

ABSTRACT

This study is an analysis of Ngugi wa Thiong'o's portrayal of neo-colonial elitism and its influence in Kenya in his postcolonial novels, *Petals of Blood* (1977), *Devil on the Cross* (1982a) and *Matigari* (1989). The study employed a content analysis approach where the three novels were read and studied in depth before emerging themes, relating to neo-colonial elitism in Kenya, were unpacked. The analysis was informed by two theoretical frameworks, namely the Postcolonial and Marxist literary theories. The Postcolonial theory, as used in this context, deals with literature produced in countries that were once colonies of other countries. This theory assisted in examining the relationship between the colonisers, the British, and the Kenyan elite in the new government. The Marxist literary theory postulates that emancipation of the masses from exploitation, oppression, discrimination and inevitable linkage between the privileged people and the miserable ones can only come from the struggle by the exploited and disadvantaged group. The Marxist literary theory assisted in analysing how the masses are trying to defend themselves against their exploiters, the ruling elite. An example is how the ex-freedom fighter, Matigari, mobilises the workers and the masses in the search for truth and justice in Kenya, which leads to the wrath of the Government.

The findings of this study show that the most persistent concern of Ngugi's literary work is exploitation generated by colonial injustice and perpetuated through unaltered colonial structures and policies. There is a complex linkage between colonial exploitation and violations of the rights of the masses in postcolonial Kenya. Furthermore, the study revealed that there is a continuous struggle for freedom from the ruling elite by the masses. Finally, the study concluded by indicating the possibility of a new political revolution that will bring a new Kenya.

It can be concluded that the masses are aware of the cunning of their leaders, and they see a light at the end of their economic and social struggle. Another possible conclusion is that the people are aware of the acts of their rulers and they are planning a revolution to free themselves from the claws of the elite. This study contributes to the body of knowledge on Ngugi wa Thiong'o's literary works, as well as the contribution literature makes in conscientising the masses regarding their plight. It, furthermore, offers possible solutions to their political and socio-economic woes, not only in Kenya, but also elsewhere in the world.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me (Philippians 4:13). All praise and thanks are to God, The Almighty, who has enabled and guided me through this study; to Him be the honour and the glory, Amen.

The research and writing of this dissertation was a demanding task that would not have been possible without the assistance of others. In this regard, I wish to acknowledge all the colleagues for their encouragement and The University of Namibia for the funding that made it possible for this work to be put together. My deepest gratitude and respect goes to Prof. Jairos Kangira, for the patience, humble supervision and brotherly advice I received from him in the course of this study. My thanks and appreciation also goes to my co-supervisor, Prof Jacob Mapara of the Chinhoyi University of Technology, Zimbabwe, for his sensitive readings, encouragement and advice. I consider myself most fortunate to have worked with them, for they were firm and yet very humane; they showed great concern for personal situations which often interfered with my programme.

My special thanks goes to my beloved children, Manga, Namasiku, Saya and Chika, for their tremendous support, their love, their patience, their understanding and their dedication through the ups and downs experienced in the writing process. Without them this work could not have been completed. Their courage and sacrifices have strengthened my resolve and determination to complete this study. However, above all others, a special mention goes to my loving husband, John since, without an accommodative, supportive and understanding spouse, my success would have never been realised. I cannot imagine having been able to complete the process without you: the tears, the joys, the love, and the elation at finally holding the dissertation in my hand echoes your love, always!

DEDICATION

In appreciation to my daughter, nicknamed “Mamino”, for her tireless efforts in going from one bookstore to another, looking for material for my study. She even went to the extent of interviewing Ngugi wa Thiong’o, the author of the novels analysed in this study, on my behalf when he visited the University of the Free State (South Africa) where she was studying. God bless you.

DECLARATIONS

I, Josephine Ntelamo Sitwala declare hereby that this study is a true reflection of my own research, and that this work, or part thereof has not been submitted for a degree in any other institution of higher education.

I, Josephine Ntelamo Sitwala, grant The University of Namibia the right to reproduce this dissertation in whole or in part, in any manner or format, which The University of Namibia may deem fit, for any person or institution requiring it for study and research, providing that The University of Namibia shall waive this right if the whole dissertation has been or is being published in a manner satisfactory to the University.

..... [Signature]

Date.....

Josephine Ntelamo Sitwala

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE(S)
Abstract.....	i
Acknowledgements	iii
Dedication	iv
Declaration.....	v
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Orientation of the study.....	6
1.2.1 Neo-colonialism in Kenya	9
1.2.2 The manipulation of the masses by the elite.....	15
1.2.3 The value of literature.....	17
1.3 Statement of the problem	23
1.4 Research questions	24
1.5 Significance of the study	25
1.6 Limitations of the study	32
1.7 Methodology	32
1.7.1 Research design.....	32
1.7.2 Population.....	33
1.7.3 Sample.....	33
1.7.4 Research instruments	34
1.7.5 Procedure	34
1.8 Research ethics.....	35
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK... 37	
2.1 Introduction	37
2.1.1 Neo-colonial elitism and its influence in kenya	40
2.1.2 Neo-colonial elitism in the three novels	53
2.2 Theoretical framework	70
2.2.1 Postcolonial theory	71

2.2.2 The Marxist literary theory	74
2.3 Conclusion.....	84
CHAPTER 3: THE INFLUENCE OF NEO-COLONIAL ELITISM IN KENYA.....	85
3.1 Introduction	85
3.2 The land issue as a means of exploitation	87
3.2.1 The land issue in <i>Petals of Blood</i>	88
3.2.2 Shortage of land in <i>Devil on the Cross</i>	90
3.2.3 Land scarcity in <i>Matigari</i>	91
3.3 Land grabbing in neo-colonial Kenya	93
3.4 Corruption by office-bearers.....	97
3.5 Industries still owned by foreigners.....	102
3.6 Unemployment.....	106
3.7 Class division and culture alienation.....	110
3.8 Social, economic and political abuse.....	115
3.9 Worship and religious hybridism	120
3.10 The exploitation of the masses	123
3.11 Women as sex objects and prostitution	133
3.12 The masses' expectations of kenyan independence	136
3.13 Conclusion.....	140
CHAPTER 4: NEO-COLONIAL EXPLOITATION IN PETALS OF BLOOD, DEVIL ON THE CROSS AND MATIGARI.....	143
4.1 Introduction.....	143
4.2 <i>Petals of Blood</i>	144
4.2.1 The journey to Nairobi city.....	147
4.3. <i>Devil on the Cross</i>	154
4.3.1 Class division in <i>Devil on the Cross</i>	163
4.3.2 Neo-colonial elitism in <i>Devil on the Cross</i>	167
4.4 <i>Matigari</i>	169
4.5 The relationship between the masses and the elite.....	183

4.6 Misuse of office by the elite in the three novels	186
4.7 Conclusion.....	189
CHAPTER 5: THE MASSES’ RESISTANCE AND REBELLION AGAINST EXPLOITATION.....	191
5.1 Introduction	191
5.2 Resistance in <i>Petals of Blood</i>	193
5.3 The liberation struggle in <i>Devil on the Cross</i>	200
5.4 Resistance in <i>Matigari</i>	206
5.5 Resistance and Rebellion across <i>Petals of Blood</i> , <i>Devil on the Cross</i> and <i>Matigari</i>	213
5.6 Active revolution in the three novels.....	221
5.7 Women in protest.....	229
5.8 A new Kenya is imminent.....	233
5.9 Conclusion.....	235
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND CONTRIBUTION TO THE STUDY.....	236
6.1 Introduction.....	236
6.2 Summary of the findings	236
6.3 The Relevance of the Theoretical framework to the topic	239
6.4 A Review of the questions.....	243
6.5 Contribution to the study.....	252
6.6 Conclusion.....	253
REFERENCES.....	256

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to analyse and examine Ngugi wa Thiong'o's treatment of neo-colonial elitism and its influence in postcolonial Kenya, as well as his quest to change that corrupt society. It also sought to show how Ngugi wa Thiong'o uses literature as a form of communication and expression to conscientise and assist in bringing liberty to the oppressed masses, by showing his commitment to the struggle against neo-colonialism and capitalism. Ngugi's *Petals of Blood* (1977), *Devil on the Cross* (1982a) and *Matigari* (1989) as an invitation to the masses and the working class groups to act against the ill-treatment they receive from the new ruling elite was scrutinised. The three mentioned novels portray the theme of neo-colonial elitism, as well as depict the neo-colonial sufferings of the Kenyan masses, by showing the elite's contributions towards social change and non-improvement in the lives of the masses. The characters and themes contained in the novels were analysed to discover how Ngugi crafted the three novels to criticise colonial rule and the neo-colonial exploitation of the masses in Kenya.

An interest to discover how Ngugi exercises his concern for his community in the three novels selected was evoked in the researcher. Ngugi demonstrates his support for his community through his continued writing about neo-colonialism and its effects. Another motivation was the uniqueness of Ngugi's writing and the way in which he organises his material in all his writing. The researcher, while studying towards an honours degree, noticed much coherence in Ngugi's writing which makes his work simple to read and follow. As noticed by the researcher, Ngugi started with those moments which took place before and during the liberation struggle for self-rule between the Mau Mau nationalists and the settler colonialists in *Weep Not, Child* (1964) and then exposes black and white cultural conflicts in *The River Between* (1965). The struggle for

liberation from neo-colonialism in *The River Between* and *Weep Not Child* (1964) comes to an end with *A Grain of Wheat* (1967) where Ngugi talks about the *Uhuru* (independence) of Kenya. The independence signals the beginning of a class-related conflict of two opposing groups: the new Kenyan elite leaders and the masses. The two opposing groups are all Kenyans but they are failing to unite because of their differing status in society. Class conflict becomes a struggle for freedom between the “haves” (the elite) and the “have-nots” (the masses) which continues in *Petals of Blood*, *Devil on the Cross* and *Matigari*; the three novels which are the primary sources of this study. The struggle for freedom from exploitation focuses particularly on the effects of neo-colonialism, which Ngugi believes has been brought by the capitalist economic system. It is in *Petals of Blood*, *Devil on the Cross* and *Matigari* where Ngugi shows a more sustained, evaluative treatment of the issues pertaining to neo-colonial elitism and its impact on the socio-economic and political structures of Kenya, manifesting optimism about the ultimate emergence of a new world in which all human beings can recognise and affirm each other (Ngugi, 1993).

Another interest is that Ngugi’s literary works conform to that of the Holy Bible. His writings have some similarities with events that feature in the bible. For instance, in *Matigari* (1989), Ngugi reports an incidence where Matigari escapes from prison among the heavy police guards unnoticed. In the same way the doors of the prison where Paul and Peter are kept are unlocked by an unknown person and they are able to escape unnoticed under the heavy guards of the Roman soldiers. Therefore, reading his novels became a necessity to the researcher in order to find the relationship that exists between Ngugi’s fictitious work and the context of the bible.

Human struggle is the striking feature of *Petals of Blood*, *Devil on the Cross* and *Matigari*. The three novels highlight how the exploited can win this human struggle and bring exploitation to an end. The deaths that occur at the end of *Petals of Blood* and *Devil on the Cross*, and the

disappearance of Matigari and Guthera in *Matigari*, signal a shift in power relations because the leaders that tend to associate with the domination of the masses are being subdued. Ngugi uses the killing of the leaders of the elite by the protagonists as a symbol to portray the staggering power in post-colonial Kenya and elsewhere in Africa. The protagonists in the three texts manage to eliminate the leaders once they have understood the cause of their suffering. This study has brought to the fore how works of fiction can bring change in the minds of people of our time and how the people can react to that change in order to bring the human struggle, brought about by the ill-treatment of the new ruling elite, to an end.

The current study scrutinised the three selected fiction novels, *Petals of Blood* (1977), *Devil on the Cross* (1982a) and *Matigari* (1989), to uncover the narrative devices employed by Ngugi in order to show how the masses of Kenya are treated by the new ruling elite. Ngugi uses various characters, both male and female, to represent the different characteristics of the ruling elite and those of the masses, in order to fictionalise the exploitation of the masses by the elite in Kenya. Such revelations are being challenged, and some scholars (Ousmane, Mwangi, Cantalupo and Ogude) are eager to find out whether Ngugi's revelation can be used to understand the situation in contemporary Kenya in particular, and Africa in general, and consequently to suggest an amicable solution to the ugly, socio-economic and unstable political situations in most African countries. This study, therefore, sought to explore whether Ngugi has succeeded in his description of the cruelty of the neo-colonial elite in Kenya to the masses. Ngugi shows a chain of development of neo-colonialism in Kenya. First, it was colonialism by the foreigners and the capitalist economy that they brought. This created neo-colonialism when the colonialists left surrogates to handle their business interests. Neo-colonialism bred neo-colonial elitism, which is

the cause of exploitation inflicted upon the masses by the ruling elite. This is the chain that needs to be broken, as advocated by Ngugi in his literary works.

Ngugi believes that the suffering prevailing in his country was started by the colonisers from whom the neo-colonisers inherited it. Ngugi uses the three novels as a weapon to deal with mainly Kenyan problems at all levels. He presents the theme of Kenya's neo-colonial elitism and its deceptiveness that refers to the colonial and postcolonial periods in the three selected novels more than in most of his other works that have been published so far. He uses different characters and their roles to bring to light the class divisions, class struggles and culture alienation that are taking place within the Kenyan society because of the influence of the past Western colonisers. The condition of class struggles and divisions is referred to as neo-colonial elitism in this study. It is through this understanding that the current study sought to analyse how Ngugi portrays neo-colonial elitism and the injustices that the elites inflict on the masses in contemporary Kenya.

Ngugi (1982a) refers to the suffering of the masses at the hands of the new ruling elite as a form of corruption by a power-hungry and autocratic government of contemporary Kenya that raises controversies in the Kenyan community. These controversies need some clarification and are a significant gap in knowledge that this study sought to explore, arguing that the suffering of the majority of the people is already being witnessed in most African countries. The people, especially the middle classes, are aware of the suffering but they are still not sure how to solve these problems. Therefore, through written literature and focusing on one of the African countries, in this case Kenya, people can be informed about these injustices and their causes, as well as the way out of them. Informing the masses about the solution on how to bring an end to exploitation done by the ruling elite is another gap that this current study filled.

In his novel *Decolonising the mind: The politics of language in African literature* (1986a), Ngugi suggests that the Kenyans should know their history because if they do not know their history, which is their identity, they will be lost. He argues that this can only be possible if the minds of the Kenyans can be decolonised. This is echoed by White (2007) when she states:

The mind is debased, and it is impossible to elevate it from corruption while it is educated to enslave the moral and intellectual powers and bring them in subjection to grosser passions. Constant war against the carnal mind must first be maintained aided by the refining influence that will attract it to be able to habituate it so that it can meditate upon good things. (p. 74)

Ngugi therefore uses fiction to write about the history of his country and, in turn, urges the Kenyans to reflect deeply on their history in all settings because Ngugi believes that history relates to the past, then to the present and, ultimately, to the future. Ngugi therefore writes about the history of past and present events through his literary works in order for his people to understand their essence, and then he compares the events. He reminds them through literature which to him is as important as history since it can be used as a compass to locate them on the world map. If the Kenyans have insight into their history, they can be informed about who they are what they have been, where they were before and, most importantly, it can reveal where they are going (Ngugi, 1983). In this way he reveals to his audience how and why things look the way they do in the present. Therefore, Ngugi urges the Kenyans to consider learning about their true history through literature because history is one of the powerful weapons that the colonisers used and still use to portray Africa falsely in order to enslave Africans both psychologically and physically (Ngugi, 1983).

1.2 ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

Under the leadership of the Kenyan natives, neo-colonialism emerged, and threw Kenya into great turmoil. According to Ngugi (2009), the neo-colonial elite exploit their own people even worse than the former colonisers. Because of their collaboration with the West, the new elite have landed Kenya in a situation in which it finds itself today. Therefore, this study envisages to present some of the means that Ngugi suggests may restore Kenya to its roots. The aim of this section, therefore, is to give the orientation of the study, highlighting key issues that made this study necessary.

Ngugi (1982a) refers to the term neo-colonial elitism as a condition where the leaders of an independent state exercise power to exploit their people socially, politically and economically but, simultaneously, serve the interests of foreign businesses and governments. Similarly, Vajrushev (1974) defines neo-colonialism as a colonial policy “employed by the imperialist powers with new hidden mechanism in order to reinforce capitalism, maximise profit and maintain the economic, political ideological and military influences of colonial times” (p. 30). In this context, the current study refers to the elite as those who are in high leadership positions, who are responsible for controlling the state. These elite include, among others, cabinet ministers, members of the judiciary, businessmen and women, as well as religious leaders. On the other hand, the masses are those who are side-lined in the development of the country. They have no say in the issues of the country, and they do not seem to exist, yet they are there; these are the poor and dispossessed, oppressed by the elite.

Moreover, the elite existed during the colonial days, and there is still elitism even after independence. The elite class that exists after independence is referred to as the neo-colonial elite

in this study. The neo-colonial elite are responsible for the system of neo-colonialism which runs the government in contemporary Kenya. This study, therefore, aimed to highlight some of the effects of neo-colonial elitism in the Kenyan society to alert its leaders (especially those who wish to come on board) about the unhappiness of their people and what can possibly befall Kenya if its economic, political and social status does not change. The researcher is of the opinion that reading a great deal of literature on the effects of neo-colonialism may help to bring a realisation of the situation and later bring the fruits of freedom to all the different classes in the society.

The system of neo-colonial elitism, according to Ngugi (1982a), started with the colonisers who brought its banner to the new neo-colonial leaders. Just as the former, the new elites use their power to oppress and exploit the masses that seem to be helpless, due to their status in society. In some cases, the masses fail to realise that they are being exploited. Characters, ignorant of the exploitation, are found in Wewuri's family where they keep on clearing areas for settlements only for those to be taken by the elite (Ngugi, 1977). The fact that they agree to clean another area without enquiring whether it will now be theirs makes it clear that they do not seem to realise that the elite are exploiting them. Moreover, Ngugi as a Kenyan is tied to Kenya's history. He is thus placed in a relationship with the exploited society and uses fiction as the community's voice regarding their aspirations in the class struggle and the way to end it. The three novels of Ngugi focused on in this study show the visibility of the effects of neo-colonialism all over the Kenya. In *Petals of Blood* (1977), the people's land is taken away from them without their concern, Warringa is dismissed unfairly in *Devil on the Cross* (1982a), and a group of people including Matigari are arrested without convincing reasons in *Matigari* (1989). Ngugi (2009) remarks that it is not an overstatement when Ogude (1999) describes the condition of Africa as

being “torn away from its past, propelled into a universe fashioned from outside that suppresses its values and dumb-founded by a cultural invasion that marginalises it” (p. 112). Because of this observation, Ngugi feels that a Kenyan, just like any other African, is now “a deformed image of another” (Ngugi, 2009, p. 26). Ngugi does not want his people to continue in this state of the “deformed image of another” and, therefore, calls them to find their true identity. He continuously urges the Kenyans to reflect deeply on their history as it relates to the conditions of their present lives, as well as their way to the future (Ngugi, 1986a).

The concerns and consciousness of Ngugi portrayed through the characters in the three novels provide a good example of the relationship that exists between him and his society. Ngugi is compelled to write about his concerns so that he can reflect the attitude that he has adopted in the face of various socio-political situations at particular periods of the political evolution in Kenya. His first novel is *Weep Not Child* (1964) which was followed by *A Grain of Wheat* (1967) where he specifies the politics of rebellion and the betrayals of trust in the revolutionary leaders. In *Detained: A writer's prison diary* (1981a), Ngugi relates his detention in the Kiriamiti Maximum Prison, the treatment he received at the hands of the authority under President Jomo Kenyatta and how he lost his job as a lecturer at the University of Nairobi. *Weep Not Child*, *A Grain of Wheat* and the memoir, *Detained: A writer's prison diary*, are some of Ngugi's writings that have a special, social regenerative and revolutionary power, and evoke revolutionary tendencies by the masses towards the leaders of the elite. Ngugi then uses the same situation that he details in the three texts mentioned above when he relates the circumstances that happen to Karega in *Petals of Blood* (1977). Karega is dismissed from his job and imprisoned for involving himself in the activities of the trade union. The prevailing exploitation has become unacceptable to the masses, and there is no trust anymore in the ruling class. The only option left for the masses is to

bring down the rule of exploitation through another liberation struggle. Therefore, Ngugi's ideological commitment to the masses can be attached to this loss of trust in the ability of the new ruling elite to build a stable society along the lines of capitalism (Ngugi, 1981a). The most important landmarks on which he mainly concentrates are colonialism, the granting of formal independence and the neo-colonial stage that prevails in contemporary Kenya.

1.2.1 NEO-COLONIALISM IN KENYA

The situation in Kenya after its independence seems not to be conducive to all Kenyans apart from those few who are the ruling elite. In relation to the exploitative regime in Kenya, Ngugi (1997) advocates for a change in his native country that has been subjected to various forms of suffering. Neo-colonialism is brought about by the western economic system of capitalism which they are failing to implement. Political leaders make laws and policies that govern the country, while, in turn, use their power to become corrupt. Ogude (1999) explains that the rich are important in the country because it is through them that shops selling commodities needed for human survival are available. Ngugi (1982) shows that the rich also assist in sponsoring some of the activities in the country, such as soccer and other social activities that can be of importance in a country; thus, possibly, the rich also have a share of the cake by sharing the country with the elite. In this way they form part of the elite and are also involved in the exploitation of the masses. This is seen in the case of *The Rich Man of Ngorika*, who indirectly forbids poor people to attend his son's wedding with Warringa by asking the invited guests to bring expensive gifts to the bride and bridegroom (Ngugi, 1982a). It seems he does this deliberately, knowing that only the rich can afford those gifts from the shops indicated and, therefore, the poor cannot attend the wedding.

In the same way, the educated also contribute to the well-being of the country. It is the educated who drive the country to achieve its future goals through their expertise. Yet, the same educated people do not want to mingle with the uneducated. The fact that Munira is being discriminated against by his own father because he has failed to obtain the same education as his siblings signifies that the educated also are part of the elite, and exploit the poor because of their lack of education (Ngugi, 1977).

The topic of neo-colonial elitism is dealt with in this study to highlight some of its effects on the society, in this case, the Kenyan society, and how the masses are planning to fight against those effects. Ngugi, in *Petals of Blood*, *Devil on the Cross* and *Matigari*, reveals a picture of the origin of the Kenyan society by contrasting the masses with the elite. In *Devil on the Cross*, Ngugi introduces the story of Wariinga, a woman who represents the peasants, the students and the workers, and who opposes the exploiters and their close collaborators, the foreigners. The elite, even though they represent a small part of the society, are the wealthy upon whom the destiny of the whole society depends. The people elected them to take over from the colonisers with high hopes that their suffering would end but, unfortunately, independence brought more suffering than before.

Ngugi disapproves of the elite's conduct towards the masses. For instance, in *Petals of Blood* (1977), Kimeria chases the delegation from Ilmorog when they come to seek for help from him. Through his writing, Ngugi presents the elite as a small group of privileged people who once governed and had a hand in the government of the country during the reign of the Whites (Ngugi, 1982a). This is seen in Gitutu's testimony when he reveals how his father worked for the colonisers and later became one of the leaders in independent Kenya. The elite, though a minority group, are able to exploit the masses because of the power they have. The masses have

no voice in the government in neo-colonial Kenya. The ruling elite order them around and the masses must follow. For instance, the boys in *Matigari* (1989) are ordered to pay bribes in order to be permitted to enter the garbage site, and when they refuse to pay, the police beat and arrest them, accusing them of theft. Ngugi blames this attitude of the elite on the modern education brought by the white man that denies them any critical reflection, when he says:

Their University where they give our children an education to enfeeble minds; make them slaves, apes, parrots, shadows of the men and women they could have been. In this process of enslavement of their minds, the native elite without realising how much subjective the education they have received from the Western school style is, consider themselves as superior to their kinds. (Ngugi, 1977, p. 16)

Through the education that the elite received from the former colonisers, they became victims by boasting about it and thus becoming neo-colonialists. This is observed in the characters of Mzigo, Kimeria, Chui and Nderi wa Riera in *Petals of Blood* (1977), who have become neo-colonial puppets because of their education. Mzigo, a school inspector uses his position to enhance his fortune, while Nderi wa Riera, an MP, misuses his position by smuggling precious stones and young women and then uses them to boost business for foreigner brothels. Nderi fails to provide proper measures to ensure decent living conditions in his constituency, Ilmorog. All he is interested in is to secure enough votes from the people of Ilmorog during elections in order to cement his position. Another educationist, Reverend Jerrod Brown who heads the church, is a sham in practice and belief. Chui, at Siriana School, rebelled against the syllabus that did not favour the Kenyans, but now he is lured by material and political power because he is one of the leaders in the education sector. Moreover, Chui, Kimeria and Mzigo take over the ownership of the Theng'eta Brewery and become the directors of this enterprise which was once run by

Abdulla and Wanja as a small scale business. Ngugi argues that western education has colonised the Kenyans' minds so much so that they fail to distinguish between bad and good (Ngugi, 1986a).

The masses are not given jobs without conditions. The government jobs are regarded as collateral for sexual abuse or political support and, mostly, jobs are given to those who support the ruling class. Above all, the ruling elite do not tolerate any opposition from anyone; when Mwireri wa Mukiraai opposes the system of stealing and robbing the masses, he is eliminated by the hit squad which is working for the elite. Members of trade unions are labelled as the perpetrators of lawlessness and, in most incidents; they are detained or disappear without any trace (Ngugi, 1977). Karega is one of the members of the trade union who is detained and dismissed unfairly for leading the factory workers in a strike against low wages. Ngugi blames the ruling class for such arrests because such unfair arrests do not solve the problem of demonstrations and strikes, but rather aggravate it. Therefore, Ngugi argues, "A song of praise begins at home. If you Kenyan men do not become so scornful and oppressive, the foreigners you talk about so much cannot be so contemptuous of us" (Ngugi, 1977, p. 96).

In the context of Ngugi's three selected novels, the study points to two groups: the exploiter and the exploited. The first group represents the elite that are composed of the most powerful elements in society in which the masses lack the power to intervene. Some of these powerful elements are the police force, the army and the judiciary. These organs are controlled by the interests of the ruling class and have nothing to do with the downtrodden, such as Wangari in *Devil on the Cross*. Wangari reports the robbers and thieves at the cave; the police accuse her of being a liar and arrest her instead of the thieves and robbers gathered there. A similar situation occurs in *Matigari* where Matigari is arrested by the police for telling the people of Kenya the

truth about the cunning behaviour of the ruling elite who prevent peace and justice from reigning in Kenya. Kenya is undergoing a system that indicates a class-structured society where the authority becomes the dominant class that occupies the most important positions in the social hierarchy and dominates the lower class who, in this case, is the masses. They do not have any say in the issues of the government. They are oppressed by the ruling elite, and they are silenced through the employment of security forces, such as the police and the army. Proof of this dominance is the striking factory workers in *Matigari*. When Matigari, Muriuki and Guthera are on their way to the plantation, they come across four vehicles full of police officers with guns and pistols and heavily armed soldiers who are on their way to arrest those factory workers who are planning the strike. Thus, a study of Ngugi's *Petals of Blood*, *Devil on the Cross* and *Matigari*, indicates a clear distinction between the elite and the masses.

