his pocket, he would get a job in writing: he and Wariara will marry and start family but instead of any of that coming to be they found themselves beating the streets together. But as days and months elapsed and the ending of their stories never changed, they found themselves feeling embarrassed and even guilty about their our failures ... their failures were putting a strain in their relationship and they were drifting apart (66).

One day Wariara had called him one morning to break the news that they should go their separate way, reminding him that two blind men cannot show each other the way. That was how they parted to meet again in front of the hotel where Kamiti resorted to begging and Wariara a prostitute. She later died from the deadly HIV virus to Kamiti's heartbreak. Nyariwa in her own part confessed to Kamiti about the realities of getting a job in Eldares, a city in Aburiria where the Ruler sat on the throne, amassing the wealth of the nation. She confessed solemnly thus:

The job I now hold is, well not quite a job – it's temporary, so to speak. There came a time when I asked myself: what is the point of the BA that I struggled to get? It is useless as dog shit, I would say in frustration. Even holders of PhD's are unemployed. They walk the streets till their soles wear out, looking for work. The certificates are not to blame. What did you just say? The world is upside down, and it should be put to right by those who on earth do dwell. (63)

This is the true picture of events in many states in the African continent, and this has in no small measure eaten deep into the fabrics of higher education in our society. Many youths aware of the high rate of unemployment often wonder the need to brainstorm for hours in the library when they can easily take a way out, either by robbing or other forms of nefarious activities that are to the antithetical viable to social and economic development of African states. The queue is endless and Ngugi believes it is time wrongs are righted. It was lack of job that turned Kamiti into a beggar and that was how he alongside Nyariwa was chased by the constable A.G in Santalucia. In order to escape the police, Kamiti had put up these words on the door: WARNING! THIS PROPERTY BELONGS TO THE WIZARD WHOSE POWER CAN BRING EVEN CROWS FROM THE SKY. TOUCH THIS HOUSE AT YOUR PERIL SGD. WIZARD OF THE CROW (98). The police man, A.G had to run for fear of his life but was back the next day to consult the wizard. That was how Kamiti became the wizard of the crow and Nyariwa his co-successor who later became the Limping Witch and both had gone through all sorts of bizarre transformations to save the state from the hands of the dictator. Whatever happens is not our

concern here but the queue, the unemployment queue which Ngugi was symbolically painting out, a queue that never ended till the end of the novel even when a decree was passed to reduce it to five. This worrisome situation of unemployment is one of the dangers facing the academic and social situation of the country and one would only wish that through the indiscernible magic of the crow that such ugly situation may be remedied for the future and posterity of our Africa.

Marching to Heaven and Neo-Colonialism: The Africa Gateway to Economic Collapse and Disintegration

The argument here is that the Marching to Heaven as exemplified in the novel *Wizard of the Crow* symbolizes the sum total of many of the efforts of our African leaders and elites to outwit the Western World and impress them and by so doing march the people not to heaven as supposed but to untold hardship, perpetual poverty, chaos, terror and economic collapse which the destructive effect is yet to be felt and quantified.

In the novel, the political sycophants surrounding the Ruler have unanimously agreed to build a monument that will reach heaven and surpass the Tower of Babel as gift to the ruler on his birth day. The author writes thus:

The whole country, the minister for foreign African was saying, the entire Aburirian populace had decided unanimously to erect a building such as had never been attempted in history expect once by the children of Israel, and even they had failed miserably to complete the House of Babel. Aburiria would now do what the Israelites could not do: raise a building to the very gates of Heaven so that the Ruler could call on God daily to say good morning or good evening or simply how was your day today God? The Ruler would be the daily recipient of God's advice, resulting in a rapid growth of Aburiria to heights never before dreamt by humans. (16).

The whole march to Heaven syndrome is symbolic to certain laudatory and unrealistic projects which our leaders and elites often embark on even when they are quite aware that the project will yield nothing good but misery and suffering. Also are some other governmental policies that have continued to lead the nation several years backwards. 'Marching to Heaven' is 'Marching to Hell' and our leaders are marching us straight to hell without their realizing the disaster they orchestrate in the corridors of power. This arguably is the symbol of the Marching to Heaven that ironical march to hell and economic collapse.