Having analysed what Ngugi calls the elite and what he refers to as the exploitation of the masses in his literary works, this study reveals that such a situation still prevails in most African countries in our time, taking into consideration the everyday events that are reported on national television and newspapers across the African continent and beyond. This is what Ngugi (1993) aims to address so that Kenyans, as well as other exploited nations are informed and prepared for a second struggle against neo-colonisation. Ngugi feels that the government is exploiting the masses by not giving them social amenities, such as proper accommodation and clean water, as well as proper health facilities and schools. This is the spirit that the lawyer in *Petals of Blood* (1977) is trying to show by helping the delegation from Ilmorog when they visit the city of Nairobi. The lawyer offers the delegation shelter and becomes their advocate and spokesperson when they are arrested because of their protest against their representative, MP Nderi wa Riera. For being a helper of the delegation, the lawyer becomes an important benefactor of the

delegation from Ilmorog. His spirit of willingness to assist the delegation gains him a position in parliament against his contender, Nderi wa Riera. Above all, the lawyer helps to direct Karega to become a political activist through the conversation that they have while Karega and his team are sheltered at the lawyer's house. Karega is equipped with knowledge through his correspondence with the lawyer and the books he has borrowed from the same lawyer.

Though not much is attributed to the lawyer in *Petals of Blood*, his minimal presence in the novel becomes important when it comes to Ngugi's political views concerning the political condition in neo-colonial Kenya. After hearing about the predicament of the Ilmorog group regarding the drought in their area and how they have been treated by the people, including their MP representative, Nderi wa Riera, who are supposed to help them, the lawyer takes it upon his shoulder to render assistance by accommodating the group, as well as representing them in court where they are sued for trespassing. Another lesson that Karega learns from his experience with the lawyer is that the liberation struggle to emancipate the masses from neo-colonialism does not come from being in the higher ranks of the government. When the lawyer joins parliament, he is assassinated by the hitmen of Nderi wa Riera. In another context, it means that the lawyer could not use his high position to win the struggle. So Karega assumes that to win the struggle in which he is involved requires sacrifice rather than a high position. Welcoming the delegation to his house, the lawyer shows the unity of interest that the masses need to have in order to cooperate as a collective group that has one goal, namely conquering the system of capitalism that has brought neo-colonial elitism to Kenya. Not able to withstand the action of the lawyer, Nderi labels him as one of those "malignant and vicious people, who are hypocrites and a bunch of public officer exploiters who are not faithful to their government" (Ngugi, 1977, p. 79).

1.2.2 THE MANIPULATION OF THE MASSES BY THE ELITE

The elite exercise power over the masses in many ways. With the power at their disposal, the ruling elite try, by all means, to make sure that the process of development in the country is carried out by them so that, in this way, they can manipulate the masses for their own profit. This is witnessed in *Petals of Blood* (1977) in the case of Nderi wa Riera, the Member of Parliament (MP) who represents the community of Ilmorog. When he is informed of the drought which is ravaging Ilmorog, he takes it as a trap to remove him from his position as Member of Parliament. Instead, he sends the delegation back without any help, despite asking them to go back to Ilmorog and collect money from each household for a water project that never materialises. The Ilmorogians are left to their own fate after he has manipulated them to vote for his election as their representative. Instead of worrying about the drought in his constituency and the welfare of its inhabitants, Nderi wa Riera seizes it as an opportunity to raise money for his own gain at the expense of the people he claims to represent. Nderi's attitude represents the way the leaders in neo-colonialism behave.

In *Devil on the Cross*, the power exercised by the ruling elite is demonstrated by the local and foreign thieves and robbers gathering at the cave. Gitutu wa Gataanguru's speech (Ngugi, 1982a) buttresses the power that the ruling elite exert on the masses, when he mentions how he has become rich by collecting money from the poor in the name of community development while, in reality, the money will be used for his own gain. Apart from community development, he continues to enrich himself from the pockets of the masses by taking the land from the colonisers and subdividing it into small plots; he sells the small plots to the masses at an alarming interest rate. Furthermore, through manipulation, Gitutu succeeds in occupying a good position in the government. Due to his position in the government, he is able to rig the local elections, and uses

bribes to find his way into office. After winning these elections through rigging, he is able to obtain the chairmanship of the Local Housing Committee which further avails him a greater chance to pocket the fabulous percentages offered by foreign speculators in exchange for building contracts. In a corrupt manner, he then allocates the well-built buildings to those who need them (Ngugi, 1982a). In this way, he manages to become one of the richer men in Kenya. The elite consider the power of money to be the strongest aspect of life, and one who does not have money is considered doomed in life. This can be seen in the statement of Mwaura, the matatu bus driver where he clearly reminds Wangari that “Independence is not tales about the past but the sound of money in one’s pocket. Do not joke with me, get out of my bus or let us hear the sound of coins so that we can continue with our journey with you” (Ngugi, 1982a, p. 37).

Not only does the above quotation show how the elite believe in the power of money but it also points to their greed that has turned them into neo-colonialists. Mwaura does not take into consideration that Wangari’s life can be in danger if she is left alone in the forest; all he wants is to get money from her to top-up on what he already has from other passengers. Even if Wangari pleads that she will pay him once they reach Ilmorog, Mwaura, who believes in the exploitation of other people, insists to be paid, claiming that his bus does not “run on urine” but it runs on fuel which he can only buy if the passengers pay (Ngugi, 1982a, p. 38). The power of money is also revealed in the presentations at the celebration of the Devil’s Feast at the cave where the presenters reveal that they have security guards all around them that are paid to protect them from those who cause a threat to their lives; if they fall ill, they are treated by specialists and doctors because they have enough money to pay them (Ngugi, 1982a). Ngugi calls the presenters at the Devils’ Feast “prototypes” of new politicians who, instead of seeking to reform the system

that brings inequality in the country, use their political offices for personal gain and remember their electorate only when an election is approaching; they only then visit the areas to solicit votes. He, therefore, concludes that “these are those politicians who reap where they have never sown” (Ngugi, 1982a, p. 89).

This study has defined the word ‘elite’ by using illustrations from the three novels in an attempt to give a clear meaning so that it can shed light on who will be regarded as the elite. In the three novels selected for this study, it is revealed that there is an interplay that exists between the external threats posed by the former colonisers and the internal collaborators (the elite) in Kenya that causes the suffering among the masses. The liberation struggle that Ngugi addresses in his three novels is an effort to awaken the oppressed so that they can stand up and continue to fight to liberate Kenya from imperialism and neo-colonialism brought by capitalism. If the masses win their struggle, the country can experience a total transformation from the capitalist system to socialism to bring an end to a social dependence and, therefore, cultivate the spirit of independence among the Kenyans.

1.2.3 THE VALUE OF LITERATURE

Another concept that plays a role in this study is the value of literature. Ngugi regards literature as a powerful tool of communication that can spread the news quickly and far within a short space of time. In his essays in the collection, *Homecoming: Essays on the African and Caribbean literature, culture and politics* (1972), Ngugi states that it is one of the reasons why he sometimes write in his native language so that his message can reach his targeted audience far and wide as quickly as possible. Though *Petals of Blood* is fiction, Ngugi uses the novel allegorically to teach the Kenyans their history and their present condition relating to the socio-

economic and political structures in their country. Marxists believe that history is the horizon within which literature can be written and understood. According to Mushengezi (2003), a text can only be analysed well, if it addresses the experiences of the people, such as their political, economic and social systems. On the other hand, Duiker & Spielvogel (2008) are of the opinion that literature can assist in creating the ideology that signifies those socially constructed ideas, images, values and norms that can bind people together to particular roles which underpin their relations as social classes or sexes. In this way, literature can reflect a society's superstructure, social relations (executive, legislative and judiciary, military and religious institutions) and economic base. Ngugi's work seems to relate the past to the present by using fictitious characters to relate the experiences of the Kenyan society; therefore, Ngugi's novels under discussion take the form of a narrative to deliver his message, from the time of pre-colonial history to the coming of the colonisers when some people, like Chui and Kimeria, betray the nation by collaborating with the colonisers. As a result, most people are killed.

In the present, Kenya is besieged by another colonialism which is neo-colonialism. In his interview with Pozo (2004), Ngugi outlined his intention to include the history of Kenya in his literary work: "History makes people to know their past. Aesthetics do not occur in a social vacuum and as such, history and art must reflect the conception of life which they represent" (Pozo, 2004, p. 20). Quoting Okigbo, a poet-soldier, who died fighting on the side of Biafra against the Nigerian Federal forces, Azuonye (2007) mentions that some writers, such as Okigbo insist that literature does not have any utilitarian value for people and, therefore, should not be given attention. He claims that literature does not hold such value that it can be taken seriously, but should just be read for pleasure as the writers also write for pleasure; therefore, the readers can interpret it according to their own understanding. He further states that when he used to

write, he merely wrote to express himself and, therefore, it is for the readers to interpret his literature in any way they see fit.

Similarly, Gikandi supports Okigbo by stating that it is a betrayal of art for the writer to put his writing at the service of a cause, even if “it is such a laudable and uncontroversial cause” (Gikandi, 2000, pp. 207-209). Nevertheless, Ngugi uses literature as a valuable tool to inform the Kenyans about aspects of their suffering that are caused by neo-colonialism which have haunted Kenya since independence. Cabral (1980) also supports the fact that literature is important by stating that “literature empowers the indigenous people by sharing a vision, an experience, and a resonance that communicates and teaches them the understanding of each other” (p. 90). According to him, literature pronounces the ideas, culture, social, as well as economic practices, of people within a certain community. His idea is clear in his words when he says:

African literature has come to mean several things to a number of people. Some see it as a tool for the literate Africans’ arrogation of the essence of their cultural heritage, meaning that it becomes an assertion and at times an imposition of the contents and excellence of a black culture, on a white dominated world. To others African literature means a new literature of the world with its authentic and original genre, themes, and message. To a few, it is only a political document of protest against the assumptions of colonialism and imperialism as they relate to the world of the black man. To yet other people, African literature in all its ramifications represents a mere appendage to British or French literature. (Cabral, 1980, p. 91)

Ogude (1999) argues that literature is to be taken seriously because it expresses the concerns and needs of its writer, and cements the unique identity of a particular group, serving as a vehicle in

informing that particular group about its cultural identity which can further give the group self-esteem and confidence to express its needs and concerns. Therefore, this study shows how Ngugi uses literature to inform the people of Kenya about the socio-economic and political reformation that is taking place in their respective areas. He believes that through literature the nation can be awakened into a consciousness of resistance and rebellion against exploitation. This study also highlights that Ngugi is not only concerned with the struggle against class distinction but also with cultural and political decolonisation, and a new socio-economic and political order. Ogude (1999) supports this observation when he says:

Ngugi has been most poignant in his engagement with other disciplines and the discursive practice to imagine. Africa's history, which he believes, had been repressed by colonialism. Ngugi has insisted, correctly, that his writing is very much part of Kenya's and by implication Africa's historiography and the theorizing of its political economy. (1999, p. 2)

Ngugi started writing when he realised that neo-colonisers were failing to honour the promises of independence. In his writing he is, firstly, concerned about how the colonisers arrived in Kenya and, secondly, he writes about the colonisers teaching the Kenyans how to write and worship the Christian God. Later on, he starts to write about the slavery that the Kenyans and other Africans went through, and eventually, he goes on to write about the socio-economic and political liberation struggle that was to free the masses from their harsh masters. Ngugi stipulates, "Writers and their works are implicated in the larger struggles which define political life in the wider society" (Ngugi, 1986b, p. 32). The harsh rules that the colonisers brought to Kenya, which were subsequently inherited by their successors, have prompted him to divert from writing about colonisation and its effects in Africa but rather to write about the literature of denunciation,

for example, the three novels chosen for this current study. Wamalwa (1986) argues that, just like history, literature and art have a primary commitment to freedom and, without it, the world would remain in darkness when it comes to information about its past and present because literature and art reveal the political, economic and social circumstances that form the sensibilities of most of African writers and those beyond. Through literature and art, the people are informed of their responsibilities towards turning from the situation brought by imperialists to its original shape.

Apart from writing to encourage protest, Ngugi seems to engage in awakening the exploited masses, inviting them to resist neo-colonialism so that they can partake in the reconstruction of Kenya after imperialism (Ngugi, 1982b). Ngugi places the theme of neo-colonialism and its effects at the centre of his literature because he believes that neo-colonialism is brought by capitalism which encourages elitism among the rich and, in turn, breeds class division. According to Fanon (1986), class division is the segregation of the poor by the rich, and if this segregation occurs, the poor are disadvantaged because they do not have resources to assist them to meet the requirements of life. Ngugi, therefore, continues to inform the new ruling elite through his writing to abolish the system of capitalism and employ socialism which does not discriminate against social lines in an effort to bring an end to class division.

Influenced by the ideology of the Marxists, Ngugi strives to show how bad capitalism is. He believes that because of capitalism, there is neo-colonialism in Kenya that has brought neo-colonial elitism. Marxists do not believe in capitalism for they perceive the system as self-centred, ignoring those who cannot climb to the top in their lifetime. Eagleton (2013) states that capitalism is in crisis across the whole world and, after all, class division and conflict are rampant in most African countries. He refers to the leaders who accepted capitalism as “leaders

who have become their own ‘grave-diggers’ because capitalism is bringing a lot of suffering instead of good living to most of the people” (Eagleton, 2013, p. 51).

There is turmoil in most of the African countries that can result in the demise of the leaders. Marxists believe in socialism in which everyone is considered important in the society, irrespective of their financial status. Ryan (2007) also perceives capitalism as only proper for Western countries where everyone is favoured and can live to its requirements, but not in Kenya or any other African country where the majority live in poverty and struggle in order to survive. Ngugi agrees with Ryan that capitalism is a system that brings class division which later brings social conflicts between the ‘haves’ and the ‘have nots’. In his three novels Ngugi supports the masses in their struggle for liberation and survival. He writes in *Homecoming*, “I believe that African intellectuals must align themselves with the struggle of the African masses for a meaningful national idea” (Ngugi, 1972, p. 10). It is because of his support for a stable society that Ngugi can be considered a writer who assigns a social and political function to literature.

Ngugi can also be described as a true nationalist and one faithful to his Gikuyu cultural identity as he openly shows his side in the three selected novels. In addition, he reveals his true identity in his foreword to *Homecoming*, when he states that “he is not a man of the Church; he is not even a Christian but a Kenyan man” (Ngugi, 1972, p. 154). What he means here is that he is indeed a true Gikuyu man, not a mixture of the white and Gikuyu, and as a Gikuyu, he has no business in the culture and behaviour of the white man’s things, but will remain a pure Gikuyu man. To cement his idea of being a true Kenyan, he eventually abandons his name ‘James’ which he understands as a mixed one, and has never given seriously thought to it since (Ngugi, 1986b, p. 154)

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study was to examine and analyse how Ngugi sensitises his readers about the injustices perpetuated by the ruling elite in Kenya. The study examined and analysed Ngugi's concerns and perspectives about the plight of the masses in neo-colonial Kenyan society as these are reflected in his three postcolonial novels *Petals of Blood* (1977), *Devil on the Cross* (1982a) and *Matigari* (1989). The central issues in the study, therefore, are Ngugi's views on neo-colonialism brought by capitalism and how he rallies behind the masses to fight exploitation. Ngugi's post-independence criticism is explored to highlight how he has contributed to the revelation of the exploitation and repression that are taking place in neo-colonial Kenya by assessing his role in the struggle against neo-colonialism and capitalism in Kenya. Furthermore, the study analysed how he uses his novels to reject the motives of colonialism which is still observed in the post-colonial Kenyan nation.

In the three selected novels Ngugi shows that Kenya is undergoing socio-economic crises which he associates with capitalism brought by the former colonisers and their agents, the new, local, ruling elite. It is in this context that this current study examined and discussed Ngugi's concern and perspectives regarding Kenya's march towards selfhood and independence by focusing on *Petals of Blood*, *Devil on the Cross* and *Matigari*. The three novels represent issues of class division, social struggle and exploitation, as well as ways that can contribute towards the liberation of Kenya from the hands of the neo-colonial leaders who still exercise colonial rules and policies in an independent Kenya. Ngugi uses these political novels to state clearly the exploitative actions of the elite towards the masses, and urges the masses to fight collectively against such actions in order to bring peace for all the people in Kenya.

Although Kenya has received self-rule from Britain, it is still dependent on its former colonisers in areas of political, social and economic development. This dependency is, in turn, abused by the new ruling elite. Ngugi (2011) argues that the Kenyan government has also developed a tendency, like other African countries, to join many international organisations in fear of being isolated from international affairs. This is seen by Ngugi not as a solution but rather as more of a burden on the economy of the country, resulting in more debts which disadvantage the poor. This study thus analysed the influence of neo-colonial elitism and even took it further to show its repercussions.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study's focus is on the presence of neo-colonial elitism and its influence in Kenya. Doing research does not always warrant a solution to the problem researched but tries to contribute to the research topic by providing the researcher's side of the story. Therefore, this study aimed to provide answers to the following questions, bearing in mind the three selected novels:

- 1.4.1 How does neo-colonial elitism impact the socio-economic and political structures in Kenya?
- 1.4.2 How effectively does Ngugi's use the novel as a genre to sensitise his audience with regards to the consequences of elitism in post-colonial Kenya?
- 1.4.3 What course of action does Ngugi directly and/or indirectly advocate for the masses to take in order to come out of the socio-economic and political doldrums?
- 1.4.4 How effective are the postcolonial and Marxist critical theories in the analysis and examination of the impact of elitism on the Kenyan society?

Therefore, this study views literature as being a necessary and important platform through which the society of Kenya can be informed about their exploitation.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The current study contributes to the critical concept of the dissemination of knowledge regarding neo-colonial elitism issues in post-colonial Kenya, in particular, as well as elsewhere. Through analysing the three novels, *Petals of Blood* (1977), *Devil on the Cross* (1982a) and *Matigari* (1989), Ngugi's concerns and perspectives about the social and political situation in their country are made known to his audience, especially the Kenyans. This may enlighten policy makers, political parties, peasants, ordinary workers, religious leaders and the elite group who seem to drive the development in Kenya.

This enlightenment can be a tool in a better understanding of the future social vision of Kenya as alluded to by Ngugi. By dealing with his novels, the study also sought to explain his vision to the masses and the neo-colonial elite, using narrative as an authentic attempt to engage his audience at their level of understanding in the process of dismantling neo-colonial structures. This understanding, therefore, signifies the contribution the study has on the socio-economic and political progress in Kenya. In this way, the current study makes a contribution to the existing literature on the subject of neo-colonial elitism and its influence in Kenya, in particular, and Africa in general.

The topic of neo-colonial elitism is seen as popular in the development of literature on postcolonial Africa over the last four decades (Kubayanda, 2013, p. 3). In the same manner, this study will add views to the debate on the issue. This may assist earlier and current writers to continue expounding the story of neo-colonialism. Though Kenya seems to be one of the most

researched African countries, there is, nevertheless, a need to conduct research on more issues, such as the influence of neo-colonialism in Kenya, to add to existing knowledge. Moreover, whenever this topic was treated, the research focused on Africa as a whole or compared Ngugi's work on the topic of neo-colonial elitism to that of other writers but not to a particular country, as this study has done. Without pre-empting the issue, journal articles, popular writings and debates on issues of Ngugi's writings and his rejection of capitalism continue to appear in both print and on the internet, in which among others, the phenomenon of 'elitism' in Kenya surfaces often.

Kenya was under British rule until it gained its independence through an armed struggle in 1963. After Kenya had obtained its hard-won independence, the leaders started to collaborate with their former colonisers on administration issues, and, according to Ngugi (2009), this paved the way for the former colonisers to implement the same laws and policies that were used in their time of rein which, consequently, disadvantaged most of the Kenyan people. It has, therefore, become necessary for this study to be undertaken to analyse the politics of exploitation, domination and oppression in Kenya. Ngugi shows his determination to the liberation of the exploited from their neo-colonial predicament brought about by the ruling class who behave just like the former colonisers. He uses literary fiction to remind the elite of the Gikuyu proverb which says, "the wise can also be taught the wisdom by those they think are foolish" (Ngugi, 1977, p. 15). Similarly, another Gikuyu proverb says that talking is the way to loving and today is tomorrow's treasury (Ngugi, 1977). In the context of the second proverb, tomorrow can mean the harvest of what is planted today, so he encourages the Kenyan masses to stop moaning and groaning as this does not bring any gain in life, but rather continue to fight exploitation until they receive their

harvest. It will come about only if they stand up to fight exploitation themselves, since no-one else can do that for them.

Furthermore, Ngugi encourages the masses to “change seeds, for the gourd contains seeds of more than one kind” and to change steps, “for the song has more than one rhythm” (Ngugi, 1977, p.16). Therefore, this study is another rhythm added to the same song of fighting exploitation by neo-colonial elitism in Kenya as it attempts to expose the way the neo-colonial elite behave towards the masses in Kenya. In addition, the present study sought to understand the effects of colonialism in Kenya. As already mentioned previously, Ngugi puts the blame on colonialism as the sole initiator of the capitalist system that has bred neo-colonialism. This study, therefore, contributes to the existing knowledge by way of presenting a systematic documentation and explanation of neo-colonial elitism and its influence in Kenya as set out by Ngugi in his three novels selected for this study.

Another factor of interest in this study is the impact of the theme of neo-colonial elitism which is commonly observed in most, if not all, contemporary, post-colonial African countries. As a matter of fact, though Ngugi seems to focus on Kenya in particular, clearly, the three novels reveal that the same situation of exploitation observed in Kenya is common in many neo-colonial African countries. It also goes without dispute that, when one reads the three selected novels, *Petals of Blood*, *Devil on the Cross* and *Matigari*, it becomes evident that these novels indicate that Ngugi is a great fighter in the interest of the masses, a man who up to now is still dedicating his life and work to the struggle for the liberation of his native country from the hands of the oppressors groomed by colonisers. Furthermore, it is undisputed that the information gathered by this study may reveal enough evidence from which other researchers can benefit. In this way, the present study will contribute to the academic knowledge in the area of neo-colonial elitism.

Ngugi's approach to writing is unique in itself; this is another factor why this study was undertaken. His works are the same when he talks about the suffering of the masses in Kenya and across Africa. Although he seems to be a politician (that suffering has turned him into), he becomes the hero of the masses because of his attachment to this oppressed group which he has vowed to support throughout his life. Through his feelings for the masses, this study classifies him as a member of the category of those who are subjected to suffering by the ruling elite. The latter statement can be aligned to the reasons why Ngugi decided to live in exile; these are outlined in his novel *Detained: A writer's prison diary* (1981a). These praises of Ngugi wa Thiong'o do not imply that he is the only Kenyan writer who has written about repression in Kenya but it indicates that it is overwhelming how he addresses neo-colonial elitism and its influence and how it affects the socio-political economy of his native country. Ngugi, as a writer, is not satisfied with what happens in his society and to individuals. He, therefore, probes deeper into the affairs of his community in order to give meaning to what is visible and, at the same time, seeks answers about what human life on earth, especially in Kenya, is all about.

Another interesting point about Ngugi wa Thiong'o is how his literary work includes all life spheres of the Kenyans, either directly or indirectly. He does this by writing about their experiences in life, both past and present, their predicaments, tensions or conflicts. One such example is Wanja in *Petals of Blood* (1977), who goes deep into prostitution, comes out of it and becomes the beacon of hope in Ilmorog by leading the Ilmorogians to rebel against the rule of exploitation by the new neo-colonial elite. Ngugi also enables his characters to reflect upon their predicament, and tries to show the way to a future that can be of advantage to them. This is realised in the character of Wariinga, who is pushed by circumstances happening in her life, to

attempt suicide but later she regains consciousness and manages to build a garage in Ilmorog after completing a degree in motor mechanics.

The interest in the work of Ngugi by most scholars motivated the current study to analyse his work which belongs to the category of the denunciation of neo-colonial rule in Africa. The study intends to show that Ngugi's literary works require more scholarly attention compared to how it was regarded in the past where most readers regarded him as "just a politician who wanted a high position in Kenya" (Lindfors, 1991, p. 51). It is important to point out, however, that the current study does not intend in any way to elevate the literature of denunciation over other literatures because all literature is important in the world of literary studies and, therefore, none should be discarded in preference of others. What matters is evaluation and the interpretation of what one reads.

A further aim of this study is to provide a general overview of the genre of neo-colonial elitism in order to be able to situate and contextualise the works with which this study is concerned within this particular genre. Ngugi's literature of denunciation still raises disagreements and unanswered questions which need clarification. This study has discussed and analysed one of the dominating themes in his writing which is "neo-colonial elitism" to try to clear up some of the disagreements and misunderstandings about his literary work.

Besides, Ngugi supports the importance of literature by stating that it has an enduring message for socio-political commitment and, in most cases, reflects on social reality. To buttress his point on the importance of literature he says, "A study of any writer can tend to be of no value if an attempt is not made to locate the major thematic concerns within the totality of the writer's society" (Ngugi 1981b, p. 81). This becomes more pressing when a research study embarks on a

discussion of a writer who writes about a particular country and its events because, historically speaking, each country has passed through various phases, such as the Great Trek, the Slave Trade, Colonialism, the Dark Ages, Independence and Neo-Colonialism (Sichemann, 1989). These themes need to be clearly outlined and explained in a chronological manner to give a clear picture of how these great events and their aftermath unfolded in each country. Therefore, there is still a great demand for studies in literature that cover such themes separately. The current study makes a closer, but not an exclusive, examination of the struggle that the masses are undergoing in Kenya in order to survive their exploitation. The exclusive examination adds information to the literary research aspect of the study.

The fictional message in *Petals of Blood* (1977), *Devil on the Cross* (1982a) and *Matigari* (1989), engages imaginative presentations of the neo-colonial elite as enemies of the masses through various characters, and at the same time, shows how the lives of the masses are shattered because of how they are treated by the ruling neo-colonial elite. In this way, this study outlines the knowledge that can be learnt about the hostility of the ruling, neo-colonial elite towards the masses and towards Ngugi as the writer responsible for chronicling the attacks on the social injustices of neo-colonialism in Kenya. This study, therefore, sought to engage in finding ways for the masses to escape from their pain that seems to gain momentum.

Despite the hostility of the ruling elite towards Ngugi, he still manages to continue writing literary works about oppression and human injustices by the ruling elite who have succeeded the former colonisers. This can be witnessed in the brave step he took to write the memoir, *Detained: A prisoner's diary* (1981a) on toilet paper while imprisoned for the same message that he had written on toilet paper (Ngugi, 1997). All that Ngugi is fighting for is justice to prevail in Kenya for everyone, and how this justice can be achieved remains a question in the minds of

many. This present research sought to examine and analyse neo-colonial elitism in Kenya as a way of trying to reach consensus of how this justice can be achieved. In so doing, the study contributes to the existing, academic knowledge on the topic in focus by using the three targeted novels and frequently referring to other major works by Ngugi, in order to illuminate the issue under discussion. More so, this study considered the Marxist method of the novelist to show Ngugi's merit as an artist and the relationship of his portrayal with his own reality in his native country. From a scholarly standpoint, the current study attempted to furnish information on neo-colonial elitism and its repercussions in Kenya as a way to signify the contribution the study may have on the issue of neo-colonial elitism in Kenya.

While much has been written on neo-colonial elitism and its influence and postcolonial literature respectively, neo-colonial elitism remains a field of analysis that seems to attract much attention from readers; consequently, literary research on the topic contributes to the analyses of most cross-cultural genres. This study, which is compiled by using a neo-colonial theoretical stance, holds that the topic of neo-colonial elitism is about the literature of repression which questions the boundaries of class division, exploitation and injustices by the new exploiters. Thus, this study sought to illustrate the reason for choosing the novels of Ngugi which are *Petals of Blood* (1977), *Devil on the Cross* (1982a) and *Matigari* (1989). Initially, the study has taken a specific way of scrutinising the theme of neo-colonial elitism that shows the suffering of the Kenyan masses and, at the same time, tries to seek for a solution to the situation. This is another gap that this study sought to fill.

1.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study is limited to three novels of Ngugi wa Thiong'o written after the independence of Kenya. It is likely that some important information on neo-colonial elitism in the other novels that were not selected might have been left out. Secondly, the study is based on literary fiction and is content analysed; that is, data collected depend mainly on the views of Ngugi in his three selected novels as the main source of information for the study; therefore, more information could have been gathered on the actions of the neo-colonial elite if questionnaires and interviews were conducted. Lastly, the researcher's bias and views on neo-colonial elitism might have been present when analysing the data gathered. However, since the study used sources other than Ngugi's three selected novels, the reliability of data is not likely to be a problem.

Another constraint is that some of Ngugi wa Thiong'o's novels written in Gikuyu have not been used in this study because the researcher does not understand the language used in writing them, even though they may contain relevant information on neo-colonial elitism. The study focused primarily on three of Ngugi's English novels and not all other novels written in English after Kenya's independence were used.

1.7 METHODOLOGY

This section looks at the methodology that this study has employed to gather the information which has been analysed. It also contains the outline of the chapters of this study.

1.7 1 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study is a qualitative, content analysis research in which Ngugi's novels were analysed. There was no fieldwork but only literary analysis of imaginative fiction was done. Through the

use of fiction, concepts and issues of concern were raised and interpreted. Works of other literary critics from journals, the internet, different disciplines of study and other publications were also referred to so as to build the information that was used to interpret the study topic clearly.

1.7.2 POPULATION

The study focuses on Ngugi's English novels written after Kenya's independence which contain the theme of neo-colonial elitism. There are some of his works written after independence but only those which relate to the topic in question have been consulted. The selection and consignment was content driven in relation to the various forms of repression in Kenya. These novels are all set in Kenya and all contain the theme of neo-colonial elitism and its influence on the socio-economic and political structures in postcolonial Kenya. There are some of Ngugi's novels that speak about the same topic which were not considered because they are written in the language that the researcher cannot understand.

1.7.3 SAMPLE

The study used Ngugi's three novels, *Petals of Blood*, *Devil on the Cross* and *Matigari*, selected for this study. The study used a purposive sampling technique. This technique, also called the judgement sampling method, is the deliberate choice of an informant due to the qualities (in this case the texts) the informant possesses (Patton, 1990). The researcher decided what needs were known and set out to find novels that could provide the information needed. Therefore, the study's sampling was purposive. Only the three postcolonial novels of Ngugi were selected as the primary sources for this study.

1.7.4 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

The data analysis strategy that was used is content data analysis. This assisted the researcher to come up with relevant issues and concerns to bring to light the literary presentations of the socio-political situation in Kenya and then present them in a narrative form. Due to the nature of the study, it was approached from a qualitative point of view. The three selected postcolonial novels were read and critically analysed, employing a content analysis method.

To supplement the novels analysed, secondary sources, such as journals, books, internet sources and academic representations with issues on repression, were utilised. Through the application of all these tools, the researcher was able to gather the required information that created a study comprising original and well-informed ideas.

1.7.5 PROCEDURE

This study is content analysis research and, therefore, the data were collected through a critical reading of the three selected postcolonial novels of Ngugi wa Thiong'o and through applying literary analysis supported by the specified theories. The study employed two complementing theories to explore this research, namely the Postcolonial and Marxist literary theories.

All three novels were critically analysed and the information obtained was consigned in terms of the themes and characters in the novels in as much as they related to the social injustices in Kenya. Thereafter conclusions were drawn, based on the novels and the secondary resources consulted for the research study.

1.8 RESEARCH ETHICS

In view of the fact that the research was based on works of fiction whose characters are imaginatively created, the literary analysis is based on the principle that makes references to real places, people, events, organisations and establishments in the source materials were used in the novels, thereby enabling the researcher to observe literary research ethics. Also the researcher acknowledged all sources that were used to avoid plagiarism.

1.9 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

This study has been divided into six chapters which are further subdivided into subtopics. The first chapter is the introduction which contains the orientation of the study that gives a broad view of the whole research study.

It also discusses the statement of the problem, significance of the study, the research questions that drove the direction of the research study, the methodology and research ethics. Finally, the rest of this study is organised in the following way:

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK This chapter reviews existing literature related to the topic of neo-colonial elitism and its influence, as well as how this study contributes to the existing knowledge on the same topic.

CHAPTER 3: THE INFLUENCE OF NEO-COLONIAL ELITISM IN KENYA

This chapter looks at those aspects of exploitation which are the result of neo-colonial elitism as revealed in the three novels selected for this study. Each aspect is analysed to show how it is used by the neo-colonial elite as a tool to exploit the masses.

CHAPTER 4: THE EXPLOITATION OF THE MASSES BY THE ELITE

The chapter examines and analyses the exploitation of the masses brought by the system of capitalism which the ruling class is practising in Kenya. The chapter also analyses how Ngugi portrays the independence of Kenya under the leadership of the new elite, focusing on its depiction in *Petals of Blood*, *Devil on the Cross* and *Matigari*. Kenya obtained its independence from Britain in 1963 but it seems that there is still no freedom noticeable among the masses. There is still class division and exploitation that lead to the social struggle observed among the Kenyan society. The exposure of these effects has assisted the study to bring to the fore how a study of neo-colonial elitism relates to a study of exploitation and class division. Finally, the chapter concludes by analysing the expectations of independence by the Kenyan masses.

CHAPTER 5: RESISTANCE AND REBELLION IN THE THREE NOVELS

This chapter analyses the relationship that exists between the two opposing groups because of the division between the 'haves' and the 'have nots'. In addition, the chapter looks at the division reflected in the conflicts and resistance of the masses against neo-colonial exploitation that has been created by the system of capitalism. Because the masses are now aware of the cunning behaviour of their leaders, they prepare for a struggle to end exploitation and oppression by the elite.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND CONTRIBUTION TO THE STUDY

The study is concluded in chapter six with findings, the relevance of the theoretical framework, a review of the questions, contribution and, finally, the conclusion regarding the viewpoint of the research study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The focus of this section was to review the literature that relates to the topic of neo-colonial elitism and its consequences in neo-colonial Kenya. The aim was to review some of the research studies, relating to neo-colonial elitism, that have been conducted, and how this study can contribute new knowledge by forging a linkage and relationship with existing material. The studies and research already carried out on the topic of elitism provide useful information that can be used for future reference. This study, which puts Kenya into the context through an analysis within the framework of Kenyan neo-colonialism, is hoped to go beyond the existing information by going back to the roots of the issues that have been haunting Kenya since independence and, at the same time, show how Ngugi provides an escape from such issues through his literary works. However, this research is limited in scope, and adopts a narrow analysis of neo-colonialism elitism in only one country.

It is necessary to note that this study was conceived and structured on the critical viewpoints of the postcolonial and Marxist literary theories, especially since it discusses the connection between the events of the pre- and postcolonial eras, as well as the conflicts between the neo-colonial elite and the deprived masses. The Marxist approach is used because of its focus on class conflict and the reinforcement of class struggle portrayed in the novels. According to Therbon (2008), the Marxist literary theory utilises traditional techniques of literary analysis and aesthetic concerns to explain social and political meanings of literature. Mlambo (2013), (quoting Mushakavanhu, 2007) states:

Literature develops along with life as writers try to meet the challenges of their time, tell the readers the truth about themselves, the world and the current events, and voice their concern about the future, the truth without which mankind cannot advance. (Mlambo, 2013, p. 26)

The above quotation fulfils the views of the Marxists which challenge the writer to inform his readers about their social and political situations. The role of literature should be to awaken the people to demand changes where changes are needed by exposing wrongs in the society. The writer should be that voice of change for the oppressed. A writer, such as Ngugi, champions the interests of the masses in Kenya, who are deprived of their land, in *Petals of Blood* (1977) and therefore becomes the voice for the oppressed of Kenya. These are the challenges which this current study sought to demonstrate by showing how literature deals with challenges as reflected in Ngugi's three selected novels.

The Marxist literary theory also champions the author's concern regarding the working class and peasants, and depicts economic inequalities in capitalist societies, a proof that the theory focuses on social significance. Grant (1985) argues that the Marxist ideology has something to teach the masses as they struggle through social, economic and political exploitation. He contends that the Marxist theory is most liberating, and suggests the future of the oppressed depending on the readiness of the oppressed for the liberation struggle which they have embarked on. The states in Africa, according to Herbst (2000), exercise the same power and authority over the people they lead. He feels that the leaders are copying from each other without analysing the type of system that works best for their respective countries. As a result, there is much instability in most of the African societies. In support of Marxist theory, Eagleton (1976), states that the has been very objective in literary criticism and in the study of literature, in general; furthermore, the critics

who have utilised it, produce works of literature that awaken the exploited middle class to demand their rights. This can be seen in *Petals of Blood* (1977) where Abdulla motivates the Ilmorog group to stage a strike against Nderi wa Riera, who provokes them to go back to Ilmorog and collect money that can assist them in the terrible drought while he knows that they do not have such money. Ngugi believes in the ideology of Marxism. He, therefore, suspects that there is conflict that is brought about by the unequal sharing of the national cake among the capitalists, elite and the masses. He feels that, as a writer, he should reflect on these conflicts by challenging those in power so that the interests of the peasants and middle class workers can be honoured. In *I Will Marry When I Want* (1982b) Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Ngugi wa Mirri show how the oppressed can rise to demand their rights on their own. In this play, they inform the exploiters that it is painful to remember that it was them who convinced many young people to join the struggle to liberate Kenya from colonialism, and yet they are the same people who are now exploiting them (Wa Thiong'o & wa Mirri, 1982b, p. 101). Therefore, the use of the Marxist, literary theory in this study is not irrelevant because the study looks at how the masses can liberate themselves from the chaos brought by capitalism.

On the other hand, the Postcolonial theory focuses on countries that were once colonised, and Kenya is no exception. After British colonisation, the promises of free education, employment and land issues made during the liberation struggle are never met. Instead of being at school, the boys in *Matigari* (1989) are seen queuing up to enter into a garbage area for food. Their houses are scrapped cars. This picture shows that most of the people are still suffering; therefore, this study sought to reveal how Ngugi mobilises the oppressed masses of Kenya to fight for their freedom. He conscientises and enlightens them regarding the practical possibilities that are available when they bond together in organised revolts to topple the oppressors so that they can

reclaim their dignity and put an end to oppression. Hobsbawm (2011) suggests that postcolonialism should reverse the situation of neo-colonialism by changing the socio-economic paradigm that the new leaders inherited from colonialism. He urges the new leaders to learn from the bad committed by former colonialists rather than to copy them. Changing the status quo of the colonisers is one of the aims of postcolonial theorists. Therefore, the Postcolonial theory assists in directing the study when discussing the ways that Ngugi suggests can assist the masses change the status quo of contemporary Kenya. Ngugi suggests that the masses should organise a liberation struggle that will end the suffering in their country. In addition, Adhiambo (1987) also suggests that research on systems of repression, control and human rights violations existing in most African countries should be conducted to explore more connections and linkages in explanations of political exploitation in the colonial and postcolonial eras. This study has adhered to that call by deciding to examine and analyse neo-colonial elitism and its influence in postcolonial Kenya by means of Ngugi's three selected novels where the theme of neo-colonial elitism is discussed.

2.1.1 NEO-COLONIAL ELITISM AND ITS INFLUENCE IN KENYA

Just as things turned around on *Animal Farm* (Orwell, 1986), where the animals were subjected to exploitation by those in power, Ngugi alludes that the same is happening in Kenya after its independence. Various nationalist leaders have virtually stepped into the shoes of the departed colonialists, maintaining the same old system and making only some slight changes. Interrogating this further, Ngugi alleges that the changes that are made to the former colonial laws suit the people in power but not the masses. There is still exploitation observed in the Kenyan society in the midst of national independence. In the face of such a state of affairs,

Ngugi alludes that the writer should by all means use the written word to assist the exploited group win their battle (Ngugi, 1993).

More perspectives on the pain and suffering of the masses brought by neo-colonial elitism have been presented by Achebe (1987), who also laments the attitudes of the post-colonial African leaders. To him, the postcolonial leaders behave like a hungry lion rescued from a trap that later turns out to eat the one who has rescued it. Achebe characterises the postcolonial elite leaders as “ash mouthed paupers five years ago, but who have become near-millionaires under our very eyes” (Achebe, 1987, p. 96). This can be a critical observation by the late Achebe with regards to the analysis of Ngugi’s work on neo-colonial elitism.

Ngugi (1998) advocates for fundamental social changes that can result from the “necessary overthrow of an unjust, exploitative way of life and socio-economic order in Kenya” (p. 56). Supplementing Ngugi’s views, Ogude (1994) feels that criticising what the new men of power are doing to the people is quite inadequate. Ogude therefore, urges African writers to be committed in their writing and not to leave things in the air without suggesting solutions; a writer should aim to tell his/her society about its past and compare it to the present. Once the people understand their present, they can employ this knowledge to their situation and be able to rectify where things can be rectified. In the same context, Ngugi urges the Kenyan leaders to reject foreign bases when he says:

Always put Kenya first; to love Kenya; to have faith in the capacity of the people to change their lives; to insist that people are the subjects and not the passive objects of development. They should insist on certain minimum professional ethics and democratic principles; to reveal that ordinary peasants and workers struggled for liberation. The

songs to praise the Mau Mau movement should continue as in the past. (Ngugi, 1981b, p. 195)

Ngugi wishes for a total immersion into the struggles of the Kenyan workers and peasants for the total liberation of the products of their labour for their own benefits. Significantly, Ngugi's plea to the masses turns out to be revolutionary. Using his Marxist ideology, he suggests that the achievement of political and social liberation lies in the possibility of resistance and rebellion by the oppressed. It is, therefore, up to the masses to indulge in rebellion against the system of neo-colonialism and its companion, the capitalist system, if they want to attain a complete revolution and total liberation into a socialist economy which they can call their own and control. The fulfilment of such a project relies heavily in the unity, commitment and the consciousness of the masses. A good example of such unity and commitment is the march of the peasants and workers to the Devil's Feast at the cave (Ngugi, 1982a). Cabral (1980) believes that such an action characterises unity in the struggle, and symbolises the epitome of revolution and resistance of the masses. It also shows social collectiveness in the struggle against the forces of capitalism which is considered a strong tool that can speed up the liberation and bring freedom to the oppressed class. The struggle of the masses is an issue that Ngugi repeatedly explains in his literary works as he writes:

Democracy and justice can only be achieved when the various interest groups voice their opposition to the activities of the postcolonial ruling class and fight them. Until democratic-minded Kenyans, workers, peasants, students, progressive intellectuals and others, unite on the most minimum basis on a patriotic opposition to imperialist foreign domination of our economy, politics and culture, things will get worse, no matter who sits on the throne of power. No country can consider itself politically independent for as

long as foreign interests dominate its economy and culture. (Ngugi & Mugo, 1976, pp. 5-8)

Ngugi is a writer who selects his facts according to what he sees and experiences in life, and then builds his argument. When he addresses the situation regarding the lives of the Kenyan masses in *Devil on the Cross* (1982a), he compares it to hell on earth because he went through hell himself. He describes the condition of the masses as hardships of all kinds: they do not have proper shelters, health facilities or clean water, no proper jobs or even no jobs at all, not enough food, neither are their children allowed to attend schools with proper facilities (Ngugi, 1977). The children from poor families are not considered for government funding in order to enrol at tertiary institutions after they have finished their secondary education. Karega, in *Petals of Blood* (1977), fails to achieve his educational goal because he cannot access a loan to study further, and his parents cannot afford to pay for his studies.

Above being a socialist, Ngugi's three novels qualify him to be a humanist because human concerns, like class and gender inequality, are the major themes foregrounded in his three targeted novels. Ngugi also qualifies to be a socialist because he observes the panoramic view of his society and then fictionalises it as it is. This corresponds with Kessler (1994) who says, "Only if one cares otherwise one cannot be observant enough to be able to tell about things happening around one's vicinity" (pp. 3-5). Ngugi foregrounds the issues of the exploitation of the masses by the ruling class by alluding that there is a betrayal of public confidence, as well as poor administrative bureaucracy between the two classes; these seem to be the main causes that breed conflict and nurture exploitation and oppression of the less privileged in society. This is seen in the way he observes a panoramic view of the lives of the masses in all three novels under discussion. For instance, Abdulla comes back to Ilmorog from the liberation struggle where he

was fighting for the independence of Kenya, with some hope of coming to enjoy the promises of independence.

But what Abdulla is given as reward is to be told there is no job for people with disabilities in independent Kenya, yet he had lost one of his legs in the liberation war. In his fiction Ngugi shows the exploitation of the masses by the new elite leaders as a betrayal of confidence. The rulers breed and nurture the exploitation and oppression of the less-privileged group. Amuzu (2004) echoes the same sentiments on the exploitation and oppression of the masses, and urges that the new African ruling elite should strive for actions that bring peace and stability in Africa rather than issues that contribute to the suffering of the poor, especially in urban areas where the poor live in slums and scrapyards, like the boys in *Matigari* (1989). Amuzu alludes that the poor living conditions and the suffering endured by the masses are “serious actions of exploitation that contribute to the crises of the world” (Amuzu, 2004, p. 36).

Significantly, the three novels also reveal that social relationships seem tense between the masses and the ruling elite, and the tension results in demonstrations and strikes by the masses in order to stop the ongoing exploitation by the ruling elite. Furthermore, the strikes and demonstrations breed the problem of class division and alienation that destroy hope in the oppressed. This class division is witnessed in the case of Karega in *Petals of Blood* (1977) who is prevented to marry Mukami, his love, because he comes from a poor family. As a result, Mukami commits suicide. The death of his girlfriend causes Karega to become bewildered, hurt and feeling rejected. What happens to Karega shows the spirit of class division and the lack of acceptance of the masses by the elite; to them what matters is wealth, not the decent life of a person. Karega suffers at the hands of his future father-in-law just because he, Karega, does not match his future father-in-law's status in life.

Mushengezi (2003) sees the situation of the masses as that of misery, isolation, loneliness and denial. They seem to live in a different world from that of the elite, yet they live in the same country. The differences in the locations of the masses and the elite in new Ilmorog echo this sentiment. The situation in the new Ilmorog between the rich, who are the ruling elite, and the poor, who are the masses, is revealed as dehumanising, where the garbage of the rich is dumped in the living areas of the poor (Ngugi, 1982a). This is the reason why Mushengezi (2003) calls for a transformation and the overthrow of the capitalist economic system as the only solution to the problems of the degrading living conditions of the African masses. Eagleton (2013) blames the masses for keeping the capitalism system, which has brought neo-colonialism, on a “life support machine” by agreeing to be exploited by the elite through overworking and offering cheap labour to the ruling elite. In this way, the new elite have learnt to use the masses to pay for their crisis of accepting a money system which they have failed to implement. But Herst (2000) reassures the masses that victory is on their side, if only they work together and hold on to their struggle until they win the race. In support of the idea that the masses are struggling, it can be said that, although the ruling elite seem to enjoy a good life at the expense of the lower class, Herbst sees a new world emerging because of strikes and demonstrations by the exploited class.

Independence seems to be in vain to the masses because they still lack basic amenities, such as land tenure, clean water or better shelters. According to Ngugi (2009), the economy of Kenya is still in favour of the interests of the imperial power and their associated dominant groups. In this regard, it is observed that factories and companies are still owned by the bourgeoisie of Kenya in partnership with foreigners. Ngugi criticises the new leaders, who still reflect the same characteristics of social discrimination that were practised by the colonisers and who are embarking on the same economic structures. He wants the resources of the country to be

controlled and owned by the citizens of Kenya. The masses, who for so long have hoped for a better life after independence, are still in deep poverty. The protagonist, Karega, portrays this situation of poverty where he has no shelter he can call his own. Since his father died, he has been seen roaming about in Ilmorog, squatting with friends. That is why Fashina (2009) advises the masses to be organised and established, as well as to fight against exploitation without fear, if they want to break away from the chains of oppression. He is of the opinion that, if the chain of oppression is broken, there will be a shift of power and wealth from the exploiters to everyone in the country without any hindrance.

Ngugi sees Kenya as a country where class division, agony, poverty and dehumanisation are still prevailing. In *Matigari* (1989) Ngugi reveals the existence of such conditions among the masses in the protagonist, Matigari, as well as how the masses are reacting towards them. Matigari confronts the police about an inhuman action they committed against Guthera and succeeds to stop the dog from biting her (Ngugi, 1989). In turn, the police threaten to arrest him, only to be stopped by his supernatural power when “he grows into a giant and his voice roars like that of the sound of an earthquake and it shakes the ground where they are standing” (Ngugi, 1989, pp. 31-14). Matigari starts to search for justice and truth in all places in the city of Nairobi but, in turn, he is arrested for vagrancy. Kubayanda (2013) makes the observation that the anarchy that the new ruling elite of Africa have brought upon their people is a “betrayal of ideals and trust which is too much to justify” (p. 29). In other words, it is to say that he regards the exploitation of the peasants and workers in most African countries a situation which has become difficult to reverse.

Jomo Kenyatta was the first black, Kenyan President to rule postcolonial Kenya but, according to Ngugi (1986b), Kenyatta was still plagued by grudges towards other people in his country;

therefore, even after independence, he failed to fulfil the promises he had made during the liberation struggle. Instead, Kenyatta formed new structures of leadership that conformed to his own objectives instead of those of the people he was leading. He also retained many skilled whites in the judicial and civil service who served in the most senior managerial positions. Ngugi (1997) regards Kenyatta's regime as the beginning of the suffering in neo-colonial Kenya though, at the very beginning, Jomo Kenyatta reiterated the aspirations and yearnings of the people of Kenya in the Mau Mau war when he promised them changes that were to take place during his reign; he said:

Our march to freedom has been long and difficult. There have been times of despair, when only the burning conviction of the rightness of our cause has sustained us. Today, the tragedies and misunderstandings of the past are behind us. Today, we start on the great adventure of building the Kenya nation. (Kenyatta, 1968, p: 212)

Although Jomo Kenyatta had such aspirations for the people of Kenya, Ngugi (1997) insists that he did not attain his aspirations because of the system of governance that he had adopted from the former colonial rulers. As a result, the socio-political climate expected was never fulfilled, and the people of Kenya continued to experience suffering and the tragedy of disillusionment during his reign. As a matter of fact, the hard-won independence has turned into a curse to the majority, because the majority of Kenyan peasants still live in a state of poverty (Ngugi, 1983).

The housing conditions of the masses in urban areas are appalling. This picture is revealed by Ngugi in *Matigari* (1989) where the boys "live in a scrapyard" (p.16). The wealth is in the hands of a privileged minority, which surrounds itself with "mansions, expensive cars, television sets, and all the consumer durables that are associated with an acquisitive rich class" (Ngugi, 1977,

pp. 148-149). In the context of this present situation of the masses, Ngugi (1977) predicts that the poor will remain poor while the rich become richer until change is manifested. The prediction is seen with Karega's mother in *Petals of Blood* (1977) who has lived her life working tirelessly and faithfully on the farms and plantations of the rich elite but, in the end, she dies without anything, not even a piece of land from her employers.

Another prediction is observed in *Matigari* (1989) where "some small boys rush to queue so that they can enter into the garbage site to look for food and clothes" (Ngugi, 1989, p. 11). These boys live in a scrapyard which signifies the living conditions of the poor who cannot afford to have a proper shelter in the city of Nairobi. The description that Ngugi attaches to the attire of the boys, namely that of "wearing torn clothes full of patches of different colours of the rainbow" (Ngugi 1989, p. 11) symbolises that they belong in the shanty towns. The residents of the shanty areas and the occupants of the trenches constitute what Fanon refers to as "the wretched of the earth" (1990, p.67). Fanon explains that the death of infrastructures, broken-down shanties and a disordered pattern of settlements, filth and squalid lives signify the peasants' poor habitation.

Ngugi dwells on the sordid details of the locations of the masses because the people, who have suffered in the liberation struggle, are still enduring more, bitter suffering in the country they have already fought for and liberated. The freedom fighters are unemployed and live in informal settlements. The unemployment of the ex-freedom fighters is witnessed in Abdulla's situation. He is unable to find a job and is mocked as a cripple when he goes out to look for one. Mwaura (2005) echoes Abdulla's predicament when he says, "to live in that atmosphere of indifference, psychological tumult is like paranoia, recidivism, kleptomania, and everywhere the peasant turns to he encounters class hate, rejection, discord and fear" (Mwaura, 2005, p. 72). Because of the increase in the suffering of the masses on the continent of Africa, Eagleton (2013) predicts that

the war of class division and conflict may be worse in the near future than it was at the beginning of the 21st century. He complements his statement when he says:

But class division is in our reality because of the economic system brought by the capitalists beyond and within our continent. This system affects all the people in different ways, and because of the continuous suffering experienced in the African countries, there arose a spirit that vindicates revolution as the only process that can bring the real Africa back. So there was a revolution in Egypt, and a counter-revolution and a counter-revolution, what we learn from it is that other countries may follow. (Eagleton, 2013, p. 51)

The plot structures of the stories in these three novels, therefore, reflect the ordeals of the life of the Kenyan peasants. Kurtz (1998) adds that these ordeals of suffering are proof enough that there is suffering in the world today, and the only solution is continuous revolution, as those in power seem to have failed the people.