The 'If and if Only' Mania: The Pathway to Continental Collapse

Another area worthy of note is neo-colonialism, the idea to be white evident in the quest of many political rulers. Colonialism left us a great disaster and that is over-dependency on western life and gains of their civilization rather than looking inwards to see what could make our continent most powerful of all others. The desire to be white was first manifested by Tajirika. This led to the 'If Mania' the 'if and if only' in the lives of many leaders. Tajirika wanted to be white having seen so much money and this desire ceased his tongue. Tajirika had voiced out thus "if ... my ... skin ... were not ... black! Oh, if only my skin were white!" The wife Vinjina caught the same malady of "if and if only". The ruler was later stuck by this malady of "if and if only". This is the problem of many Africans, who in mad pursuit of western civilization, abandon the thing at home and the continent is at the mercy of the European whims and caprices. It is in this regard that the wizard of the crow has lamented thus:

Why did Africa let Europe cart away millions of Africa's souls from the continent to the four corners of the wind?
How could Europe lord it over a continent ten times its size? Why does needy Africa continue to let its wealth

meet the needs of those outside its borders and the follow behind with hands unscratched for a loan of the very wealth it let go? How did we arrive at this, that the best leader is the one who knows how to beg for a share of what he has already given away at the price of a broken tool? Where is the future of Africa? I cried (681).

It is this cry that summed up the message of the novel, a cry for help to save the soul of African continent with all revolutionary means and struggle we can. It is high time we shunned neo-colonialism and look inwards for the true pride of the African continent.

CONCLUSIONS

From the foregoing, Ngugi is a radical and visionary writer who believes so much in the power of revolution though often time much is demanded of him on how best the revolution could be best executed for the most desired result. In the novel, *Wizard of the Crow*, Ngugi views African problems as greater than meets the eyes and would be comfortable to advocate magic as part of what it will take to reclaim the continent. If we are to face our realities, many African countries are held under the heavy shackles of dictatorship. The Ruler is everywhere spelling havoc and untold hardship on his people. Again is unemployment, the queuing mania that is devastating both the academic and social system in the continent for what is the need of a PhD certificate when one can do nothing gainful with it. 'Marching to Heaven' is a guise through which the leaders march us to hell. All that is needed is a fund, a loan from Global Bank to embark on a project that is neither feasible nor realizable. The 'if and if only' mania still eats deep into our system. Coup begets coup and the cycle of unending game of blood continues ushering in new 'Emperors', the new face of dictatorship and socio-economic as well as political imperialism in Africa. In the spate of political quagmire, economic instability and social decay, Ngugi turned our attention to magic and sorcery as part of the remedy to our continental malady. This is symbolic of the alarming level the African problems have exponentially risen to and the helplessness of the writer in the midst of such chaos and rash battle for power, fame and wealth. Magic provided a sort of escape and elixir for some characters and one could quickly wish for such escape in our real life situation. But in all we will continue to be grateful to Nyawira, Kamiti, the two sorcerers in their own capacities while hoping for more well to do and meaningful citizens to come to a realization of the evils of dictatorship and bad governance as well as imperialism and neo-colonialism and join the struggle. Sad enough, Ngugi too seems defeated and swallowed by such a heavy quest. All the revolutionary efforts and life claiming struggles of some of his characters even in the world of fiction could not dethrone dictatorship. He obviously may have his reasons for not doing so. As a literary artist, he has the powers to create and re-order things in his world of imagination. He may well have ended the novel with a unique kind of utopia where Nyawira and Kamiti will defeat and dethrone all dictators and usher in true democracy, our ideal and long awaited democratic government. Such end would create a different kind of feelings in his readers towards the end of the novel, but Ngugi never did so. The dictators won; a demonstration of their deep rooted powers and tight grip on the nation. Yet Ngugi never gave up, nor saw the situation as beyond redemption. He has his hopes and beliefs, part of the realities his readers must come in cognizance with. His most significant hope lies in the survival of Nyawira and Kamiti who narrowly escaped death with the aid of Constable A. G. As long as Nyawira and Kamiti survived, the struggle must continue. They will reinforce more hands and re-dedicate themselves to the common task of purging the nation free of dictators and wishy-washy politicians, too bad if one of us is recruited next. This is a task that must be done but just like the two revolutionists-survivors, we hope for our survival for the greater task ahead as we continue just like them to be grateful for 'the gift of life'.

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