Ngugi is able to capture events in both the rural and urban settings with the intention of giving a comprehensive picture about the quandary of the masses. The fate of the town-bound individuals, the job seekers and those of lower status in neo-colonial Kenya are easily distinguished because of how they dress, eat or the transport they use. For example, a lady faints when she sees Munira with his uncombed hair and creased, muddy, dirty clothes at a social gathering of the many representatives of the various communities because she cannot bear to see such a lowly person (Ngugi, 1977). In another incident, the boys in *Matigari* have left their parents in search of better lives in the city, but they are still unemployed. The boys race the tractor to the garbage yard and queue to go inside as this is the only way they know to survive in

the city (Ngugi, 1989). Ngugi dwells on unemployment, because it is one of the most formidable problems facing the youth in Kenya and one of the serious impediments facing developing African countries.

In *Matigari* (1989) Ngugi shows that the negligence of neo-colonial leaders has had many consequences for the middle class, especially the youth. It is true that the system of capitalism embarked on by the ruling elite is being harsh to all categories of people; moreover, the youth are considered as the inheritors of the double impact of future suffering: physically and psychologically, which, according to Ogude (1997), is more dangerous. The boys' hope founded on school in *Matigari* has been destroyed, and they have resorted to stay in one of the scrapyards of Nairobi. Ngugi (1986b) refer to these boys' situation as a sacrifice because of poverty due to the bewildering dispossession of their ancestral land. Their good dreams about a happy life after completing school are destroyed by socio-economic forces, causing them to become beggars and scavengers of garbage in the city of Nairobi.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Ngugi wa Mirri (1982b) present a sociological analysis of separation between the elite and the masses, as well as a revolutionary vision which captures both the realities of colonial domination and the evils of the neo-colonial elite in Kenya. The two Ngugis are both fighting for what Knight (1983) terms a "return to sources" (p. 56). All they hope for is the return of the resources that once belonged to the people of Kenya, without discrimination. Thus, it may be true, as asserted by Ngugi in *Detained: A writer's prison diary* (1981a), that "being conscious of those societal imperatives and being actively involved in the struggle is the essence of being and the focus of history in the progression of forces between the paradigms of political, social and economic divides" (p. 98).

Balogun (1995) comments that literature about neo-colonialism is an active weapon in educating the masses concerning the struggle against social, political, economic and physiological separation in African societies. He encourages writers of literature, especially Africans, to focus more on exposing the exploitation by African leaders of people with whom they share citizenship. Ogude (1999) also details the message of political rebellion by applauding Ngugi on his approach to the activities of the neo-colonial elite that have led to the loss of trust in the leadership of the elite by the masses. He is in support of Ngugi's concerns about the plight of the masses, and states that Ngugi's message of "rage and anger against the ruling elite should not be misunderstood as rebellious, but should be seen as a way of igniting fire into the hearts of the cunning ruling elite to understand the importance of accepting each other within a society" (1999, p. 71). Other writers (Ousmane, 1983; La Guma, 1986; Cook & Okenimkpe, 1997; Sonyika, 1999; Bhabha, 2005) also testify that Ngugi's literary work indeed captures the history and memories of the past and, ironically, the aspects of exploitation of the masses by the elite in neo-colonial Kenya. In his novel, *Enactment of power* (1997), Ngugi critiques the capitalist system and its manifestations as rules of economic alienation of the lower class from the means of production by the neo-colonial capitalists.

Other than Ngugi, writers such as Mwangi (1976), Sonyika (1994), Ogude (1999) and Uwasomba (2006) state that class division is often mirrored as a sign of social tension at different stages of history. Social tension is witnessed in the incident where the chief of the police pulls out a pistol and points it at Matigari; he threatens to shoot him if he fails to cooperate with the police (Ngugi, 1989). Although Matigari does not show signs of insolence by not adhering to the rules of the police, he is threatened with a gun; this is an indication that there is social tension within the community of Nairobi and the trust among the people has vanished. In

an open letter written to the African Union heads of state, Nyanze reminds them to honour what they had promised the people of Africa:

This is my call: Don't just promise development, deliver it, and make it happen now. Make real, concrete progress towards investment that reaches all Africans. Investments that prioritise rural people are the most neglected by the governments. Our biggest resource is our people. To squander them is worse than wasteful. If we do not act now, by 2030 Africa will account for 80 per cent of the world's poor. Is this what we want to leave for future generations? (2014, p. 14)

He concludes by reminding African leaders that their people are tired of caricatures, waiting to be led to the real Africa filled with possibilities, dignity and opportunities in which they can face its challenges and solve these without outside involvement. Africans have held this image for so long: “a starving and hopeless continent, hungry and poor, corrupt and prey to foreign exploiters” (Nyanze, 2014, p. 14).

Moreover, Ngugi, as a socialist, writes to seek audience from the readers who are willing to join the struggle which questions the order of the masses, given the political background of the countries in post-colonial Africa. He questions these critical issues, and wants them to be resolved by the dominant power structures of the time. He interrogates every class: the relations of men and women, landowner and lower class, the rich and the poor, the exploiter and the exploited, the master and the servant, the educated and the illiterate, and then urges the masses to fight for what is theirs. This is the motive behind Matigari wanting to take John Boy's house because he claims “the house was built by him and his brothers” (Ngugi 1989, p. 158). Macgoye's *Victoria's murder in Majengo* (1993) and Biko's *I write what I want* (2000), also

propagate against a social order that is discriminatory to other social groups, the discriminatory social order that can be associated with class division that is brought by neo-colonialism.

2.1.2 NEO-COLONIAL ELITISM IN THE THREE NOVELS

The novels, *Petals of blood* (1977), *Devil on the Cross* (1982a) and *Matigari* (1989), posit a message that the neo-colonial Kenyan society is mainly dominated by the local elite, whose actions and conduct bring about social and political changes that further the exploitation of the disadvantaged group, the masses. The change of Ilmorog from a primitive to industrial town is a good example that has brought about the exploitation of the masses. Because of the change, the families are breaking out (Munira's family), lack of employment (Abdulla unable to find employment) and the degradation of rural people who become destitute and beggars (Wangari and Karega respectively).

Furthermore, the change in Ilmorog also brings change in labour and the values of its citizens. Wanja becomes a prostitute, which represents people's immoral values. Wanja cannot sustain herself through small business enterprises as before because the rich, like the Kimerias, Chuis and the Mzigos, have erected big enterprise structures against which the small shops cannot compete. The change that has come to Ilmorog has been initiated by the big businessmen who are the owners of the big shops and estate structures which bring a great deal of money in their pockets. In this case, the poor are employed by the elite as cheap labour. The social and political changes assist the ruling elite to enrich themselves from the labour and sweat of the masses. The ruling elite use the authority and power bestowed on them to run their own personal affairs, and in that way obtain more riches. All their political utterances are directed at corruption,

exploitation and blackmail as indicated by Kihaahu when he presents his speech at the Devils' Feast:

I hardly need to tell you that after two years, the millions that I did invest in the election campaign had yielded quite a tidy sum. And, you will note, I had not shed a drop of sweat in that sum of money. All my money came from the very people who had voted for me. How, one may ask, it was their tax that would go to pay the money borrowed from foreign banks. (Ngugi, 1982a, p. 116)

Kihaahu's statement shows how the members of the political elite grab the political power, that they have received from the colonisers, for their own interests and how they use their political offices for their personal benefit. Like all competitors who gathered at the cave, Kihaahu is a member of the local elite and believes in the ideology of modern theft and robbery. Ngugi's neo-colonial elitism story is a direct consequence of the colonial influence. During colonialism, the Europeans trained the local bourgeoisie according to the basic principles of modern capitalism which, according to Ngugi, teaches that "the sweat of the workers are the wellsprings of wealth" (Ngugi, 1982a, p. 79). In *Devil on the Cross*, Ngugi remarks that "Today money is the ruler of all industry and commerce. Money is the field marshal of all forces of theft and robbery on earth. Money is supreme and money rules the world" (Ngugi, 1982a, p. 173). The speeches of the thieves and robbers at the cave are testimonies to the above statement.

According to Eagleton (1976), where neo-colonialism exists, controlling power is often in the hands of the state which formerly ruled the country in question, though indirectly. For example, the presence of the foreign thieves and robbers at the cave in *Devil on the Cross* (1982a) symbolises that Kenya is still ruled by its former colonisers. He further argues that a country in

the grip of neo-colonialism is not master of its own destiny, and this factor makes neo-colonialism such a serious threat to world peace. Ngugi, therefore, relates that the struggle against neo-colonialism that he initiates among the masses is not aimed at excluding the capitals of the developed world from operating in Kenya as one of the less developed countries of the world but, rather, it is aimed at preventing the financial power of the developed world to be used in such a way as to impoverish less developed countries like Kenya. As it is in Kenya, Ngugi sees that foreigners' money is used for the exploitation of the masses by the ruling elite.

Investment under neo-colonialism in Kenya increases rather than decreases the gap between the rich and the poor. This is evident in the actions of Nderi wa Riera in *Petals of Blood* when he asks for money to develop Ilmorog but uses the money to buy plots from the peasants at a cheap price and sells them at a high price. Bresser (2010) regards neo-colonialism as the worst form of imperialism. According to him, it means power without responsibilities for those who practise it, and for those who suffer from it, it means exploitation without redress. It is with reasoning like that of Nderi wa Riera that Ngugi tries to open up the minds of the Kenyan people and other Africans to see the corruption and the greedy nature, together with the destructive power, of the neo-colonial independence leaders for accepting modern capitalism which seems to fail them.

The study targeted the three selected novels of Ngugi as its basis, but considered his other novels that have the theme of neo-colonial elitism as secondary sources as well. The three targeted novels speak about neo-colonisation and its influence in Kenya. Said (1993) notes that literature on neo-colonial rule and its systems of repression and human rights' violations have recently come to light through on-going studies. The current study has revealed an interesting connection and linkages that can be made in explaining the political exploitation that was experienced in both the colonial as well as the neo-colonial era, using the literature of oppression, such as

Ngugi's three novels under study. More perspectives on the pain and suffering of the masses brought by the influence of neo-colonial elitism have been presented by Achebe (1987) who also laments the attitudes of the neo-colonial African leaders. He is joined by Amuta (1989) who informs the African that the neo-colonial elite leaders should refrain from inflicting miseries on the poor, especially in urban life. Easterly (1997), also expresses his opinion by saying that "post-independence Kenya, like many other African countries, is faced with another rift, a horizontal rift of dividing the elite from the masses" (p. 12). In his book *The open score of a continent*, (1994), Sonyika focuses his frustration on the failure of the continent's new leadership to carry out the goals of independence. He places the primary responsibility for failure not only on Nigeria's long list of dictators but on the very concept of the modern nation-state which was introduced into Africa by Europeans.

Other commentaries on neo-colonial elitism and its consequences are contributed by writers such as Mwangi, (1976); Cabral (1980), Killam (1980), Killam (1984), Ibrahim (1990), Ogude (1997), Kotun (1998), Kiriamiti (2004), Uwasomba (2006), Eagleton (2013) and Kubayanda (2013). All these writers contribute towards exposing Africa's neo-colonial regimes for their poor governance which separates the elite and the masses. Other than these, writers such as Wamalwa (1986) and Easterly (1997) state that class division is often mirrored as a sign of social tension in a society at different stages of its history. Easterly (1997) refers to these kinds of social problems in any society as elements of the general condition of segregation. Ogude also discusses the issue of neo-colonial elitism and its effects on postcolonial Africa as one of the elements that is "tearing Africa into pieces" (Ogude, 1994, p. 43). Thus Ngugi is not alone in conscientising the masses about their plight. In an imaginative way, his novels portray characters that resist a social order that is discriminatory to other social groups.

Most of the African writers have reflected the problem of neo-colonial elitism according to how they see the situation in their own countries at the time of writing. Ogude (1997), states that neo-colonial literature is a “literature of using the weapons of words for the legitimate defence of the African heritage” (p. 16). In *Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon states that the past can only be significant when the writer “uses it with the intention of opening the future and as an invitation to action and a basis for hope; otherwise it can confuse the mind” (1990, p. 28). Achebe (1985) aims to portray the past life of the Igbo people, comparing it with the present, so that the Igbo people of Nigeria can know what their past was like before Nigeria was colonised. His message is that Nigerians were not introduced to their culture for the first time by the Europeans, but that they knew about it, lived by it and kept it in their minds, even if they did not keep written records. He pleads with the colonisers to stop giving the wrong impression that African culture was nothing else but a primitive way of living to the generations to come. He argues further that other African writers should continue writing about the life of the Africans before and after colonisation to paint the real picture of Africans for the generations to come (Achebe, 1987). For the continuum of the events and to make them easy to follow, one has to understand the present using the past. Likewise, Ngugi uses the past experiences of the characters in *Petals of Blood* (1977), *Devil on the Cross* (1982a) and *Matigari* (1989) to explain the present.

Ngugi argues that, after Kenya has gained its independence, the political, as well as social status of the people has altered much. Of course, the people might have celebrated independence because they were now free but the picture turned out differently. They all waited to enjoy the fruits of their sweat as promised during the struggle for independence but there is still inequality in the standards of living within the society. The masses still depend on the elite for survival. Wanja, Wangari and Wariinga are seen lingering about Nairobi in search of employment from

the elite who, in turn, abuse them sexually. The attitudes of the new elite leaders in Kenya do not differ from that of their predecessors. Various nationalist leaders have virtually stepped into the shoes of the departed colonialists, maintaining the same old system and policies that still create suffering among the disadvantaged class. For instance, Wangari is arrested by the police for vagrancy because she is not carrying a passbook when moving around Nairobi. Interrogating these further, Ngugi states that the masses' benefit from national independence is shattered and all they receive is exploitation coming from the new ruling elite.

Ngugi uses his past political experience with British colonisation to try, by all means, to use the written word to assist the exploited group in understanding their position, and use the power they have to win their battle. He urges the masses to have a vision of the struggle in order to liberate themselves from the yoke of neo-colonisation brought by the new elite. Ngugi places much emphasis on criticism regarding the activities of the Kenyan nationalist leaders towards the working class and the peasants. He reminds them of the positive proposals and recommendations that he has suggested for the social direction in which the ruling class must go. Therefore, Ogude says, "it is for the new leaders of Kenya to take Ngugi's criticism as constructive and implement the directives given so that the masses are accorded their rights as also citizens of Kenya" (1994, p. 29).

The living conditions of the masses are poor and inadequate to accommodate their families. This is revealed in Ngugi's description of the living conditions of the boys in *Matigari* (1989) who have turned the car scrapyard into their living space. The same living conditions feature in *Petals of Blood* in the location of New Jerusalem, which is the dumping area for industrial rubbish, as well as the rubbish from the elite's township. In New Jerusalem, the masses are said to live in slums made of paper and plastic sheets. The area is stinking and without electricity; it is so

crowded that the “space looks small as compared to its population” (Ngugi, 1977, p. 11). Ngugi, therefore, questions the validity of independence if the situation has not changed since colonial times when the Kenyans attained self-rule. This current study analyses why such occurrences still persists in Kenya, and also shows how the situation can be brought to an end. Wamalwa (1986) says that the leaders who took over from the colonisers are the same people who were used by the former colonisers to betray the people during the war of independence. For this reason, it has become difficult for the ruling class to conform to the promises of independence. Wood (1986) further states that the only way the new leaders can be reminded of the hardships and the promises of independence is to wage another war against the new exploitation committed by the new elite leaders, assisted by their western allies. In her novel *A love story* (1991), Aidoo focusses on the identity of African women where she challenges them to change their status of being occupied by their domestic obligations but join the African men in the struggle for economic change in Africa for survival and happiness.

Ngugi advocates for fundamental social changes, changes that can result in the overthrow of an unjust, exploitative way of life and socio-economic order. Ngugi is aware of the predicament in which the peasants, the masses in Kenya, find themselves, and his aim is to rally behind them by encouraging them to liberate themselves from the corruption of the ruling class through a revolution. He continues to encourage them to be brave and to work together as a collective team when fighting for their liberation so that they can win the battle, for people who stand together become stronger than those who are divided; as the saying goes, once people are divided they can fall easily but if they unite, they stand firmly. At the same time he urges the ruling class to treat the people well and put them first in every aspect of life, for a better Kenya.

Ngugi has studied how poverty affects the masses, creating different social structures in Kenya. Consequently, he urges the leaders to revisit the capitalist system that they inherited from the colonisers to rescue the masses from the degrading social situation in which they find themselves, which is worse than it was during the colonial time. The people fought to liberate Kenya so that everyone can be free and enjoy the fruits of their independent country. Therefore, Ngugi sees a need to change the system of capitalism and that change should be hastened. It is for the masses to quicken this and engage in resistance and rebellion against the oppressive system of neo-colonialism without any fear. Other prominent voices discrediting neo-colonial elitism are Mwangi (1973), Bardolphe (1987), Bhabha (2004) and Daabu (2008). These are among the writers who join Ngugi to expose the ill-treatment that engulfs the masses in Africa as a result of neo-colonialism. These writers expose the exploitation of the masses by the elite, and at the same time they also hope for a new world which can only be attained by the masses themselves through their struggle against exploitation.

The novelist dwells much on social issues, such as social classes, gender, religion, politics and poverty observed among the masses, because these are the issues that embrace all aspects of human relations. His fiction reveals that the neo-colonial Kenyan society is embedded in betrayal of trust. When Wangari informs the police about the thieves and robbers who are gathered at the cave, she is arrested, accused of being a liar and gossip against good people who are developing Ilmorog to boost the country's economic status. This makes Wangari lose trust in the police. Similarly, when Muturi and Wangari have listened to the speeches of the elite in attendance at the Devils' Feast, they lose trust in their leaders and decide to organise the workers, students and peasants to chase away these untrustworthy leaders. In the same vein, after Matigari has failed to find truth and justice with the leaders in Kenya, he decides to collect his

weapons to wage a war again because he has lost trust in what he had hoped for (Ngugi, 1989). Ngugi sees the seeds of disharmony and corporate distrust that are being sown among the society of Kenya and, as a matter of fact, the lack of trust in their leaders seems to grow among the people. If a society lacks trust within itself, there is always fear. This fear is seen in the security forces in *Matigari*, who start to hunt for Matigari ma Njiruungi, thinking that he is dangerous.

Meanwhile, corruption tends to grow unchecked in the government of Kenya. Ngugi reveals the corruption of the elite through the character, Nderi wa Riera, in *Petals of Blood* (1977). Nderi wa Riera collects the money from each house-hold in Ilmorog for a water project but, in the end, he takes the money for his own personal gain (Ngugi, 1977). The same situation is observed in *Matigari* (1989) where two policemen and a tractor driver collect money from the boys who want to enter the garbage area; later they divide the money among themselves. Ngugi is dismayed at such actions, especially as they are committed by those who should be law-abiding citizens because of the positions they hold in society. He condemns the corruption among the neo-colonial elite in most of his work, and sensitises his audience about it. This study, therefore, aimed to uncover corruption as revealed by Ngugi in the three selected novels, and give Ngugi's view on how corruption can be eradicated in neo-colonial Kenya. Mwangi (1976) refers to corruption as "a betrayal of ideals and trust" of the leaders of any class group by those who are ruled (p. 39).

Ngugi (1977) also condemns the social motivation and cultural education brought to Kenya by the colonisers as some of the causes of alienation among its societies. Ngugi reveals the alienation of families in *Petals of Blood* through Munira and his father. Munira's father regards him as a loss because he has failed to acquire the high qualification his brothers and sisters have attained. Munira, therefore, decides to go to Ilmorog, where he accepts a teaching post at an old

school with poor buildings and no teachers except him. Ngugi points out that the Kenyans need a type of education that will inform them about the social and cultural orientation anchored in their understanding of Kenyan cultural and traditional values. If the Kenyans can understand these values, then the values can be used to train and educate them on the causes, processes and rewards of active participation in the fight for economic independence and the struggle for emancipation from all forms of neo-colonial exploitation. The Marxist ideology also supports the struggle for emancipation from neo-colonial exploitation but states that this can only happen if the masses work as a unit in the struggle for freedom from the ruling elite (Daabu, 2008). Ngugi, therefore, chooses to educate the Kenyans about the struggle against social, political, economic and physiological separation in their societies through literature of repression.

In *Weep Not, Child* (1964) Ngugi details the politics of rebellion and the betrayal of the leaders of the masses who lead the struggle for freedom from neo-colonial oppression. He reveals how Njorege is arrested after leading a strike against the low wages of the mine workers. The same message is given in *Wizard of the Crow* (2006) where Ngugi gives a message of rage and anger against the new ruling elite. He urges the ruling elite to avoid the social blindness that brings confusion among its society. In *Decolonizing the mind: The politics of language in African literature* (1986b), Ngugi critiques the capitalist system and its manifestations as a rule of economic alienation of the masses from the means of production by the capitalists. All these texts reveal the influence of neo-colonial elitism in societies.

Calder (1984) also focuses on the ordeals of the destitute in neo-colonial Kenya. Calder talks about the plight of the masses in Kenya, and encourages a revolution as the only way the masses can reclaim their freedom. He uses quotations from Mwangi's novel, *Kill Me Quick* (1973), where he shows the characters, Meja and Maina, who fail to obtain the type of jobs to which

their academic qualifications entitle them, not even when they accept to do odd ones. Calder condemns the culture of the new dispensation where corruption is what the elite perpetrate in their respective offices. He urges the new African leaders to treat their people equally, without any segregation based on social status, because the war to liberate Africa was a war to bring about equality among all Africans. Likewise, Ngugi portrays class division and other exploitative ways brought by the influence of new-colonial elitism in Kenya through the characters in the three novels. Mushengezi (2003) refers to these kinds of social problems, such as class division conflicts, in any society as elements of the general condition of segregation, as they often mirror social tension that can lead to hatred and civil wars.

Ngugi's three novels portray the whole society's political, economic and social struggle that is dominated by imperialists where the masses remain deprived and disinherited of their natural rights, such as access to the economy and political power, which depict class division. This class division has brought class conflicts which have further led to strikes and demonstrations; thus, there is no more peace in the land. This supports the Marxist literary theory which promotes strikes and demonstrations by the exploited and states the importance of workers to strike when their masters do not listen to their pleas. Likewise, Zizek (2010) asserts that demonstrations and strikes can hasten the reaction of the ruling body to solve the problem raised. Ngugi, therefore, vows to continue to support the masses until they gain their social, economic and political freedom from the hands of the elite. This study, therefore, adds to the existing knowledge about post-colonial elitism by informing the reader about Ngugi's views on the subject. Ngugi addresses the question of class division in Kenya by revealing the cunning of those in power in his three novels. It is in the context of this realisation that this current study has situated Ngugi's three target novels within the theme of neo-colonial elitism.

In *Matigari* (1989), Ngugi portrays the prison as a better place to live than the hostile environment where the peasants and the working class live, because in the prison cells there is accommodation, food and companionship. This is demonstrated in the way Matigari shares his food with his fellow inmates. The prisoners eat together and share their stories on why they have been apprehended, which gives a sense of relief and belonging. Prison life is regarded as normal, as Ngugi (1989) remarks, “there, prisoners are able to sleep on blankets, and are recognized by being counted” (p.119). In addition, Kurtz (2013) also claims that the prison scenes in real life indicate the high level of crime in the society, as the youth in many African countries have resorted to crime. Unfortunately, they consider crime as a means of survival, such that even when they are released from prison, they look forward to a quick return to it so that they can be with their friends once again. The youths experience failures and are widely exploited in life; therefore, they resort to crime as a way of survival. The youths do odd jobs, like chopping wood for housewives in the suburbs, collecting and selling scrap metal, working on farms and working as housemaids. Their masters practice cheap labour and exploit them; they then choose crime to be able to compare with the children of the rich (Ousmane, 1983, p. 35). The youth are the most affected group when it comes to unemployment. Ngugi shows the state of unemployment with Karega in *Petals of Blood*, Wangari, Muturi and Wariinga in *Devil on the Cross*, who are unable to find jobs in Kenya though they have qualifications. Cantalupo (1995) suggests that the new leaders should balance the wealth of their countries if they want to see peace prevail in Africa. He feels that the protests experienced in various places around the world are a result of unbalanced wealth sharing.

The three novels, *Petals of Blood* (1977), *Devil on the Cross* (1982a) and *Matigari* (1989) all reveal the masses as victims of flights from their families, friends and the society at large. When

Wariinga finds out that she is pregnant, she wants to commit suicide because she fears rejection from her family and friends. In the first instance, her boyfriend and the father of her unborn baby have rejected her and, to relieve herself of the shame of rejection, she tries to take away her own life, though she does not succeed. In *Petals of Blood*, Munira is rejected by his highly educated, rich father who considers him a shame and a loss in life for failing to obtain high educational qualifications like his other children. Munira decides to leave his father and join his class in the deserted area of Ilmorog. The delegation from Ilmorog refuses to sit and eat together with the lawyer because they feel their appearance; clothes and status in life do not match that of the lawyer (Ngugi, 1977, pp. 78-79). The flight of the lower class goes together with Mwangi's ideas when he remarks, "While there is a lower class, I am of it. While there is a criminal element, I am of it, while there is a soul in jail, I am not free" (Mwangi, 1976, p. 9). Daabu (2008) reveals the condition of accommodation of the masses in most towns; cities and rural areas are objectionable. Likewise, Wamalwa (1986) says that, because of the condition of their locations where they live, the masses experience hardships related to a high crime rate and infections from various diseases. He ends by saying that the life of the lower class is that of "fear and unrealistic" (pp. 11-12). Though Ngugi's *Petals of Blood*, *Devil on the Cross* and *Matigari* chronicle the issues of hardships and suffering in the lives of the masses brought by neo-colonialism and imperialism, they equally reveal the determination and strength of the masses to survive. The three novels also suggest revolution as the only way for the masses to emancipate themselves from neo-colonisation.

The struggle for freedom from the hardships and suffering endured by the masses is seen in characters, such as Karega and Munira of *Petals of Blood*, Wariinga of *Devil on the Cross* and Matigari in *Matigari*. The four protagonists represent the masses in search of space; for example,

Matigari searches for the house he claims to have built with his own hands, but John Boy Junior is denying him what is rightfully his and Wariinga is dismissed from her job because she refuses her boss's sexual advances. The four protagonists' experiences serve as testimony of the deprivation of the rights of the exploited class. Ngugi uses the three novels as a means of social advocacy, in the sense that he wants to see a better Kenya where the life of the ordinary person can be marked with a free conscience and where the deprivation of human rights will reign no more. Ngugi blames colonialism as the root cause of the suffering of the masses. Maloba (1993) also believes that exploitative issues affecting the peasants and the working class emerge from colonial relations and their aftermath, covering a long historical span (p. 28).

Petals of Blood reconstructs Kenya's history with all its woes and wounds from pre-colonial betrayals. In this novel, Ngugi reveals the exploitation and the struggles for liberation, notably the resistance against the imposition of British rule and the Mau Mau rebellion. The main focus of Ngugi in *Petals of blood* is neo-colonialism which brings oppression, exploitation, social abuse and injustice to the lower class. Ogude describes it as a novel that "probes the history of the heroic struggle of the people of Kenya from pre-colonial times to the present day, within a comprehensive cultural perspective which embraces the political, religious, economic and social life of Kenya" (1999, p.5). Ilmorog, the setting of the novel, is transformed into the place of a proto-capitalist society with all the problems of prostitution, social inequality, misery, poverty, uncertainty, as well as inadequate housing. Through *Petals of Blood*, Ngugi hopes the masses can gather "petals of love" so that the slogan of 'eat or be eaten' is scraped from their faces.

This chapter envisages to uncover the nature and commitment of Ngugi's literary works and indicates the extent to which Ngugi uses literature and formal devices to reveal the consequences brought by neo-colonialism in postcolonial Kenya. Through the characters portrayed in *Petals of*

Blood, Devil on the Cross and *Matigari*, Ngugi indicates his effort to try to solve the dilemma of the masses, a group he associates with. What he tries to reveal, especially with the characters of Karega and Munira, is the reworking of his previous concerns with the role and function of the educated minority of Kenya to assist the masses to win their battle. Karega is an intelligent boy from a poor family who is attracted to the daughter of a wealthy Christian farmer, Brother Ezekiel. Because of Karega's status in life and him having a brother who served in the Mau Mau movement, he is prevented from marrying Mukami. But, through the knowledge that Karega has as an educated person, he organises and leads demonstrations until he is arrested. This study, therefore, reveals the possible paths for the educated elite to be able to assist with the formation of a new Kenya that is free of corruption, exploitation and class division.

In his fiction, Ngugi has a vision where he imagines a world with no class division, no corruption and no leaders who exploit others. Moreover, he continues to signal his commitment to his home country and its people, even though he is in exile because of his literary work. He imagines a time when "the black masks with the souls of the whites which the neo-colonial elite are dressed in can be removed" (Ngugi, 1993, p. 98). Thus, Ngugi hopes for an order free of discord, corruption, exploitation, disparity, disillusionment, subjugation and stratification. The coming together of the masses in a united and collective manner against the exploitation and injustice by the elite is the only way that can liberate them from the state of bondage and the life of misery in which they are ensconced. Ngugi assures them that the time has come for "the reaper and tiller, and the worker and labourers to refuse to be used like cooking pots whose sole purpose is to cook and never eat" (Ngugi, 1986b, p. 153).

Although Ngugi seems to believe the world has turned upside down, he still hopes that it can be set right again. He claims, through the character of Matigari, that, though there is no more truth

and justice in Kenya and the people seem to have believed lies above the truth, the tears of those exploited will be wiped away. In *Matigari*, the concern of the entire novel is to reveal the truth and justice linking the past to the present, at the same time trying to restore voices to the land. *Matigari* symbolises the reaction of the oppressed against the oppressor. Ngugi has observed the failures and betrayals of independence in his native country and, therefore, insists that the oppressed should stand up and fight to regain their freedom in the new era of neo-colonialism. Ngugi is fighting to give a voice to the voiceless, the masses.

Gikandi (2000) argues the opposite from Ngugi in regarding the exploitation of the masses. While Ngugi pushes for the liberation of the masses, Gikandi underlines discontinuity in the actions of the masses by stating that the suffering of the masses is brought about by their laziness to work. He suggests that it will be good for the masses to spend more time working hard to improve their lives than to engage in demonstrations and strikes that can lead to the loss of their lives (Gikandi, 2000, p. 3). But Berman (1990), Therbon (2008) and Daabu (2008) support Ngugi in his fight to educate the masses about the treatment they receive from the neo-colonial elite, pointing out that the masses need to be freed from exploitation; they also blame the suffering of the masses on the colonisers of Africa who had trained their successors in their exploitive rules and policies.

The current study extends the body of literature on neo-colonial elitism and its influence on the socio-economic and political structures in Kenya through the three targeted novels authored by Ngugi wa Thiong'o. This chapter has shown that there is a broad spectrum of knowledge on neo-colonialism that researchers and students of literature have addressed, but there is still much that can be examined and analysed. The chapter has also revealed the many writers that have already explored the topic of neo-colonialism in different disciplines. In addition, this current study has

also explored the subject of neo-colonial elitism and its influence in Kenya; therefore, it is positioned in the body of literature of oppression which focuses mainly on neo-colonialism. In this way, the current study can be viewed as also one of those studies that have contributed to both the new and existing knowledge pertaining to the literature about neo-colonialism and its influence on the social, economic and political structures in neo-colonial Kenya. Through the fiction of Ngugi, this study has attempted to expose a parade of exploitation and injustices that the new ruling elite are inflicting on the masses. The current study exposes what neo-colonial elitism has brought among the Kenyans and clarifies some of the misunderstandings evolving around Ngugi's views and criticism on neo-colonial leaders who took over power from the former colonisers. In so doing, this study adds information to the existing knowledge on neo-colonial elitism and its influence on socio-economic and political structures in contemporary Kenya.

The three novels sum up Ngugi's concern regarding the exploitation of the masses brought by the rules and policies inherited from the colonisers. It is also revealed that the study has gathered acceptable evidence to contribute to the academic knowledge on the topic of neo-colonial elitism and its influence in contemporary Kenya. Furthermore, the three novels clearly demonstrate Ngugi's vision that Kenya will be reborn through the struggle of the masses if Kenyans work together towards one goal: their liberation from the hands of the cunning elite. Ngugi's choice of the vision of rebirth is unique in that it reflects his awareness of the people's predicament even in the midst of inadequate resources. He uses the protagonists in the three novels to portray overwhelmingly the difference of life between the neo-colonial elite and the masses. The protagonists reflect the daily experiences of both the neo-colonial elite and the masses to reveal the quandary of the masses in neo-colonial Kenya.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As a study based on fictional literature only, it is important that specific theoretical frameworks that reinforce the theme of neo-colonial elitism be identified. In many ways, Ngugi's Marxist ideology has been depicted, for example, in the novels *Petals of Blood* (1977) *Devil on the Cross* (1982a) and *Matigari* (1989), which were ultimately meant to educate the Kenyan society about exploitation and corruption within their society. With regards to this state of affairs, it is important for this study to employ literary theories that can assist in creating knowledge that addresses the real world about what is portrayed by the characters in the three novels. This study, therefore, employed the Marxist and Postcolonial theories because the three novels portray class conflict, class struggle and the reinforcement of class distinctions. These theories use the traditional techniques of fictional analysis that address concerns regarding the social and political meanings of literature of repression which fit Ngugi's three novels studied. The three novels champion Ngugi's consideration of the masses and also depict the economic inequalities in the Kenyan society. For instance, in *Devil on the Cross*, Wangari supplicates Mwaura, the *matatu* driver, to allow her to enter in the *matatu* and only pay the charge when she reaches her destination, but Mwaura rejects her plea. The bus driver, instead, intends to throw her out and leave her in the middle of the forest if she does not "cough out the money" (Ngugi, 1982a, p. 37). Mwaura's action towards Wangari is contrary to Ngugi's beseeching of the leaders in which he asks them to "always put the people of Kenya first in all their undertakings".

Marxist and Postcolonial literary theories provide the complementary foundation for this study, and their combination serves to unearth the intricacies involved within the issue of neo-colonial elitism and its influence in the socio-economic and political situation in Kenya. Therefore, these major theories are propagated and applied from a specific setting of fiction, that is, the period

after Kenya obtained its independence, because of their great significance in the study undertaken. The two theories and their role in this study are looked at separately in the section that follows.

2.2.1 POSTCOLONIAL THEORY

Postcolonial theory is defined by Bitterly (1989) as an “approach to literary analysis that concerns itself in literature particularly written in English in formerly colonised countries” (p. 65). The theory probes what happens when two opposing cultures clash and one of them has an accompanying power and deems itself superior to the other. In this study, two opposing cultures are observed, the western culture left behind by the colonisers and the Kenyan culture. The western culture followed by the neo-colonial elite is deemed superior when compared to the Kenyan culture. In *Devil on the Cross* (1982a), Gaturia’s father scorns the Gikuyu traditional apparel that Wariinga is wearing. As one of the rich men of Ngorika, his daughter-in-law should wear the clothes bought from the shops in Europe (Ngugi, 1982a, p. 251). This situation shows two different cultures that are clashing, where the foreign culture (western) is favoured over the Kenyan culture. Therefore, the Postcolonial theory is of great significance to this study because it deals with the effects of colonisation on cultures and societies. Thus, this theory deals with the reverberation of colonialism and the effects it brings on the society.

Furthermore, the Postcolonial theory deals with a historical period between the colonial and postcolonial eras; therefore, it may seem to suggest a concern only with the national culture after the end of the historical period, colonialism, but Mukherjee has the following observation regarding the Postcolonial theory:

Postcolonial theory is not merely a chronological label referring to the period after the demise of empires. It is ideologically an emancipatory concept particularly for the students of literature outside the Western world because it makes us to interrogate many concepts of the study of literature that we were made to take for granted, enabling us not to read our own texts in our own terms but also to re-interpret some of the old canonical texts from Europe from the perspective of our specific historical and geographical location. (1989, pp. 3-4)

In terms of content production, the postcolonial theory analyses similar ranges from the beginning of a book to the end. For example, Ngugi's *Matigari* (1989) relates one topic of Matigari who is roving different places in Nairobi, looking for justice and peace, from the beginning to the end. This theory also applies to the readings which muse on one step or one aspect of some texts, the array which this current research study has followed. It has looked at one aspect, that is, neo-colonial elitism and its influence in postcolonial Kenya. It should now be clear why this study coveted to address the issue of neo-colonial elitism in Kenya using the Postcolonial theory. For Ngugi (2011), this theory is fitting when one analyses issues of neo-colonial elitism and their effects on any African society that was once colonised. Therefore, it has been constructive and mutually enlightening to use this theory, and applying it in this study has assisted the study to convey a sense of engagement with the thinkers on issues relating to neo-colonial elitism, particularly, neo-colonial elitism and its influence in postcolonial Kenya, an engagement that the study aimed to pursue in the chapters that follow. According to Balogun (1995), the Postcolonial theory is a specifically post-modern, intellectual discourse that consists of reactions to, and analysis of, the cultural legacy of colonialism. The novel, *Devil on the Cross*, reveals the legacy of carrying passbooks when moving around Nairobi, which was a rule in

colonial times. Wangari is arrested when moving around Nairobi in search of a job because she is not carrying a passbook (Ngugi, 1982a).

In *Petals of Blood*, Ngugi does not hide his yearning for Ilmorog's original environment before it was turned into a commercial area by the legacy of colonialism. *Petals of Blood* reflects the past, how the people of Ilmorog survived, and use the past to carve out a new way of creating and understanding the new world in which the Ilmorogians find themselves. This logic is in accordance with the idea of the Postcolonial theory which teaches that the writer has to bring the past in order to shape the future of the audience. The Ilmorogians mourn the time when everyone had had enough land for housing and cultivation. In other words, the community of Ilmorog does not like the modern changes that have come to the area. Therefore, the contribution of the Postcolonial theory in this study is to bring an understanding of how the circumstances of the masses are epitomised and inferred within the texts. Because there is continuity of the pre-occupation with the actions related to those of colonialism still going on in neo-colonial Kenya, the postcolonial theory becomes essential.

Ngugi, in *Petals of Blood* (1977), recognises postulations which underline the logic of colonialism that are still active forces in the neo-colonial era. The delegation from Ilmorog is not given the attention they deserve because of their status. The treatment afforded the Ilmorog delegation is one of the assumptions that Ngugi tries to expose and deconstruct. Doing this requires the removal of the power of the elite with regards to persuasion and coercion, the step with which the neo-colonial elite do not agree. The goal of the postcolonial theorists, therefore, is to clear space for multiple voices, especially those voices, referred to as subalterns in Said's *Culture and imperialism* (Said, 1993, p. 23), which are silenced by dominant ideologies. Said

gives clear pictures of the ways Orientalists disregard the views of the elite, preferring instead to rely on their own ideas and those of their peers.

2.2.2 THE MARXIST LITERARY THEORY

Another theory employed in this study is the Marxist literary theory. This theory analyses social processes which refer to the struggle of the working class and the peasants, its internal political conflicts and the strategy that the struggle is to be taken up, the tactics to employ in the struggle and the organisation of the struggle. Ngugi, who is influenced by Marx, invites the exploited to unite in order to produce effective results to make things meet their needs. He accentuates unity when he says:

Humanity is in turn born from many hands working together, for as Gikuyu once said that a single finger cannot kill a mouse, a single log cannot make fire last through the night, a single man, however strong cannot build a bridge across a river and many hands can lift a weight however heavy. (Ngugi, 1982a, p. 56)

The quotation above qualifies Ngugi as a Marxist novelist and, in the three novels analysed in this study, aspects of Marxism were noticed. In *Devil on the Cross*, Wariinga represents the working class. This is the group of workers who work for just enough money to get by each day. The neo-colonial elite are represented by the likes of Boss Kihara whom Wariinga asks for a job. Boss Kihara promises to give Wariinga a job but on condition that she agrees to his sexual advances. In this way she then becomes the quarry who is oppressed by these elite. Wariinga faces injustices from her boss who keeps her from success and happiness. Once she is employed, Wariinga is soon fired after refusing to sleep with her boss. Ngugi is again presenting her as an oppressed, lower class worker who is dependent on the unfair elite class for survival. Wariinga

has no choice but to look for work from such slimy bosses as Boss Kihara, because she needs to earn a living. Even during Wariinga's nightmare, we observe that the devil is released by the rich men in dark suits, instead of being hanged on the cross as desired by the masses. Marxists believe that the proletariat depends on the bourgeoisie for earning the bare minimum for survival (Eagleton, 2013). This is exactly what Boss Kihara is implying when he takes advantage of Wariinga. It is this state of affairs that has prompted Wariinga to seek revenge and side with the masses who are facing the same exploitation as her. From a Marxist perspective, Ngugi's *Devil on the Cross* (1982a) can be said to have a Marxist agenda.

Another factor to fathom is that the Marxist literary theory calls on a writer to commit his/her art to the cause of the exploited. According to Therbon (2008), the Marxist literary theory stipulates that the author should be a mirror of the society in which he/she lives, and since the author is the product of the society and does not come from a vacuum, he/she should be what he/she writes. Mushengezi (2003) states that literature should aim to transform the culture, norms, beliefs and values that are bad for the society and suggests better alternatives. Ngugi's aim is to fight against the old, bad norms and values of capitalism left behind by the colonialists, to be replaced by new ones to accommodate every person in Kenya. His role is to awaken the people to demand changes where these are needed. His three novels expose the wrongs in his society and he is committed to be the voice of change for the oppressed. His work reveals the clashes that prevail between the politically and economically powerful classes, like the ruling elite class, capitalists and industrialists, against the proletariat and peasants. Ngugi is against the way the masses are treated by their bosses, and he says:

The power of our hands goes to feed three people. Imperialists from Europe, Imperialists from America, Imperialists from Japan. And of course their local watchmen. The labour of our hand is the real wealthy. (Ngugi, 2009, p. 33)

In *Petals of Blood* (1977) he urges the people to start fighting for themselves so that they can eat the produce of their sweat and not to sweat for others so that they can become rich. The spirit of fighting for justice is seen in Karega who vows not to repeat what he has been doing in the past where he believed lies from the cunning leaders. He informs Akinyi, the girl who has come to visit him in prison, that they should keep the spirit of comradeship burning until they bring down the system of capitalism that is exploiting the lower class.

Marxists believe in amplifying people's feelings and the desire to change; therefore, Ngugi steers for the change so that the national cake which is produced in Kenya can be equitably shared among all. He is thus challenging the ideology of the superstructure in order to promote the interests of the oppressed and exploited masses. He asks the superstructure, who is the elite:

Don't you know how it pains when I truly know that it is your son who lured her away from home? Now I will prove to you that I am also a human being. This sword is my law and my court, the poor people's law court. (Ngugi, 2009, p. 101)

The Marxist literary theory also employs a type of criticism in which literary works are viewed as the product of work whose practitioners emphasise the role of class and ideology as they reflect, propagate and even challenge the prevailing social order (Gugelberger, 1985). That is why Ngugi, in most of his work, is an activist who stands for the rights of the people and demands change. Mushengezi puts it this way: "Ngugi's commitment to activism is no doubt total in that he reveals it in most of his written work, his presentations and interviews"

(Mushengezi, 2003, p. 82). In his novels, *Petals of Blood*, *Devil on the Cross* and *Matigari*, Ngugi ceaselessly calls upon the Kenyans to rise in a popular revolution and fight for land and their rights. Ngugi wa Thiong'o validates how people can wage a struggle to recover their land and their lost rights in his play *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* where a woman praises her son:

Your words contain wisdom, son. Kimathi was never alone and will never be alone. No bullet can kill him for as long as women continue to bear children. Let a thousand bullets be shot through our heads, but this I believe: one day, the soil will be restored to the people. Our land shall one day be truly ours. (Ngugi, 1976, p. 21)

The same call is seen when Karega in *Petals of Blood* organises a strike against low wages for the workers; Muturi in *Devil on the Cross* also manages to chase the thieves and robbers from the cave with his organised group, and at the strike of the workers in *Matigari*, though they are surrounded by armed policemen and the army, they vow not to go back to work until their demand is met. Ngugi's calls are in accordance with the ideology of Marxism which states that the oppressed should remove fear and cowardice, if they want to win their battle against oppression by the elite. Therefore, the Marxist literary theory has remained central to the study of the literature of repression.

Still in the three novels, Ngugi commits himself to the cause of the exploited, as he writes in *Something torn and new: An African renaissance* that "Struggle is central to nature, to human art and to my history" (2009, p. 22). Through *Matigari*, Ngugi shows his commitment to rally behind the plight of the masses until they achieve their goal. *Matigari* is stoned by the boys, but he does not fight back because his mission is not to fight them but to help them in their oppression so that they can find a solution to their predicament (Ngugi, 1989, p. 14). Through his

numerous novels, plays and essays, Ngugi is consistently positioning himself as an advocate for the ordinary peasants and workers of Kenya, and generally for Africa. Wood (1986) once remarked, “Cut the Kenyan novelist, Ngugi wa Thiong’o, and he will bleed politics” (p. 23). Accordingly, the three novels give evidence that Ngugi is still searching for a political strategy to end the social, economic and political struggle between the elite and the masses which, he argues, is being fuelled by capitalism successfully.

Ngugi describes capitalism as a ‘faceless system’ used by the new Kenyan elite to control the state and treat the poor unfairly. Marxists believe in an economic system in which the state controls the means of production to create a society in which everyone is treated equally and share the national cake together, a situation for which Ngugi is advocating. Ngugi shows, in the three selected novels, that everyman loses out to capitalist endeavours and is essentially exploited by the new Kenyan elite. Farmers are forced to mark out their lands and mortgage them with loans linked to the success of their harvest. In cases where the quality of the harvest fails, the farmers have no choice but are forced to sell land, because what they earn from the produce is unable to match their loan repayments. Wangari becomes a victim of the cunning of the elite when her only two acres of land are auctioned by the Kenyan Economic Progress Bank for failing to pay back the loan as agreed upon because of the poor harvest (Ngugi, 1977). Wangari’s situation which makes her a victim relates to what Ngugi argues when he says:

Capitalism brought new horrors such as ordinary poor Africans slaughtering each other with machetes, clubs and knives. Houses are looted and torched and thousands are forced to flee to other areas. Tens of thousands of families have been forced from their homes. People have been hacked or burnt to death. Women and children had been raped, all because of capitalism. (Ngugi, 1998, p. 10)

Ngugi further rationalises the above by explaining that it is not only in Nairobi where the masses are aggrieved in this way; the same is true of all other cities in every country that has recently slipped the noose of colonialism. These countries are finding it difficult to stave off poverty for the simple reason that they have taken it upon themselves to have their own economies run by American experts. They have been taught the principle and system of self-interest, and have been told to forget the ancient songs that glorify the notion of collective good (Ngugi, 1982a, p. 56). Ngugi can be attributed to a class of Marxists because his ideas focus on the lives of different classes and glorify the struggle of the masses towards societal progress. But Ryan (2007) seems to differ a bit from Ngugi's thinking because, according to him, Marxists refer to class struggle mainly in the context of the struggle between capital and labour within capitalism rather than over its suppression (p. 17). Nonetheless, Ngugi (2009) argues that it was through the ideologies of class struggle, politics and economics that the Marxist literary theory emerged. The thought behind it is to prove that works of literature are mere products of history that can be analysed by looking at the social and material conditions in which they were constructed. When one looks at the context of the three selected novels, there is no doubt that the three texts display both the social and material gains of the societies of Kenya. In the three novels, Ngugi has used his social situation to determine types of characteristics that have developed, political ideas displayed and the emotional statements that have developed in the three texts. Consequently, it is indisputable that Ngugi can be a proponent of the Marxism ideology.

Ngugi's writing focuses more specifically on the socio-political consequences in Kenya, in which he heightens the feelings and desires of the masses to rise up and demand radical change (Ngugi, 1982a). He uses literature as a mirror and the main tool to urge the exploited classes to rise for socio-political transformation. Ngugi presents a massive strike of protesters in *Devil on*

the Cross who demand the removal of imposter leaders gathered at a Devil's Feast that are violating human rights. His commitment to activism, for instance, is no doubt total in his novels *Petals of Blood*, *Devil on the Cross* and *Matigari*. He calls upon the Kenyan masses to rise in a collective revolution and fight to bring down the system of neo-colonialism that has encircled them in the name of capitalism. Their fight for their land and their rights needs to be strengthened and hastened before the capitalists and their foreign allies bring yet another colony under their control (Ngugi, 1982a, p. 82).

The Marxist literary theory challenges the experiences of the people, their political and economic relations and their social systems (Grant, 1985). It, furthermore, advocates that there should be a cause to change where change is due. Thus, Ngugi's three novels serve as a voice of change for those who are disadvantaged or oppressed. In *Petals of Blood*, Karega is seen organising a group of people to demonstrate against Nderi wa Riera for asking them to "go back in Ilmorog and collect money towards a Harambee water project" (Ngugi, 1977, p. 85). Similarly, Muturi, in *Devil on the Cross*, manages to gather workers and peasants to unite and chase away the local and international robbers and thieves from the cave (Ngugi, 1982a, p. 105). In *Matigari*, workers are planning a strike against low wages at Mataba Hotel, Bar and Restaurant (Ngugi, 1989, p. 25). What Muturi, Karega and the workers, and *Matigari* are doing in planning and staging demonstrations and strikes is a way of bringing change where change is due, according to the principles of Marxist literary theory. Therefore, the Marxist literary theory has assisted this study in understanding why the masses are reacting the way they do in all three novels studied.

As already stated, Ngugi's literature also reflects on the country's superstructure, economic base and social relations, such as the judiciary, executive, legislature, military and religious institutions. Ngugi, influenced by Marxism, is concerned with the way the wealth of the country

is produced and shared by the rulers and capitalists. The share of the country's wealth seems to be enjoyed only by those in power. Ngugi wishes for the "national cake" (country's wealth) to be shared equally among all the social groups, irrespective of their status in society. He uses his Marxist ideology to survey the history, class struggles and other sociological realities of his people in an unrestricted manner to awaken the oppressed masses to demand their rights. Ngugi, as one of the prominent supporters of the Marxist ideology, champions the interests of the masses who are deprived of their land and, consequently, work for the capitalists. He constructs the idea of the struggle of the masses, values and norms that bind them together to fight for a common goal: freedom from the oppressors.

All exploiting classes attempt to justify their class rule morally by portraying it as the most natural form of social development but, deliberately, conceal the exploitation by disguising and distorting the truth. This is observed in Brother Ezekiel's action against one of his farm workers. The worker is forced to sign an oath, and when he refuses, he is severely beaten and is informed that the beatings he received are in accordance with God's law (Ngugi, 1977, p. 56). The capitalist class, foregrounded in Ngugi's three novels, has elaborately evolved a whole new philosophy and morality through their professional hirelings, and are hanging on to power to justify their ruling position in society. Onimonde (1988) also agrees, adding that the working class, on the contrary, have no material interest in distorting the truth, and sets itself the task of laying bare the realities of capitalism in order to prepare, consciously, for its emancipation.

The working class, peasants and students have the aim to abolish capitalism and all its class distinctions and privileges. To do so, they need to reject the outlook of the capitalists, and seek a new Marxist method of understanding which is the philosophical ideology that provides a richer, fuller, more comprehensive view of society and life, in general, for themselves. In so doing, they

can clear away the veil of spirituality in understanding human and social development. It is economics, in the last analysis, that determines the conditions of life, the habits and consciousness of human beings; that is why Ngugi (1993) stresses the point that unless the economic system of capitalism is abolished, the masses will continue to suffer. Any new organisation of society, be it slavery or capitalism, has ushered in an enormous development of the productive forces which, in turn, gives the elite greater powers over the masses. Ngugi (2009) further states that as soon as a social system proves unable to develop these forces of production in a certain society, then that society will enter into, or start, a revolution, as can be seen in Kenya. Throughout this research the theory is used to assist with the approach to the subject of neo-colonial elitism which Ngugi categorises as a product of capitalism.

The Marxists favour change from capitalism to socialism because capitalism brings grief to the poor, but warn that changing from capitalism to socialism requires the conscious intervention of the masses to carry this task through. Failure to do so might, in the long run, pave the way for the advent of reactions and eventually another world war, as it is seen that capitalism has once again entered a new world economic crisis (Eagleton, 2013). Cabral (1980) states that national television and newspapers daily report strikes and demonstrations in nearly every country of Africa because of the mass unemployment experienced by people. Onimonde (1988) states that the theories of capitalist economists have proved utterly incapable of preventing recessions; therefore, Africans should embrace socialism to rescue the situation, because only Marxism can expose the contradictions of capitalism which result, periodically, in depression and slump. Ngugi (1982b) considers capitalism as having completely exhausted its historical role in developing the productive basis of society. Though hemmed in by the nation, state and private

ownership, the production of goods in the country are systematically enjoyed only by the privileged minority, right in the face of the masses (Ngugi, 1982b).

Africa has good policies but Wood (1986) believes that these policies later are twisted by the implementers to benefit them and as such bring bad results on the masses. An example of such policy is freedom of expression in an independent country which in most cases turns out to be seen as violation of peace in a country. What is seen by Ngugi (1983) in Kenya is barbaric, but this barbarism is the result of the failure of capitalism: failure to provide the masses with basic human needs, such as clean water, good roads, proper accommodation and employment for the youth, who are just condemned to rot in prisons. Ngugi (1986b) foresees the continuous suffering of the masses if this degenerate system, capitalism, is allowed to continue in Kenya. The only choice for Kenya will be to change the status quo to socialism, which is what the Marxist theory teaches. Thus, Ngugi (1986b) urges the educated, working class to transcend all the barriers of race, colour, nationality, religion and status, and support the abolishment of the system of capitalism which has brought the rule of neo-colonialism. Cabral (1980) also says that the masses have no home; therefore, they can only survive by developing class unity which overcomes distinctions of colour, race, tribe or creed. Ngugi (1986a) also says, “We are neither Kikuyu nor Luo, Catholics nor Protestants, neither black nor white but we are brothers and sisters fighting for the same cause; we are soldiers of the world socialist revolution” (Ngugi, 1986a, p. 73).

The combination of Postcolonial and Marxist literary theories is thus relevant to this study because of their relation to the knowledge of neo-colonial elitism and its influence, and suggests a solution to the difficult situation affecting the masses. According to Ngugi, the only message of

hope for the masses of Kenya is revolution that can conquer capitalism and replace it with socialism.

2.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter reviewed the relevant literature on the theme of neo-colonialism and criticism of authors regarding the behaviour of leaders who took over power in Africa after the colonisers had left. According to Ogude (1999), Ngugi's literary works focus more on his country Kenya than on any other country in Africa. Therefore, this chapter has positioned this current study in the body of literature on the theme of neo-colonialism and the influence of its capitalist system in Kenya. Thus, the current study has contributed to the creation of new knowledge that can be used by other researchers of literature, especially on neo-colonial elitism and its influence on the social, political and economic structures in Kenya.

Most writers (Mwangi, 1973; Cabral 1980; Maloba (1993) and Ogude, 1999)) discuss the theme of neo-colonialism and its influence in Africa in general, disapprove of capitalism and argue that the system should be replaced to bring the suffering of the masses to an end. The chapter has confirmed Ogude (1999)'s prediction that a variety of Ngugi's works contribute towards the theme of the current research study. In short, the chapter has revealed the range of many writers who call on neo-colonial leaders to stop exploiting their own people but rather to find a solution to the situation that is tearing the continent apart.

CHAPTER 3: THE INFLUENCE OF NEO-COLONIAL ELITISM IN KENYA

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Ngugi characterises postcolonial Kenya as a society in turmoil because of the laws and policies which were inherited from the colonial government. This chapter therefore, examines the expectations of the masses in connection with independence, focusing on the socio-economic and political issues that drive elitism in Kenya after independence. Furthermore, the chapter analyses Ngugi's portrayal of neo-colonial Kenya by looking at the role played by the capitalist economic system, with its cultural and moral impact on the Kenyan society. In addition, the chapter will also look at how Ngugi views various aspects, such as the land issue, religious liberty and fallacy, exploitation of the masses, parastatals controlled by foreigners, injustice and misuse of office, freedom of movement, disrespect and alienation of culture, unemployment, class division, prostitution and women as sex objects as being the driving tools used by the new ruling elite to exploit the freedom of the Kenyan masses.

Neo-colonial elitism and its influence are seen in some aspects of the lives of both the elite and the masses in Kenya. The masses are unemployed; there is corruption in employees' offices, a lack of land and proper accommodation among the masses, as well as injustices, exacted upon the masses by the ruling elite. Because of their gluttony, the elite use the power they have to exploit the masses. The masses are deprived of their rights and continue to live in poverty while their leaders continue to humiliate them. Neo-colonial elitism constitutes a focal point in postcolonial African literature, which as is common, is concerned with political and social issues. At the same time, neo-colonial elitism is a relevant issue within the Marxist discourse of class analysis and struggle. In *Petals of Blood* (1977), *Devil on the Cross* (1982a) and *Matigari* (1989), the elite represent a high class and authority in society. According to Ngugi (1981a), the effect of colonial

power in Kenya is the creation of new elite who have adopted the language and style of their conquerors (p. 10).

The three novels explore the destructive effects of neo-colonialism with its inherited capitalism, and reflect Ngugi's concern for the poor people in Kenya, who are being exploited by the neo-colonial bourgeoisie, together with their western associates from whom they have seized power after independence. The aspects of exploitation, as listed in the previous section, which Ngugi believes are the cornerstones in the influence of neo-colonial elitism, are discussed in detail in this chapter. Dealing with these aspects of exploitation brought by neo-colonial elitism is also a way of showing how Ngugi portrays Kenya's independence.

This chapter, therefore, assesses the extent to which neo-colonial elitism impacts the socio-economic and political structures in Kenya. To be able to assess the negative impacts brought by neo-colonial elitism in Kenya, the chapter examines and analyses the way Ngugi portrays the independence of Kenya and his continuous appeal to the masses to engage in a revolutionary struggle to liberate themselves from the bondage of exploitation and oppression by the ruling elite. In the analysis of the three selected novels by Ngugi, the current study lays bare the actions of the ruling elite towards the masses. The three novels are relevant because of their theme of neo-colonial elitism and its influence in Kenya. The realisation of the masses regarding their condition relates to the two theories applied in this study. In this chapter, therefore, corruption and greed, misuse of office, poverty, land-grabbing, oppression and class division are critically examined and analysed.

3.2 THE LAND ISSUE AS A MEANS OF EXPLOITATION

The masses are engaged in a struggle to acquire land in neo-colonial Kenya. Nations and tribes seem to be in continuous war because of the issue of land. The former colonisers' interest was based on how much land they could acquire; they managed to acquire more land than the natives and they still own this land, even after Kenya has attained its political independence. When independence was attained, the neo-colonial elite collaborated with the colonisers to share the land among themselves. It is revealed in the three novels that the masses are experiencing some challenges when it comes to ownership of land especially in urban areas. A similar situation, namely, the shortage of land, is observed in *Devil on the Cross* (1982a) and *Matigari* (1989), where collaborators, such as Gitutu and Boss Kihara and John Boy, are depicted. All these people prosper because the colonisers had left enough land for them before they gave away the power. The failure of the new leadership at independence to avail land to the freedom fighters confirms that the new leaders still live according to the life style of the former colonisers. Abdulla is one of those freedom fighters who fought for Kenyan but still suffers after independence. As a former freedom fighter he hears about people buying land but he is optimistic that he could still buy some of the land which he had already fought for and bought with human blood (Ngugi 1977).

Ngugi (1977) reveals that the land, especially fertile land, is in the hands of the new elite and foreigners who still participate in the economy of Kenya, irrespective of the fact that Kenya is now a sovereign state. The novels show that the masses have no land and, if they do, it is not good land. Most of the young and middle-aged men and women leave their villages in search of land elsewhere. Some have gone to work on plantations and farms belonging to foreigners and the local elite who live in big, well-furnished houses and have much wealth.

3.2.1 THE LAND ISSUE IN *PETALS OF BLOOD*

In *Petals of Blood* (1977), Ngugi exposes the fact that the available land is inadequate and, as such, people are suffering. In this novel Ngugi demonstrates that land is a primary source of capital accumulation and without it there is no capital accumulation. There is a fluctuation of people to cities and from cities to rural areas because of dispossession of land. The first to come to Ilmorog in search of land is Munira. He settles in a moss-covered, two-roomed house which was once a classroom. Ngugi paints a picture of how the land is scarce by describing the structures of the school as consisting of only one two-roomed house for the teacher and one classroom block with four rooms. This is the school which has been abandoned by the authority, and all teachers who come to teach at the school are forced to leave because of the poor infrastructure and lack of resources. The villagers gossip about this young man, and wonder if he has also come to take the little land left for them by the rich. They seem to all agree that he will “go away with the wind as others have done, after all, who would want to settle in this wasteland, they ask” (Ngugi, 1977, p. 5).

The four rooms of the school consist of broken, mud walls, a roof that is tiny, with gaping holes and spider webs full of the heads and legs of dead flies. The pupils of the school are herd boys who do not finish a school term but follow their fathers in search of new pastures and water for their cattle. These boys and their animals keep on moving from place to place because their land does not provide good pastures anymore. The fact that the learners of the school are both learners and herd boys at the same time makes it difficult for Munira to find pupils who come to school. Most of the young men and women have left Ilmorog to go to the city in search of better lives. Young women only come back to deposit newly born babies on their grandmothers. The ladies argue that they lack space in the city to keep their newborn children.

The second newcomers to Ilmorog are Abdulla and his nephew, Joseph. Abdulla, a former Mau Mau fighter, comes as a businessman because he cannot acquire land to settle in urban areas after he has returned from fighting in the forest. All he has is a donkey-cart full of an assortment of “sufurias and plates and cheap blankets tightly packed into torn sisal sacks and dirty sheets knotted into temporary bags” (Ngugi, 1977, p. 8). His aim is to start a shop in the mud-walled building left behind by Dharamashah, one of the legends of Ilmorog. This shop’s roof and walls lean to one side and look indistinguishable from the dry weed and the red earth. The furniture consists of a creaking bench and a table with a huge crack in the middle. Munira, Abdulla and the villagers talk about the poor rain that has yielded a poor harvest because the fields are not virgin soil, and there is no more land to escape to. Despite the fact that Abdulla has fought for the independence of Kenya, he does not have a piece of land where he can erect a structure for a shop; neither is he given a job by the government of Kenya as was promised. Before he knows it, the big businessmen and women have built big commercial shops around his tiny shop, and it cannot compete with big supermarkets full of commodities. Consequently, he loses business in the process.

These foreigners and local elites own famous houses and much wealth, consisting of cows and goats, on their farms. The young men and women have gone to work there, hoping that the elite would give them goats, as well as virgin land where they can keep the goats, so that in the end they can also have land of their own. Some peasants have to marry more wives to give them more sons, anticipating that these may go to work on the farms of the rich and bring in more wealth and more land. But, in turn, the many children just bring them more sorrow than the wealth and goats they wish for. Instead, the local elite and the foreigners are exploiting the sons of the poor peasants and continue to use them as cheap labourers (Ngugi, 1977, p. 9). Thus the

peasants and their families continue to live in small huts which are seen scattered about Ilmorog, utilising poor implements and surviving on the labour of their hands. Though they seem to be struggling with life, they still hope for a better tomorrow (Ngugi, 1977).

Karega also returns to Ilmorog in search of land. His father has died without leaving him a piece of land. His mother also dies without acquiring land, though she has worked honestly on the farms and plantations of the neo-colonial elite. On his return, he finds no place to settle because all land is taken by the bourgeoisie and their foreign friends. Karega moves from one place to another, squatting with friends. At one time, he is hired by Munira to teach at his school, but he is fired by the authority after leading a strike of students against a curriculum that does not contain the values and norms of the Kenyan culture and history. Cantalupo (1995) states that independence in Africa has brought nothing but suffering of the poor, as is seen with Karega in *Petals of Blood*.

3.2.2 SHORTAGE OF LAND IN *DEVIL ON THE CROSS*

A lack of land is experienced by the masses while the elite and their friends, the foreigners, enjoy the ownership of huge tracts of land. In *Devil on the Cross*, Wangari loses her two acres of land which she used as collateral to secure a loan from the Kenya Progress Bank. Her aim is to borrow the money to keep high grade cows that can give enough milk that she can sell for money to repay the loan. The cow that she buys dies from gall fever, and this stops her from fulfilling her ambitions. The bank then auctions her land and leaves her with no land and no job. She decides to go to Nairobi but is arrested for vagrancy while looking for a job. After she has been discharged from prison, she decides to go back to her mother's hut in Ilmorog because she has nowhere else to stay in Nairobi.

In another incident, Wariinga's only piece of land where she has built a garage is sold by the City Council to Boss Kihara and his international friends from the USA, Germany and Japan, who are planning to erect a tourist hotel. Tourist hotels are built to promote prostitution and odd jobs, such as making beds, cooking, portering and security. Boss Kihara owns land almost all over Nairobi where he has built many shops, houses, hotels and restaurants. Because of greed and cunning, he organises with the City Council to snatch the only piece of land belonging to Wariinga. Wariinga manages to retain her land and garage through the help of other peasants and students who unite to demonstrate against the action taken by the council and Boss Kihara.

3.2.3 LAND SCARCITY IN *MATIGARI*

On another level, the boys in *Matigari* (1989) have nowhere to live because they are not employed; therefore, they cannot find any place to stay in the city. As Matigari and Muriuki leave the storeyed building, they come upon a scrapyard where cars of all makes are heaped. Ngugi laments, "a grave yard for motor vehicles, yes a true vehicle cemetery" (Ngugi, 1989, p. 15). This is the place where Muriuki and the other boys live. The vehicles are so badly damaged that they have grass growing inside while some are stuffed with pieces of cardboard, plastic and sacking. Furthermore, they are standing on stones. Muriuki informs Matigari that the car scrapyard is their location and that the scrapped vehicles are their houses. The condition of what the boys call 'houses' make Matigari's heart "beat in rhythm", and he contemplates taking them to his own house, the house where John Boy lives. Since Matigari left the forest, he has not found a place to stay because there is no accommodation provided for ex-soldiers of the liberation struggle. Matigari's situation shows that the people who were involved in the liberation struggle for independence are no longer regarded as important as they were while still

fighting in the forests. Their sweat and suffering were for other people, that is, the leaders who took over from the colonisers.

Matigari comes from the bush, thinking that things have changed in Kenya, but no, they are worse than before. He sees two policemen and a tractor driver collect bribes from the boys behind a bush near the scrapyards. He then remarks that there is still no place for his family in Kenya if law makers seem to play with the minds of the down-trodden, such as the small boys who survive on food which they share with dogs and vultures (Ngugi, 1989, p. 12). Matigari decides to move from one place to another in search of truth and justice for he says his people are still suffering because of the lack of justice and truth. When he comes near the car scrapyards, he is beaten by the children whom he wants to help to find a better place to stay, but he does not hit back because that is not his objective. His objective is to provide land and better accommodation to his people, the masses, so that they can live in peace.

Matigari believes that when everybody has appropriate accommodation and is treated equally, there will be peace and justice in the land. He then asks Muriuki and the worker, Ngaruro, who both come to his rescue, to go with him to his house, which is his own sweat and his struggle against the Whites. The house is built on a hill, stretching out for miles like a plantation which has no end. It is huge enough to accommodate all his children. He also informs them about his name 'Matigari ma Njiruungi' which means 'The Patriots who survived the bullets' (Ngugi, 1989, p. 20). He further informs them that he is one of the patriots who had gone to the forest to fight for the freedom of the Kenyans and remained behind to keep the fire of freedom burning by making sure all the colonisers are wiped out. Now that he has killed the last white person, Settler Williams, he has decided to return home to his people. He, therefore, moves around the city to reveal himself to his people and hopes that, at the end of his journey, they will all be gathered

together and live as one, peacefully in the house which John Boy Junior is occupying illegally. Matigari regards the labour of the masses in building the house as price enough for them to occupy the house in which John boy Junior lives. Since John Boy Junior was not involved in building the house with his own hands as the masses did, he is seen as occupying the house illegally.

3.3 LAND GRABBING IN NEO-COLONIAL KENYA

There is a lack of land in both urban and rural settlements in Kenya. Consequently, the masses, young and old, look for land wherever they can find it. Young people migrate to cities and towns where they think they will be privileged enough to find a place to stay. Some go to work on the farms of the elite, hoping that the farm owners will commiserate with them when it comes to accommodation. Ngugi reveals the situation in *Petals of Blood* (1977) where the parents in rural Ilmorog decide to have more children so that, when they have many sons who can work on the farms, they can acquire more land from the farmers. To be precise, the parents seem to think that the more children they send to work on the farms, the more land one family can acquire when the farm owners give land to the workers.

The land issue is not only a problem for young people and those who want to pursue businesses, but the issue spreads even to the elderly in villages. Karega's mother is one such victim. Her family land is snatched from her by the greedy elite after her husband has died. Her husband was accused of being a terrorist and spy of the Mau Mau movement by the Jomo Kenyatta regime, the movement which Kenyatta no more recognises; in the process of being victimised by the Kenyatta regime, their land is taken from them by their accusers. This woman has worked on European farms and on Brother Ezekiel's fields but she remains a "landless squatter" all her life

(Ngugi, 1977, p. 342). One of the conceptions of Marxist literary theory is that the working class are obliged to sell themselves “piece-meal” in order to live (Eagleton, 2013).

In another incident, Karega’s mother kept on working piece-meal every day, not necessarily working for tomorrow but so that, when she is gone to join her ancestors, she could have left an inheritance for her children. Brother Ezekiel is a priest, but despite him being a Christian, he fails to accord Karega’s mother a place to stay. He praises her as one who has been a “hard, dedicated woman who could work from morning till late every day without complaining” (Ngugi, 1977, p. 78) but still Brother Ezekiel does not show any sympathy for the woman he praises. This woman dies without having owned the piece of land which she worked for so hard. Brother Ezekiel’s practices are what Ngugi refers to as “hybrid religion” where the moral values are ignored (Ngugi, 1981b, p. 17). Similarly, Karega’s father died landless; “he would be given a land in the bush, clear it out as his own, and after that he is driven off and the cleared land is given to the European landlords, shown another bush to clear as his own but the same happens until he dies without any piece of land that he could call his own” (Ngugi, 1977). It is the attitude of the capitalists to exploit the poor, while the poor ignorantly suffer the exploitation. Karega’s father inadvertently supports exploitation by accepting to clean every bushy area he is given to clean and continues to do so, while, until his death, every time the cleaned land is taken away from him.

Consequently, Wariinga in *Devil on the Cross* (1982a) also falls victim to land grabbing by the elite. After Wariinga has completed her course in engineering, she manages to build a garage in one of the areas of Ilmorog. After some time, and when the garage is booming, Wariinga’s garage is sold by the City Council to Boss Kihara who owns plots all over Nairobi. Boss Kihara wants to build a big hotel for tourists on the site where Wariinga’s garage is built. Tourist hotels

are meant to nurture a nation of prostitutes, servants, cooks, shoeshine boys, cleaners and porters, and are owned by the elite and their cronies, the foreigners. Boss Kihara decides to buy the site where Wariinga's garage has been erected, and in so doing, force her to live a miserable life so that at the end he can win her over to become his mistress. Moreover, Boss Kihara wants to build a tourist hotel where the women of Ilmorog can become prostitutes, an occupation that can destroy the morals of a nation. All he cares for are his riches and not the life of the masses (Ngugi, 1982a). This is the behaviour of the elite towards the masses which Ngugi argues should be reversed, as it is tantamount to destroying the society of his native country, Kenya. The land which the masses badly needed in colonial times becomes so hard to find after independence. Instead of getting more land, most of the people lose their land through dispossession or grabbing by the elite. The grabbing of land then adds to the scarcity of land among the masses. Therefore, Ngugi undertakes to assist the masses to use their own power to reclaim their stolen land.

Ilmorog is Ngugi's home town where he grew up with his parents. Ngugi seems to love this town and often presents it as a golden area to which everybody wishes to go back, and stay. As a result of his love for it, whenever he talks about Ilmorog he uses words which seem to have been selected only for a very beautiful thing that soothes the lonely mind. At one time he is giving thanks to one of the Gikuyu ancestors for having made such a wonderful area. He says:

Ngai has given Gikuyu a beautiful country,
Never without food or water or grazing fields.
It is good so Gikuyu should praise Ngai all the time,
For he has ever been generous to them. (Ngugi, 1977, p. 155)

This is symbolic of his desires for Kenya after it has attained its independence from the British. But now the land and its beauty are taken away from its owners and its beauty is destroyed by the factories and industries of the rich. Ngugi's wish is for Ilmorog to be returned to its owners, so that they can enjoy its beauty, even though the area is now commercialised. Ngugi (1982a) continues to urge the masses to sustain themselves in the collective spirit of solidarity and reach a common destiny, as they did during the war against colonialism, in order to repossess Ilmorog. During the war of liberation from colonialism, the spirit of comradeship and unity reigned and, because of that, it was possible for them to win the war despite difficulties.

In *A Grain of Wheat* (1967) a man, referred to as General R, is released from a detention camp on the eve of independence with the high hope that he will come to enjoy the fruits of *Uhuru* but, on the contrary, he discovers that the same rules that governed Kenya before its *Uhuru* are still there. The incident that befalls Wangari when she is moving from shop to shop looking for work testifies to the matter. Wangari discovers that the rule to carry a passbook when moving around in cities, like Nairobi, that was mandatory in colonial times still applies in independent Kenya. Wangari is apprehended by the police at a hotel where a black man reports her to the police as a thief wandering about Nairobi in search of places and banks to rob. When she is taken to a court of law, she is charged with the intention to steal and vagrancy, the crime of moving around without a passbook. Wangari asks, "I, Wangari, a Kenyan by birth, how can I be a vagrant in my own country as if I were a foreigner?" (Ngugi, 1982a, p. 43). The masses expected peace but all they receive are unlawful arrests and suffering at the hands of the rich. Ngugi urges them to unite against neo-colonialism because it is the only way he foresees bringing Kenya back to its roots.

3.4 CORRUPTION BY OFFICE-BEARERS

Another drawback brought by neo-colonial elitism is corruption within the bureaucracy of Kenya. The ruling elite have become corrupt because of the power they have and the capitalist society they inherited. In a corrupt manner they exploit the masses for their own gain. Ngugi believes that corruption is milking the economy of Kenya and causes the masses to suffer. He shows, in his three novels, that corruption goes together with greed. Because of the greed of the elite, they become corrupt by harvesting more riches for themselves, and in the process exploiting the masses. A good example is Nderi wa Riera in *Petals of Blood* (1977). Nderi collects money from the community of Ilmorog presumably for a water project, a tea party, good roads and free transport, which do not materialise as he uses the money as security to borrow huge sums of money from the bank to complete his own projects. The same Nderi buys land from the poor at a cheap price, builds small houses on the land and rents them out at such a high price that the masses cannot afford and, as a result, they continue to live in shacks.

Ngugi is of the opinion that Ilmorog was better off under communal existence, compared to the urban development that has come to it. To him, urbanisation is exploitative, as the poor have lost their ancestral land and, because they do not have money to buy it back when it is grabbed by the elite, they resort to living in slums and shanties. Because of the urbanisation that has come to Ilmorog, most of its former inhabitants are nowhere to be found; therefore, the new generation can enjoy listening to the stories being narrated by their elderly elders in order to gain more knowledge of their history. Because they cannot afford to buy back their land, they are forced to live in shanty towns under hardship, and there is a high crime rate in such towns. Because of the high crime rate, Ngugi questions whether the country is independent or not.

Ngugi recalls the harmony that the people of Ilmorog enjoyed when they lived as brothers and sisters in their community which was self-sufficient until urbanisation and its capitalist values encroached on them. He regards the physical transformation of Ilmorog from communal to urban as an exploitative process that brings suffering to its former owners (Ngugi, 1977). Ngugi describes this situation as not freedom but slavery of some kind and, therefore, he declares Kenya as experiencing neo-colonisation which is more subtle compared to colonialism. Just as the lawyer points out during his meeting with the delegation that came from Ilmorog, there are different forms of dispossession of the poor by the rich that are taking place all over the country because of the economy that is inherited from the colonisers. The poor have nothing that they can call their own. Everything around them is either too difficult for them to attain or it belongs to the rich. Ngugi views the capitalist economic system as destructive and one that brings unfair treatment to the lower class. The masses no longer mix with the elite because of their status in life. In *Petals of Blood*, a woman faints when she comes into contact with Munira and his team from Ilmorog, citing the reason that she cannot “survive to mix with such people who are dirty and not wearing decent clothes” (Ngugi, 1977, p. 89).

Ngugi disapproves of foreign, political and economic structures controlling Kenya after it has gained its independence because the same laws of the former masters still operate in the country, bringing suffering to those who are not in leadership positions. If the new leaders continue to collaborate with the former, Kenya’s independence will remain a shadow. Wangari’s experience in *Devil on the Cross* proves that bureaucracy is still enforcing the same laws that governed the acquisition of passbooks during colonial invasion. His portrayal of the leadership of the elite during neo-colonialism indicates that the people in power have not made an attempt to break away from the type of administration that was employed by the colonial regime. They merely

play the role of new masters with old rules. He assumes that this inheritance of laws is a great problem in his native country, which is failing to bring democracy among all Kenyans. He suggests that the leaders should modify the laws to suit the people, instead of holding on to capitalism, which brings imbalance in the distribution of wealth among all (Ngugi, 1982a).

Achebe (1985) believes that anarchy has been let loose on the people of Nigeria. Ngugi, like Achebe, also believes that the same anarchy has befallen the Kenyans, and as a result, the Kenyans seem to be confused about which way to go. This confusion is seen in Wariinga who wants to commit suicide because of a number of misfortunes she experiences. People fought for the freedom of the country from the colonisers but there is still no freedom for others. Priests, who call themselves father-confessors, are claiming they have come to set the souls of people free, asking them to confess their sins to them while “the clotting blood, the scars and the wounds of the oppressed are all over their faces and in their eyes” (Ngugi, 1982a, p. 164). In *Petals of Blood* (1977) the priests murder some of their church members as sacrifices before they go to conduct services in the church. So, reflecting on this situation the lawyer remarks “then tell me who makes these laws, for whom and to whom?” (Ngugi, 1977, p. 164).

One missionary, Lord-Freeze Kilby, practises grabbing land from the church members and turning it into commercial enterprises. Ngugi relates how he grabbed land from the herdsmen and peasants, leaving them with no land for grazing their livestock (Ngugi, 1977, p. 69). After taking their land, he turns them into labourers on the very land which was once theirs. This is the attitude that prevailed among the colonisers which is still experienced by the people in an independent Kenya. Ngugi, therefore, is pessimistic about why the vision of independence is failing to embrace new thoughts, desires and possibilities in the minds of the Kenyan leaders, so that Kenya can be redeemed from exploitation (Ngugi, 1981b).

The masses hope that their children will one day have enough to eat, clothes to wear and adequate shelter to live in. The people were promised education for all which meant that schools would be built all over the country to give every child access to education. But after independence the situation is different from what had been promised. During the colonial days, Nakuru High School was reserved for European children only. The political leaders were fighting for the school to open its doors to children of all races. But after independence, the same school is turned into an expensive national school where only the rich can afford to take their children. Ngugi sees this as an arrangement to carry on with segregation as practised by the former white elite (Ngugi, 1982a). This means the children from the poor families are left out when it comes to education.

The school in Ilmorog, where Munira is teaching, is in poor condition. It has been abandoned for some time until Munira comes to its rescue. Even though the school reopens, it cannot cater for all the children around its area. The school buildings are damaged and the classrooms are few. The situation is worsened by the fact that there is only one teacher for all the Grades at the school. As a result, the only teacher, who is Munira, can only teach Grade One to Grade Two learners. When the learners pass Grade Two, they have nowhere to go but opt to stay at home because there is no other school nearby where they can attend Grade Three upwards. Ousmane (1983) wishes for the original empire to be revived so that Africa can return to its roots. He argues that the continent of Africa has been deprived of its beauty; therefore, Africans are no longer enjoying their life style.

Another hindrance is that there is no manpower to assist Munira to add another Grade to the existing ones (Ngugi, 1977). Munira has been reporting the lack of teachers at his school to Mzigo, the Minister of Education, on several occasions but to no avail. On one occasion, Mzigo

promises to assess the condition of the school and its lack of teachers but he can only do so if the roads are good enough for his luxury car. Mzigo urges Munira to look for extra teachers by advertising the “free women” in Ilmorog. This message, he suggests, will attract teachers to this poorly structured school in a remote area. Because of the situation of the school, many learners drop-out since they are without choice. Most youths are forced to leave Ilmorog to seek employment in big cities like Nairobi where they are faced with another problem, namely the lack of accommodation. Ngugi shows that the promise of education for all cannot be achieved unless the hindrances are removed. Since the ruling elite does not budge from their attitudes, Ngugi keeps on calling for a revolution by the masses in order to bring equality to all Kenyans, irrespective of their status in society.

When Kenya obtained its independence from Britain, the new leaders who came on board inherited the institutions, laws and values from the colonial government. Instead of altering the inherited systems and policies to suit the people of Kenya, the leaders compromised all the governance forms. The new government centralised the political, economic and civic power, reserving all the top positions both in the public and private sectors to factions that were already serving in the former regime. As a result, the institutions that should serve as watchdogs against corruption, such as the police, judiciary and the security, selectively serve the elite alone. Because the masses were poor, unskilled and without any significant holdings in the private sector at independence, their situation worsened when independence was achieved. These people need jobs but are told that there are no jobs for unskilled people. Corruption is practised everywhere in Kenya, as is revealed when Wangari reports the real thieves and robbers gathered at the cave. The police, who are supposed to be the watchdogs of corruption, praise stealing and robbing, accuse Wangari of being the culprit in the process. The same is seen with the judiciary

system that fines Wangari two thousand shillings, even though the judge cannot find any fault with her. Ngugi (1986b) advocates for the ruling party to punish corruption socially, politically and economically, by allowing the media to expose such practices.

3.5 INDUSTRIES STILL OWNED BY FOREIGNERS

One of the expectations of the masses was that the factories they toiled to build would be in the hands of the Kenyans once independence is achieved. The people of Ilmorog toiled in building a shoe-making factory during the Second World War which belonged to the colonisers. But after independence, the same factory, which is now known as the Czech-Canadian International Shoe-Making Factory is owned by Baumann and Coy, Forrestals, and also Primchand Raichand and Coy, who are all foreigners. The Ilmorogians hoped that once the factory was taken over by Kenyans it would ease the unemployment in their area. Instead, all high positions in the factory are occupied by foreigners and the highly educated that do not form part of the community of Ilmorog. As for the Ilmorogians, they only do odd jobs, such as being cleaners, shoeshine boys or becoming prostitutes to satisfy the desires of foreigners who visit Ilmorog. These odd jobs leave them in such abject poverty that they fail even to bring bread on the table. In the same vein, Milk Stream Tea Estates is also owned by another foreigner in partnership with Munira's father, and the workers receive the same exploitative treatment regarding low wages as on other farms.

Still in *Petals of Blood* (1977), Munira narrates a story of the exploitation of one worker he sees at Milk Stream tea plantation farm: "he is so poorly dressed in rags and has been a long serving member on the farm" (Ngugi, 1977, pp. 93-94). Munira witnesses how this man is beaten by his father, Brother Ezekiel, the priest, for refusing to sign another oath. The worker does not want to take another oath because he sees no use in doing that, as currently, with the oath that he signed

previously, he is not even given food to eat for his labour. The boss steps on his neck and presses it down against the floor, and only stops “when the man makes animal noises and takes the oath but not with his heart” (Ngugi, 1977, p. 94). Brother Ezekiel then comforts him through preaching, explaining why it is necessary for him to take the oath:

Now that all prosperity, all that hard-won freedom is threatened by Satan working through various tribes arousing envy and jealousy for you who accept to work for us, white people. That is why this oath is necessary. It is for the peace and unity and it is in harmony with God’s eternal design. Now you listen to me. I have been there. I used the Bible. I want your mother to go. She is refusing. But Christ will soon show her the light. Even highly educated people are going there, of their own accord. My son, for the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. (Ngugi, 1977, p. 95)

Brother Ezekiel praises the man for agreeing to take the oath, promising that he and his church colleagues will soon establish a church branch where such obedient people as the worker can worship God. The church branch will serve as a cultural organisation to bring unity and harmony between the whites and the blacks, and the rich and the poor. This is the prosperity that has multiplied since independence. The worker’s beating is presented as in accordance with the acts of God (Ngugi, 1977). All these flattering words are said to soothe a broken heart, to dilute their exploitation and make it appear a good act. Marxism teaches that the exploiting class attempts to justify its class rule by portraying it as the highest, most natural form of social development, deliberately concealing exploitation by disguising and distorting the truth (Grant, 1985). This is what Brother Ezekiel is trying to do. Therefore, Ngugi (1972) concludes that as long as the colonisers are still in charge of most of the business entities of Kenya, the oppression and exploitation of the needy will still be witnessed in a free Kenya, as is the case of this tea farm

worker. As can be seen, the poor man, who has nowhere to report the injustice of his employer, is forced to take an oath against his will. His rights are not respected. When everyone is supposed to enjoy the hard-won independence that Munira's father is alluding to, there are still people who are suffering oppression at the hands of their brothers and sisters who took over power from the colonisers. Ngugi uses Brother Ezekiel to show that many peasants and workers are affected by the same treatment.

The factories, shops, banks and companies are still owned by foreigners. The people fought so that the industries, such as the shoe-factory which they have toiled to build, can belong to the people of Kenya. Instead, the Czech-Canadian International Shoe-making Factory still belongs to Bauman and Coy, Forrestals and Primchand Raichand, who are all foreigners (Ngugi, 1977). The Paradise Development Company in *Devil on the Cross* belongs to Boss Kihara in partnership with his foreign friends (Ngugi, 1982a). What is happening is that the factories, shops or banks are either owned by foreigners only or are owned in partnership with the local elite. As a result, all the shops, banks, clubs and factories belong to the bourgeoisie. The masses who own no means of subsistence are crushed and their means of life are appropriated by the capitalists and landlords. This is seen with what happens to Abdulla's shop in Ilmorog. After Abdulla has managed to start a shop in an old building left behind by the colonisers, Kimeria comes, with his foreign friends, and erects big shops around Abdulla's mushroom shop. Eventually Abdulla's shop closes because of a lack of profit (Ngugi, 1977). In the conversation between Wariinga and Gatuiria, Gatuiria's words prove that the elite possess more land than necessary while the poor are landless. Talking about his parents to Wariinga, he informs her that he is the only son of a very rich man who owns several shops in Nakuru, many farms in the Rift Valley and countless other businesses from where he exports and imports goods (Ngugi, 1982a).

As in *Petals of Blood* and *Devil on the Cross*, in *Matigari* (1989), many factories, banks and companies are still owned by foreigners, and as a result, many workers are still exploited by their employers. The Guard Company Property is jointly owned by locals and foreigners. The workers at this company wear uniforms which do not cater for all their needs, such as warm winter clothes, yet they are not allowed to wear their own. The only way they protect themselves from the snare of winter is by using charcoal as means of keeping warm and cooking their food. Another factory nearby hangs a poster which reads “Anglo-American Leather and Private Works Private Property” also owned by foreigners as one can tell even from the name itself. Under the name are words which read “NO WAY THROUGH” alerting the people that the premises of the company can only be entered with permission of the authorities (Ngugi, 1989, p. 90). This poster is an indication of colonial rules where blacks were not allowed to enter some places. Ngugi suggests that such rules should not apply in Kenya which is an independent state. At Mataha Hotel, Bar and Restaurant, another company owned by foreigners, the workers are planning a strike against low wages. This is the company where the elite and the foreigners meet to enjoy life. When Matigari and Muriuki leave the bar where they have met Ngaruro, one of the workers at Mataha Hotel, they pass through Barclays Bank, American Life Insurance, British-American Tobacco Company and the Esso filling station belonging to foreigners and the local elite. Ngugi wants all these to belong to Kenyans for their benefit, not to foreigners.

At the Esso filling station one can view Mercedes Benzes as they line-up to be fuelled. Along the other side of the same high way are shops where only the rich can afford to buy. The shops include American Express, Bata Shoes, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Wimpy Bar, all belonging to foreigners and their local friends, the elite (Ngugi, 1989). Along these shops is the Tourist Paradise Development Company belonging to Boss Kihara and his foreign friends. The Golf

Club is owned by Robert Williams and John Boy Junior, where only the rich go to relax. The Sheraton Hotel also belongs to foreigners. Outside the hotel are automatic Mercedes Benzes parked. The hotel is one of the most luxurious and expensive in the city. As a result, only the elite and foreigners who are known to have much money can afford to spend a night there (Ngugi, 1989). Ngugi associates these places with the good life that the elite enjoy at the expense of the poor. According to Ngugi, the fruits of the independence of Kenya are only within the reach of those in powers and not with the masses.

3.6 UNEMPLOYMENT

The masses expected the creation of jobs for all from the new leaders once Kenya would be independent, which did happen. But instead, the rate of unemployment is rising. Abdulla, an ex-Mau Mau soldier, who even lost one of his legs in the fighting, waited to be given a job or maybe to be compensated for his disability, as well as for his work in liberating Kenya from British colonialism, but to no avail. When he goes to look for a job, he is mocked by the employers:

They said: a cripple? They looked at one another. They said: he who has ears should hear; he has eyes should see. This is a new Kenya, no free things. *Mkono mtupu haulambwi!* If you want free things, go to Tanzania or China. (Ngugi, 1977, p. 255)

Abdulla laughs bitterly at the answer he is given by the officers and says, “For even to go to Tanzania or to China one would need money for a bus fare” (Ngugi, 1977, p. 255). He is fated by the present circumstances and remains a “petty fruit-seller on the verge of ruin” (Ngugi, 1977, p. 340). A freedom fighter that was promised a job if independence was attained in Kenya is seen lingering along the streets of Ilmorog looking for any type of a job. In the same vein, Matigari, another Mau Mau fighter, comes from the harshness of the forest only to find that he is not

welcomed by his society. He tries to make friends with the down-trodden, but they also attack him, calling him a mad person who does not know what he wants.

Accordingly, Achebe (1987) quotes T. S. Eliot in connection with such situations and writes, “We returned to our places, these kingdoms, but no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation, with an alien people clutching their gods. I should be glad of another death” (p. 1). The outcome of the rejection forces Matigari to change his opinion, and he decides to go back to war since he cannot find justice and truth in Kenya. Ngugi, through Wangari in *Devil on the Cross*, Abdulla in *Petals of Blood* and Matigari in *Matigari*, shows that the masses’ expectations of independence resulted in mere illusions, in the sense that the new political leaders are just like the “Black White Man” (Ngugi, 2009, p. 39).

Moreover, in *Devil on the Cross* (1982), Wangari, a peasant from Ilmorog, narrates her story to friends that she meets on the matatu. She informs them that she is a former Mau Mau soldier who participated in the struggle so that the children of Kenya “may eat until they are full, may wear clothes that can keep them warm, may sleep in beds without bedbugs, may learn the art of producing wealth for all the people” (Ngugi, 1982a, p. 18). She further informs them of her unsuccessful efforts to find a job in Nairobi and her arrest allegedly for being a vagrant and not being in possession of the proper documents to enter Nairobi. This shows that those who were at the forefront fighting for freedom are being marginalised after independence. The elite, who have usurped power in the new regime, continue to exploit the Kenyan ex-soldiers. To some extent, Ngugi remarks, “the masses’ expectations are tantamount to a dream” (Ngugi, 1981a, p. 67).

The masses are unable to find a job wherever they go. Whenever they go to look for a job, they are greeted by the same words “Ha Kuna kazi” which means that there is no work. It is like a slogan everywhere one goes to look for work (Ngugi, 1982a, p. 145). The boys in Matigari have gone to Nairobi to look for work but they end up looking for food in a garbage dump, yet these boys have to pay a fee to the policeman at the gate and the driver of the tractor that carries the garbage from the elite’s houses to the garbage site to be allowed to enter the area. The policeman and the driver also take the valuable objects that the boys collect from the garbage. When Matigari enquires why the boys are paying the fee and why they cannot report their exploiters to the authority, Muriuki, the boy who decides to be with him in search for truth and justice, has the following to say, “If we refuse to pay them or give them what they demand, the police will come after us claiming that we are thieves, they then beat us and forbid us from entering the pit again” (Ngugi, 1989, pp. 13-14). Matigari discovers that the money collected from the boys is shared between the policeman and the tractor driver. Ngugi refers to such practices as corruption and misuse of office.

In another incident, Ngugi sets up a situation where Wariinga, one of the protagonists of the novel, *Devil on the Cross*, is fired by her boss after refusing to sleep with him. She goes to look for another job, where the employer is Boss Kihara. Boss Kihara promises her a job but only if she agrees to become his mistress. Wariinga has picked up the threads of her life by coming to Nairobi. Unfortunately she is fired by her boss for refusing his sexual propositions. She is now back in Ilmorog and is attending a Devil’s feast with Gaturia. At this time, Muturi is awakening the masses to go and see the thieves and robbers that have been stealing the wealth of the people. Then Muturi holds a demonstration outside the cave, denouncing the exploiters and the system of capitalism, a system of modern theft and robbery. Before they realise it, their demonstration is

disrupted by the forces of the elite's law and order where they lose five of the workers and Muturi and the leader of the students are arrested. Ngugi uses the three novels to highlight the rampant corruption and the nexus between business and crime, both national and international, thus depicting the struggle between the elite and the exploited.

Ngugi chooses the narrative technique for the stories in his novels as a way of exposing the revolution of the masses against the elite's exploitation. All the elite seem to do is to exploit and oppress the masses. This is witnessed by Ngugi himself when he is in detention. In his prison memoir, *Detained: A prisoner's prison diary* (1981a), Ngugi reports that, while in detention, the police isolated him from others and put him in a cell that belonged to already condemned criminals. The lights in his cell were on throughout the day and his family was denied a visit. Therefore, when Ngugi writes, he is determined to thwart the actions of the ruling elite and their cohorts. He reveals their cunning behaviour.

Wariinga represents the masses, and the treatment she receives is common when the masses go out looking for work. They are fired from their work for no reason. The only reason why they are refused work is because they do not agree with the conditions put forward by the employers. The women are asked for sexual favours by those responsible to give jobs, which makes it difficult for women of a high moral conduct to obtain jobs. Because of the high unemployment rate among the masses, most of them resort to doing odd jobs for survival and, in most cases, the masses are not paid. This is revealed in *Petals of Blood* with the caddy boys. The boys are employed by the elite to carry their golf bags. Ngugi reports that "the caddy boys are seen in torn clothes, standing at a distance, weighed down by bags of golf sticks and white balls, and they are not allowed to participate in the game, neither are they paid for the work they are doing" (Ngugi, 1977, p. 12). In this incident, Ngugi portrays how exploitative the Kenyan leaders are. They use

the boys to be their spectators. Ngugi hopes that the children of Kenya will one day praise their fathers and forefathers for their work of winning Kenya back to their side through the struggle against neo-colonialism.

3.7 CLASS DIVISION AND CULTURE ALIENATION

The Kenyan independence has been won; the British colonial administrators are replaced by the local political leaders but what people expected from them did not happen. The outcome is that the elected, new elite have lost their direction regarding the promises of independence. The new leaders no longer visit the people to find out about their hardships so that they can solve them. Most of them reside in cities and towns which makes it more difficult to know what is happening in the areas that they represent. The only time they go back is during elections, just to gather votes for their next term of office. This is the condition with Nderi wa Riera, a representative of the town of Ilmorog. Nderi is uninformed about the drought in Ilmorog. One cannot expect any development in an area which seems to be deserted by its representative. Instead, the people suffer.

Furthermore, when Nderi wa Riera hears about the drought in Ilmorog, he answers, “I was planning to come for a whole week or so and tour the constituency and get to know the people and to acquaint myself with the farming problems in the area” (Ngugi, 1977, p. 177). His answer shows that Nderi wa Riera has taken long before visiting the area or has never visited the area to familiarise himself with it or make himself known to the people. Ogude (1999) compares Nderi’s weakness to a person who possesses a qualification that he did not sweat for. Ngugi suggests that political representatives like Nderi wa Riera can do better if they plan to develop places that they represent, instead of hurrying to towns and cities where there is better development. Some other

representatives have developed these better places because they were committed to their duties. Ngugi argues that every representative of an area should be committed to develop the area he or she represents to improve it to become equal to other already developed areas. He, therefore, advises the masses to shun such leaders who seem to have total power, like Orwell (1986) shows in his novel *Animal Farm* when the animals take power from the human beings. Corruption is on the increase in Kenya, and Ngugi continues to educate the masses about what their leaders are doing and, at the same time, persuade them to intensify their struggle.

A delegation from Ilmorog goes to the city to report the drought in their area. The expectation of the delegation is that the MP, Nderi wa Riera, will sympathise with them but, to their surprise, Nderi wa Riera asks the delegation to go back to Ilmorog and collect money from each household for a water project. The delegation is depicted as being in extreme poverty because they cannot afford neither modern transport nor food or even pay hospital fees for the sick child travelling with them. Though the delegation indicates that they do not have money, Nderi wa Riera comes to Ilmorog as a follow-up journey on the request of the delegation. He collects two shillings from each household in Ilmorog town for what he calls the 'Harambee water project'. He also collects twelve shillings and fifty cents for the tea party at Gatundu but the Ilmorog people never see the piped water project take off or being implemented. In fact, the millions of shillings which he robs are used for his own personal gain. He uses "the money as security to borrow bank loans" (Ngugi, 1977, pp. 86-87). In this way, he is able to save the money as investment for buying land to build houses for the low income class and also to buy shares in various companies. The houses which are built are sold at high prices which the masses cannot afford; therefore, they remain in their shacks. With such outcomes, Ngugi (1977) concludes that neo-colonial leaders are not the representatives of the people but they are only elected to run

their own personal affairs, and become richer at the expense of the poor. The people of Ilmorog lose their livestock and are unable to cultivate any fields due to the drought. Their MP is not fulfilling his promise to bring water to the area.

Similarly, the same exploitation is witnessed at the Devil's celebration that takes place at the cave in Ilmorog. The robbers and the thieves are boasting about their exploitation of the needy. They plan to oppress them until they do no longer know the difference between good and bad and become immune to suffering (Ngugi, 1977). Johanson (1990) refers to the masses' suffering as a deliberate action of the elite to exploit the oppressed. Johnson says that the masses will revolt and some will end up beaten and some arrested. Likewise, Herbst (2000) is of the opinion that power and authority are misused in Africa to the extent that Africa may experience a world war. Contrary to the masses' expectations, independence has brought more suffering and has financially enslaved the masses to the elite. Kihaahu wa Gatheeca, one of the presenters at the celebration, uses the same tactics of enriching himself as Nderi when he is elected chairman of Iciciri Country Council's Housing Committee. He blackmails the community to donate money towards the council which gives him an opportunity to buy all the council houses and he then rents them out at high rates. To buttress this point Ngugi states:

It happened that now and then the council would borrow money from the American owned World Bank, or from European and Japanese Banks, to finance the construction of cheap houses for the poor. That was a source of real fact. I can remember one time when the council demolished some shanties at Ruuwa-ini. The plan was to erect a thousand houses there instead. The company that won the tender for building the houses was Italian. But, of course, it had first given me a small back-hander of shillings. I put the

money in my account and knew that the campaign money had been repaid. Now I waited for the returns on my investment in the elections. (Ngugi, 1982a, pp.115-116)

Ngugi (1981b) questions how forgetful the elite are of the situation during the colonial time when the economy of the country was still in the hands of the colonisers and they lived a miserable life that forced them to take up arms and fight to free their country. When they taste power, they quickly forget their past. In this way, social matters become worse and the masses' minds easily become deluded.

In *Devil on the Cross* (1982a), Gatuiria contemplates the shock of his father when he sees his daughter-in-law-to-be, Wariinga, dressed in a Gikuyu traditional dress. Wariinga is dressed in clothes, necklaces and earrings made of dry maize stalks. When Gatuiria's father sees Wariinga in these clothes, he quickly asks her to take off the attire and put on the clothes and jewellery made in Europe for she is marrying the son of a rich family and should no longer indulge in wearing Gikuyu traditional attire (Ngugi, 1982a). This is an indication of culture alienation that is seen within the elite class. Ngugi compares people, who disregard their culture, to a library without books which is non-functional. The culture of the Gikuyu is disregarded in independent Kenya. This is supported by Gatuiria's statement in *Devil on the Cross* when he remarks, "Our culture has been dominated by the Western imperialist cultures. Imperialist culture is regarded as the mother of the slavery of the mind and the body" (Ngugi, 1982a, pp 41-43).

In *Petals of Blood* (1977), Abdulla is disrespected by Kimeria, a young man who threatens to throw him in jail if it were not for the sick child they are travelling with. Ngugi remarks that elderly people were respected before the colonisers invaded Kenya, but now the culture that is being followed is that of the European where young people can lead the discussions with elders

and pat them on their shoulders. The same happens to Matigari. The small boys hit him and haul insults at him instead of showing respect to him as an elderly person. The on-lookers do nothing but watch the drama and join the boys in insulting Matigari, calling him a lunatic and mad person (Ngugi, 1989).

To keep the poor from attending Wariinga and Gaturia's wedding, Gaturia's parents design invitation cards which state the dress code for those who will attend the wedding, where the outfits can be bought and the type of gifts required at their son's wedding (Ngugi, 1982a). Because the poor cannot meet these requirements, they cannot attend the wedding even if they want to. Ngugi regards this arrangement not only as one of class division but also of culture alienation. In the culture of the Gikuyu, people gather and enjoy wedding ceremonies without prescriptions regarding attire and gifts. Rodney (1981) observes that the educated Africans are the most alienated Africans on the continent. They have succumbed to the white capitalist system and they can afford to sustain a style of life imported from outside that further transform their mentality (Rodney, 1981). Ngugi (1983) also observes that the lack of congruency between colonial education and African culture creates people who are abstracted from their reality. The division between the masses and the elite is strengthened by their status in society brought by the system of capitalism which Ngugi refers to in his memoir *Detained: A writer's prison diary* as a system of theft and robbery. He writes that "Capitalism is a system of theft and robbery, and thus theft and robbery are protected and sanctified by the law and law courts, parliament, religion, prisons, police as well as armed forces" (Ngugi, 1981b, pp. 135-136).

In *Petals of Blood*, Munira is forbidden from playing with the children of the farm workers on his father's farm because these children belong to poor families. Not only that, Munira is regarded as a loss by his rich father for failing to obtain a good educational qualification and a

prestigious job like his siblings. The same parents refuse Karega to marry their daughter, Mukami, because he is regarded as pagan. Karega is also regarded as a son of a poor family whose parents are former members of the Mau Mau movement that has become an enemy to the government of Kenya, as well as to the Western religion to which Munira's father belongs. As a result, Mukami commits suicide and Karega is left devastated (Ngugi, 1977).

3.8 SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ABUSE

Independence has been won in Kenya and people are happy and rejoicing. Thus, after independence, the masses thought everything would be easier for them because the powers are now in the hands of their fellow countrymen. Ngugi (1964) reveals how people were happy ululating and beating drums because of joy. Unfortunately, things do not happen as they are expected; in fact, they are besieged by another colonialism which Ngugi calls economic colonialism. The context in the three novels shows that the new political elite assumed political power for their own ends and adopted new methods and new behaviours with regards to their power over the masses. Although there is a drought in Ilmorog, nothing is done to rescue the situation. Instead, the MP comes to the area to rob the community of the little money that they have at their disposal, and he continues to promote his own interests instead of rescuing Ilmorog from the drought.

Ngugi presents a picture of independent Kenya with the cunning elite and their abuse of power. The elite use power for prestigious purposes, and the gap between them and the masses continues to widen. Because they have all the power at their disposal, they are able to do anything that can assist them to keep their places in the government apparatus. In *Matigari* (1989) Ngugi reveals

the presence of the former colonialists, who still have a stake in the affairs of the country when he writes:

A white man and a black man sat on horseback on one side of the narrow tarmac road next to the gate. Their horses were exactly alike. Both had silky brown bodies. The riders too wore clothes of the same colour. Even their postures as they sat in the saddle were exactly the same. The way they held their whips and the reins - no difference. And they spoke in the same manner. Indeed, the only difference between the two men was their colour. (Ngugi, 1989, p. 43)

The statement above shows that there are still leaders within Kenya who collaborate with the imperialists to rule, and John Boy represents them. John Boy still has people who work, honour and protect him as it was during colonial times. The house of Robert Williams, where John Boy, a white man, is hiding is “heavily guarded by the police while John Boy is sitting close to the telephone so that he can quickly receive the welcome news of Matigari’s arrest or death” (Ngugi, 1989, p. 158). The police who are guarding the house, arrest Matigari when he attempts to enter John Boy’s house, claiming it to be his. The Kenyan elite are supposed to keep on pleasing the international elite in sharing with them the wealth and power in Kenya.

In the competition at the cave, the supervisors are white men who are in control of the feast. In this illustration, Ngugi tries to show how the foreigners still control Kenya socially, economically and politically. The leader of the National Organisation of Thieves and Robbers mentions why foreigners are important in his presentation at the gathering. He says that everything comes from them (Ngugi, 1982a). The speeches are an indication that foreigners are still using the elite leaders as their front. In the same manner, the political elite of Kenya use the

same methods they have learned from foreigners to rob their people in order to gain political positions and pursue their own interests. This is supported by Cook and Okenimkpe when they state:

It is by rigging the local elections and bribing his way into office against equally ruthless opposition that Gitutu reaches the rich goal of chairmanship of the local housing committee. Now he can pocket the fabulous percentages offered by foreign speculators in exchange for building contracts, and then corruptly allocate the jerry-built marionettes that result to line his pockets even more richly. The community endures debased local administration while publicly subsidize housing is hawked on the black market. (1997, p. 119)

Ngugi tries to show that the Church, the bureaucratic government, the education system and capitalism are duplicates of the former colonial state. The ruling political elite usually call upon the white imperialists whenever they face administrative and economic problems to assist in solving these in the name of “experts” in economic aspects and administration. In this way the people are still being cheated and exploited by both the international and local elite. Corruption is on the increase but instead of condemning it, the leaders support it. In *Devil on the Cross*, when Wangari reports that thieves and robbers gathered at the cave, she is the one arrested for spreading lies (Ngugi, 1982a). The worst about corruption is that the corrupt elite are the law-makers. They, therefore, bend the rules and then make laws that favour their behaviour. They bend the laws for fear that, if they do not do so, they can be the victims of such laws. Because of corruption taking place, the masses experience more problems and no solutions to their plight.

Furthermore, Ngugi in *Devil on the Cross*, (1982a) reveals a chief tax gatherer and a policeman who would terrorise the people of Ilmorog into paying their dues but the money ends up in their pockets. In *Matigari*, it is revealed that only the matatus, the transport for the poor, are searched at road blocks while the smart cars of the elite are not searched, which means that they are free to transport any commodity of their choice to any place (Ngugi, 1989). The laws of independent Kenya are for the poor, not the rich who are the elite. The corruption of laws by the elite results in an increase in unemployment, lawlessness, starvation and prostitution. While the masses are suffering, the elite have more than enough food, more houses and big commercial farms grabbed from the poor.

During colonialism, the wealth of Kenya was in the hands of the few foreigners who controlled it while the people of Kenya suffered. After independence, won through the shedding of the blood of many patriots, the situation has not changed. The elite have failed to fulfil their promises; the poor continue to suffer though Kenya is free. There is no free education, free health services, no houses and unemployment is rising. Ngugi blames those in power for the suffering of the masses. The elite have used the masses to fight against imperialist powers during the war for independence, and, after independence, the same group set them up as targets for economic exploitation. Ngugi (1986b) tells his readers that the struggle of the masses is both moral and physical but, nevertheless, it is still a struggle, no matter how it appears. To buttress his statement he writes:

It never did, and it never will. Find out what people may submit to, and you have found out the exact amount of injustice and wrong which will be imposed on them; and these will continue till they are resisted with either words or blows, or with both. The limits of

tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress. (Ngugi, 1986b, p. 33)

Ngugi sees the struggle between the local elite and the masses resulting from the greed of the elite. He, therefore, advocates for violence, as he regards “violence to change an intolerable unjust as a social order which is not savagery but rather, it purifies a man, and if it is done to protect and preserve unjust and oppressive social order as criminal and diminishes a man” (Ngugi, 1983, p. 28). This, in a sense, is an adoption of the Marxist mechanisms for social change as outlined by Marxist theorists. This ideology shows that the interactions, conflicts and relations among people are on class terms. Its aim is to support the oppressed class, who are struggling to redeem themselves from the dictatorship of the ruling class, in order to bring the true vision of a socialist revolution.

Ngugi speaks against the acts and consequences of economic and political subjugation such as unfair dismissal, sexual harassment of women in places of work and arrests of individuals that are taking place in Kenya. He, therefore, questions the elite for allowing the masses to fight for their freedom, as he puts it “for you cannot persuade the one who has lost his hand to forget the loss, the hungry to forget the hunger or the person who bears the whiplashes of an unjust system to forget the pain” (Ngugi, 1981a, p. 18). Adding on, he says that cultural subjugation is more dangerous because it is subtle and its effects last longer. Ngugi then alerts the Kenyans that they should try to understand the fact that all humans have a conscience that has become the battle site of the struggle between the new coloniser and the oppressed. He vows to support the masses, stating that it is their obligation “to fight for their right in order to call their souls their own” (Ngugi, 2009, p. 111). Ngugi hails Karega as one of the people who devotes his time to support and suffer with the masses to end exploitation. Karega in *Petals of Blood* becomes a leader in the

struggle of the peasants and workers in Ilmorog though the police are after him all the time. Ngugi hails him as a man who stands up to fight injustices without fear. It is, therefore, clear that in the three post-independence novels, *Petals of Blood*, *Devil on the Cross* and *Matigari*, Ngugi is able to view neo-colonialism as the perpetuation of exploitative values established by colonialism.

3.9 WORSHIP AND RELIGIOUS HYBRIDISM

During the liberation struggle, a promise to revive culture and African/Kenyan traditions was made by the revolutionaries who were fighting for independence. This means that the people would be free to worship in their own way, according to their belief, as their culture permitted. But, this is not the case in independent Kenya. Mwathi wa Mugo, the spiritual power, is disregarded as evil (Ngugi, 1977). Western Christianity is still in full force and the people are forced to join it. People are informed that indigenous religious practices are sinful, and those who practise them will be burnt in fire when Jesus comes back for the second time (Ngugi, 1973). For fear of death, people have become Christians but their leaders are exploiting them in the name of religion. As a result, there is religious fallacy and hybridism experienced in Kenya. The leaders of Christianity do not practise what they preach. Kimeria is one of the pastors who practise religious fallacies. He impregnates Wanja and abandons her. When he meets her during the journey of the Ilmorogians, he threatens to imprison her for six months if she refuses to accept his advances towards her, and then rapes her (Ngugi, 1977, p. 155). In the same manner, the Rich Man of Ngorika bribes and impregnates a school girl, Wariinga, and later denies being responsible, leaving her to suffer the consequences alone.

The workers of Munira's father, known as Brother Ezekiel, a priest, still wear "some type of patched up trousers and nginyira for shoes" (Ngugi, 1977, p. 14). As a priest, he is supposed to show love to his workers but, instead, his workers are dressed in torn clothes, which proves that he does not have remorse even if he sees another person suffering. The group who calls themselves "'Defender of the Faith, Elect of God' would first massacre some of their Christians and then go to church for blessings and cleansing" (Ngugi, 1977, pp. 90-91). One of the reasons why ancestral worship is referred to as evil is the fact that sometimes there is shedding of blood (where an animal or bird is slaughtered and the blood used to wash the affected people) during the period of worship. Here is a church where people are massacred and afterwards the murderers go to church for blessing and cleansing. Ngugi (1973) refers to such pretences as hypocritical and not true Christianity. Ngugi comments on such pretence, saying Christianity is a disruptive influence on the African life. He states:

Christianity as an organised religion is corrupt and hypocritical: besides acting as an agent of imperialism. It exercises a highly disruptive influence on African life and is the chief villain in alienating the African from his own culture. (Ngugi, 1973, p. 31)

Still in *Petals of Blood*, Ngugi reveals another situation where a pastor, named Lord Freeze, exploits cheap labour and harasses the peasants on his farms. He also grabs land from the poor peasants and turns them into labourers on the very land that is rightfully theirs (Ngugi, 1977). Ngugi also shows how the Blue Hills community and the rest of the elite use religion to condemn those who are involved in the struggle for justice in the community of Ilmorog. The pastor who meets the Ilmorogian delegation rejects and exploits them. He refuses them any help, such as water to quench their thirst or accommodation. In this scenario he demonstrates how the behaviour of the religious, neo-colonial, elite leaders contradicts the basic Christian concept of

love and brotherhood. Ngugi, therefore, believes that the Western religion came as part of the colonial package and is always used to blind the people to the realities of exploitation.

In the first place, the religious missionaries left their countries to come and save the people of Kenya, especially the needy, to teach them to love one another, but in *Petals of Blood*, their behaviour as priests reveals the opposite. Ngugi, therefore, suggests that the religion brought by the missionaries fails to recognise spots of beauty and truths in the Kenyans' way of life and is, therefore, useless. Ngugi has this to say:

Religion is not God. When the British imperialist came in Kenya 1925, all the missionaries of all the churches held the Bible in the left hand, and the gun in the right hand. The white man wanted us to be drunk with religion while the white man in the meantime was mapping and grabbing our land and starting factories and businesses on our sweat. (Ngugi, 1982a, pp. 56-57)

Thus Ngugi regards religion as the greatest weapon which the new elite use to oppress the masses and, as such, he sees no difference between a coloniser and a missionary priest (Ngugi, 1982a). Instead of assisting to bring peace among the people of the same nation, religion brings hatred, division, a lack of trust and culture alienation among them. According to Cabral, "the European exploiters, oppressors and grabbers of land use Christianity as a tool to explain the manifest contradictions portrayed in African history because of the working out of broader historical forces" (1980, p. 153). Any nation surrounded by such sentiments does not experience the joy of independence, so is Kenya.

3.10 THE EXPLOITATION OF THE MASSES

The masses are exploited and suffer at the hands of their leaders in various ways. The exploitation is experienced in the form of corruption, bribery, abuse of office, criminal attacks, greed and the exploitation of women and children. For instance, a colonialist, Ramjeeh Ramlagoon Dharamashah, wants to change the Ilmorog wilderness into what he calls civilised shapes and forms that can yield millions of pounds for him. He needs manpower to be able to fulfil his ambitions. He then uses the magic of the government, the chit and the power of his rifle to conscript labour. Instead of following the labour law where workers should be given reasonable salaries and work within the stipulated hours per day, Ramjeeh's workers are casual labourers throughout their stay at his farms and work more hours according to his own wishes. He resorts to land grabbing and turns the peasants into labourers. He buys food from the farmers at a cheap price and then sells the food at higher prices to the masses. When he buys goods from the city, he uses the labourers to carry them to his farm on their backs (Ngugi, 1977). This kind of exploitative behaviour is seen among the elite towards the poor.

Ngugi uses characters, such as Ramjeeh, to show the exploitation of the masses by the rich people, yet the rich rely on the poor to sustain their wealth through their labour. This exploitative behaviour is in accordance with neo-colonialism which the Marxist literary theory defines as a mode of exploitation to perpetuate the masses, though in a different way (Rodney, 1981). The labourers on Ramjeeh's farm accept the perpetuation of the imperialist oppression and colonial domination in a different and essentially new format in an independent Kenya without knowing it. Little do the masses, who work for Ramjeeh, know that they are not supposed to be supervised by someone carrying a gun. Ramjeeh applies a new form of colonialist oppression that operates

in a latent manner to give him an opportunity to continue his imperialist exploitation, using the ignorance of the labourers as scapegoats, even after Kenya has won its self-rule.

At the Devil's Feast taking place at a cave in Ilmorog, the local participants boast how they exploit the masses. For instance, Gitutu suggests that they should bottle air and sell it to the masses for breathing so that they can keep on coming back to beg for more air from the elite. Another one gives the suggestion of building folding nests for the poor to lay their heads into at night. The elite use the feast as a platform to utter the language of exploitation without fear because they are with their anchor, the foreigners (Ngugi, 1982a). Be that as it may, the cave where the meeting takes place symbolises the devil's domain dominated by rich men and women of leisure. The deliberations of the men of status who are the speakers at the meeting shows that there is an intense struggle between the exploiters and the victims of exploitation. The speeches of the rich at the cave prove that the economy of Kenya is collectively owned and controlled by individual people not the government. The feast is disrupted by the arrival of the police and Wangari who has gone to inform the police about the thieves and robbers holding a feast in the cave to choose the best thief and robber in Ilmorog. The police refuse to arrest the self-proclaimed thieves and robbers but, instead, arrest Wangari for levelling what they call false accusations against these respected businessmen on whom Kenya is anchored.

In fact, the children of the squatters, whose parents work for Mzigo, survive by stealing plums and pears because of hunger while their fathers work on his farm. Henceforth, two of his workers remained in his employment the longest but still wear the same "type of patched up trousers and nginyira for shoes" (Ngugi, 1977, p. 14). The clothes of these long serving workers indicate how the workers are exploited by their employer. This situation seems to be the norm between the workers and the employers in contemporary Kenya. Ngugi shows the suffering of the children of

these workers in the way they dress. These children have only “tattered calicoes for clothes” (Ngugi, 1977, p. 13). Ngugi wants the children to be well looked after, to get proper education and learn the morals of life but these children on Mzigo’s farm have become thieves of plums and pears because of hunger. Their parents faced the same situation under colonial regime, and hoped to see their children well educated once Kenya has its independence but the opposite is happening. Their parents receive small wages, and cannot buy enough food and clothes for these children, neither can they afford to send them to proper schools. From a Marxist perspective, Ngugi states that the abilities and energies of the labourer are seen as a commodity by the abuser. Mwaura (2005) sees the labourers’ agreement to work for low wages as a sale of labour power, and argues that it is another way that the elite use to exploit the masses. In extension on labour exploitation, Ngugi also asks, “if nobody is cheated, if the worker receives the full value of his sweat, where can exploitation come from and where can the exploiter make his money?” (Ngugi, 2009, p. 19). This is the social and economic exploitation that Ngugi wants the oppressed to fight against for all the people of Kenya to live a better life.

When Karega receives the sad news of his mother’s death, he is reported to be weak in body because of the beatings and electric shocks and the mental harassment he continuously receives from the police. He is in police custody in connection with the assassination of Mzigo, Kimeria and Chui. Karega’s mother lived under the exploitation of Brother Ezekiel, Munira’s father. It is reported that, though she was a hard worker and humble woman, she was never treated fairly by her employers. Ngugi describes her as a “black woman who had worked all her life breaking the skin of the earth for ‘a propertied few’” (Ngugi, 1977, p. 143). This type of sacrifice, according to Brown (1999), is the only way in which the proletariat can remain alive. Although she insisted on her immediate rights, she never complained much, believing that maybe God will one day put

everything right but she died without God putting anything right. Ngugi believes in Wanja's ideology "eat or you are eaten" (Ngugi, 1977, p. 143). Though the elite are the minority, they are able to exploit the workers and the peasants because of the power they possess. The masses sweat but the production of their sweat turns out to be the profit of the elite, as Ngugi puts it, "the elite's capacity is to drink the blood and sweat of many" for their selfish gain (Ngugi, 1977, p. 343).

The masses are exploited through negligence by the government. In Ilmorog, there is no transport for people to use when they want to travel to far-away places and neither do they have health facilities nearby. Ngugi reveals this situation when the delegation from Ilmorog decides to go to Nairobi to see the MP in connection with the drought in their area. The delegation takes a long journey to the city of Nairobi on foot and a donkey cart because they cannot afford the modern transport which seems to be owned by private people only and, therefore, expensive. On their way they feed on wild fruits and animals as there are no shops with basic commodities for human consumption nearby. During the night, they use fire to protect themselves from cold and also to scare away vicious wild animals from attacking them. When Joseph, a child they are travelling with, falls sick, they fail to take him to a clinic because there is none. When they reach the city, they decide to spend the night in the cold air with a sick child for they cannot afford even one night in a guesthouse or hotel (Ngugi, 1977).

The elite misuse power in the manner they institute law and order. For instance, when the delegation from Ilmorog arrives in Nairobi, they decide to rest a while in the Jeevanjee Gardens. Later the police detain Abdulla's donkey which assisted them on their long journey from Ilmorog to Nairobi, claiming that the donkey has messed up the gardens as well as the nearby streets where the group has passed. When the group tries to resist, they are threatened with arrest and

jail. In another incident, Munira's friend is accused that he still carries Mau Mau weapons and is hanged for that. Ngugi refers to these actions as the manifestations of colonial heritage which the new leaders practise in Kenya. While back in Ilmorog, Munira's group is invited to a tea party by a group of government officials. It is to take place in the banana plantation belonging to Munira's father. At the plantation, the group is left alone and the party never takes place. One person from the group, who enquires why they are brought there, disappears and is never seen again (Ngugi, 1977). Ngugi fictionalises these stories to reveal the bad shape of Kenya's independence. He believes that it would not have been like that if the leaders, who took over, did not accept the system of capitalism.

Ngugi compares the structures in the areas, where the two opposing groups live, as another way to portray the image of Kenya after independence. The comparison is between the urban and rural areas where the elite and the masses live. Munira's hut at the school where he is teaching has no sink or a cupboard. When he is visited by a strange girl, who assists him with the washing of the dishes, there is no place where the dishes can be placed. The girl has to use two sticks to place the dishes. Nyakinyua describes her hut as "a small acreage with poor implements" and that these are the type of huts scattered about Ilmorog country (Ngugi, 1977, p. 9). When Munira calls for a school assembly, only five pupils turn up. Munira praises the five and promotes them to an English beginner's class. He closes his school assembly by swearing never to return to this "God-forsaken place" (Ngugi, 1977, p. 11). These remarks reveal not only the school structure but the entire structures of the area look like. If a place looks as if it has been forsaken by God, it is one where people are not supposed to live. The school has no proper structure and the few children that attend the school have to go out to learn about flowers and other types of grasses because of a lack of books and other resources. The roads are dusty and the only sport available

is that of riding horses. When Munira wants to visit the inspector, the only transport available is a bicycle.

Once Munira decides to go and see Mzigo in connection with extra teachers at his school. As usual, he uses his bicycle as means of transport. The road to the farms is “as treacherous as those hags and brats and cripples, and is riding through ruts and bumps and ditches” (Ngugi, 1977, p. 13). He only smiles when he comes to the way that passes through the coffee farms previously owned by whites but now belonging to the new elite. The drivers of smart cars laugh and make obscene gestures when they see him cycling, saying that he may soon be cycling underneath one of the Lorries. Munira views the Ruwa-ini buildings which look more beautiful and bigger than the mud huts of Ilmorog. Instead of the dusty roads of Ilmorog, Ruwa-ini houses have a golf course and neatly trimmed green lawns. Mzigo’s office is also different from that of Munira’s office at his school. Mzigo’s office is “a specklessly clean affair” with a tray for incoming mail, a tray for outgoing mail and one for miscellaneous mail plus numerous pens and pencils beside each of the three enormous inkwells. On the wall hangs a map of Chiri District with the location of the various schools marked in with drawing pins (Ngugi, 1977). The description of the buildings in Ilmorog and Ruwa-ini shows the segregation of the poor and rich in Kenya after independence.

By all means, the new elite seem to develop only the areas where they reside and not where the masses live. As Namhila (1997) states about Namibia, “the educated in colonial Namibia were geared to see themselves as a special class apart from the uneducated majority, and this stereotype was instilled in the minds of the educated not to see themselves as part of the problems experienced by their people” (p. 25). She adds that by distancing themselves from their people, the elite also turn a blind eye on community development. The situation reveals that the

masses remain in poverty though they were promised good accommodation once Kenya attained self-rule. Ilmorog's roads still remain in bad condition where one experiences bumps, while those in Ruwa-ini are tarred. When the inspector is asked to come to see the situation at Munira's school, he answers "any good roads yet, as my car cannot ride on poor roads" (Ngugi, 1977, p. 87). This reveals that there are better tarmac roads where the inspector lives as compared to the roads in Ilmorog, a place where Munira lives.

Abdulla's shop is also a concern as Ngugi describes it as a "broken mud-walled shop" with the roof and walls leaning to one side (Ngugi, 1977, pp. 8-12). The table in the bar has huge cracks in the middle and may break at anytime. But in the bars owned by the elite, one finds all the necessary equipment that a modern bar should have. The boys in *Matigari* live in car scrapyard, which Ngugi refers to as "a true vehicle cemetery" (Ngugi, 1989, p. 16). When Matigari and Muriuki leave the scrapyard, they pass through some tiny workers' houses which are crammed together. When they come to a place where the rich live, the houses are large, with huge gardens. There are flowered lawns with green trees everywhere. At the entrances of the big houses are huge steel gates. From the road one can see swimming pools full of clear blue water. Despite the drought in the country, these homes have enough water for their lawns and shrubs and their swimming pools. On the other side of the highway are tall buildings and big supermarkets and shops, such as Kentucky Fried Chicken, McDonalds, Wimpy Bar, as well as various banks, such as Citibank, Barclays, Bank of Japan, American Life and many others. The scrapyard and the small houses of the workers signify the poor living conditions of the masses. The fruit of independence is being enjoyed by those in power and not by the masses.

Under those circumstances faced by the masses, Ngugi shows that the differences in the buildings in the areas where the two groups live display the same social and economic divisions

that characterised the Kenyan society under colonialism. In other words, post-independent Kenya is undergoing neo-colonialism and, therefore, independence has no meaning for the masses. Ngugi as well shows that the gap between the elite and the masses keeps widening. Ngugi argues that the elite's behaviour is the same as that of the British, the former colonisers; therefore, the new elite form a social class which is black in colour but European in ideals and opinions (Ngugi, 1982a). Ngugi intends to reflect postcolonial Kenya as a capitalist society based on political and economic inequality among its social classes.

Ngugi seems to be aware of the social and cultural factions within the two opposing groups, the elite and the masses. He regards this social and cultural division as the basis of the social struggle brought by the system of capitalism which, in turn, breeds the neo-colonial system. To Ngugi, the division between the societies in his country is a misfortune that hinders its development, as Kenya seems to move from one colonial system to another. Neo-colonialism is corrupt. The leaders exploit their people through class segregation. Because of the elite's corruption, there is continuous economic inequality between the masses and the elite. To support this, Ngugi, through Wariinga, describes the condition of two of the residential areas allocated to the two opposing classes:

The residential area is divided into two parts. The first is the Ilmorog Golden Heights residential area. In the past it used to be called Cape Town. The air there is clean and good, that is where anyone who is anyone lives in Ilmorog. It contains the homes of the wealthy and powerful. The walls of their magnificent mansions are made of expensive stones from Njiru and the roofs are made of red brick. The windows are of dark blue glass, like the waters of the lakes or the heavens on a cloudless day. They are decorated with iron different kinds of flower. The doors are made of tick wood, carved into all sorts

of wonderful shapes. The floor is lined with wood, so polished, so smooth that you can see your own reflection in it, and you can even use it as a mirror to do your hair. (Ngugi, 1982a, p. 130)

Furthermore, Wariinga states that there is competition in the Ilmorog Golden Height residential area. She reveals that, if one man builds a ten-roomed house with ten chimneys, the other one builds a twenty-room house with twenty chimneys. If the next one imports his carpets and other building materials from China, the following one will import his from another country. This shows the luxury life that the elite are enjoying in Kenya while the masses live in poverty. To reveal how the masses live in poverty, Ngugi gives a picture of the other side of Ilmorog where the masses live:

The other part of the residential area is called New Jerusalem, Njeruca. That's the residential area for the workers, the unemployed. It is where the wretched of Kenya live. They live in shacks as small as the sparrow's nest referred to as shanties whose walls and roofs are made of strips of tin and old tarpaulin of Ilmorog. These are the slums of Kenya. This is the area where Chibuku, Chang'aa, Maatheng'eeta and other illegal beer are brewed - beers made more potent by the addition of quinine and aspro to knock the workers out. (Ngugi, 1982a, p. 130)

Ngugi calls Njeruca "the Hell described in the Christian Bible" (NIV, 2009, p. 1130). He continues to describe the Njeruca residential area as an area where there are armies of flies. The bedbugs are marching up and down the walls of these shacks because of what he terms "the sickening ditches that are not drained, full of brackish water, shit and urine, where the naked children swim" (Ngugi, 1977, p. 131). The area is smelly because of the human faeces, urine and

carcasses of dead dogs putrefying. To add to this unhealthy situation is the smoke of dangerous gases from the industrial area which is blown towards New Jerusalem. Not only that, but all the rubbish and waste from the factories are deposited there. The workers live in such slums and “bury themselves in such holes full of fleas, lice, bedbugs”; Ngugi compares their life to “hell on earth” (Ngugi, 1982a, pp. 130-131). This picture of Njeruca depicts the poor living conditions of the masses in an independent Kenya.

The masses do not only live in slums but they are not provided with health facilities. The children in *Petals of Blood* are seen with “flies swarming around their sore eyes. Their nostrils are blocked with mucus but there is no dispensary or clinic nearby to take them” (Ngugi, 1977, pp. 14-18). Services are not available as they should be. When Ilmorog is hit by a severe drought, the community is left to solve it themselves. Though Nderi wa Riera has promised them clean water, proper roads and hospitals, the area is still threatened by the lack of such facilities. To put it in another way, the money which the community donate towards installing running water, building hospitals and tarmac roads is used by Nderi to complete his own projects not the Ilmorogians. Markedly, Ilmorog remains a place of poverty.

During colonisation, the colonisers lived in areas where basic needs were available while the colonised remained in poverty. In postcolonial Kenya, the same situation persists. Ngugi believes that imperialism and its local representatives are the enemies of the progress of the workers and peasants and the whole Kenyan nation. If the leaders had not adopted the policies and rules of the colonisers but stuck to what they promised the people during the war of independence, there could have been harmony in the Kenyan society. The colonisers are gone but their rules and policies are still dominant in postcolonial Kenya. Until these rules and policies are removed or changed, the wind of colonisation will remain in Kenya and, therefore, the lower class will

continue to suffer. Because the new leaders do not want to part with the colonisers' ways, Ngugi urges the masses to fight against neo-colonialism, as he regards it as the "the last kicks of a dying imperialism" (Ngugi, 1982a, p. 210).

3.11 WOMEN AS SEX OBJECTS AND PROSTITUTION

Women are regarded as sex objects by the elite and foreigners. In *Petals of Blood* (1977), Mzigo advises Munira to look for extra teachers at his school by advertising that there are 'free women' in Ilmorog (Ngugi, 1977, p. 87). Furthermore, Munira thinks of buying a drink for Wanja and then asks to go to bed with her in exchange for the drink. This indicates that women in Kenya are regarded as sex objects. Ngugi strives to sensitise his audience about these sick actions of the elite to bring about justice to all. Munira's friend goes to bed with Amina and abuses her sexually; afterwards he accuses her of being a bad woman (Ngugi, 1977). Still in *Petals of Blood*, Kimeria treats Wanja as a sex object. When her delegation comes to his house during their visit to the city, he locks her and her group into a dark room, and then Kimeria takes her to his bedroom where he rapes her (Ngugi, 1977). Women are sexually abused by men in position and this causes them to lose focus for the future as they regard themselves as useless in the society.

Meanwhile, when the delegation from Ilmorog arrives at the office of its MP, his secretary informs them that Nderi has gone to Mombasa for a business inspection to find a place in Mombasa where "Europeans can buy an authentic virgin girl of fourteen to fifteen for a price of a ticket to a cheap cinema show" (Ngugi, 1977, p. 175). In one of the bars for the elite, the thighs of women are used as the writing tables of men. When Wariinga goes around Nairobi looking for a job, she encounters sexual abuse in every office that she enters:

She enters another office. She finds there another Mr Boss. The smiles are the same, the questions are the same, the rendez-vous is the same, and the target is still Kareendi's thighs. The modern Love Bar has become the main employment bureau for girls, and women's thighs are the tables on which contracts are signed. (Ngugi, 1982a, p. 19)

Ngugi uses these sentiments to show how women are regarded as cheap objects for sexual amusement.

The exploitation of women is also seen in *Devil on the Cross* and *Matigari*. Wariinga is promised a job by Boss Kihara but only if she agrees to his sexual advances (Ngugi, 1982a). Failing to endure the life of hardship in Nairobi, Wariinga returns to Ilmorog where she manages to put up a garage as a business for social and economic survival. Later on, when the business is booming, Boss Kihara and his international friends decide to buy the site on which Wariinga has her garage to build a tourist hotel. The tourist hotel is to be a business centre that promotes prostitution to cater for both local and foreign dignitaries. Instead of assisting the community of Ilmorog to come out of their miseries in life, Boss Kihara only sees his own benefit when a tourist hotel is built.

Ngugi fictionalises the tradition that is practised among employers when it comes to giving employment. The women are sexually abused by employers, and those who refuse their advances do not get jobs, even if they qualify. Ngugi shows the same trend among the managers in the colonial era. Moreover, in *Matigari*, Matigari, the teacher and the student are arrested; the only way the policeman on duty will help them escape is by sleeping with Guthera who is pleading for their release. Then Guthera decides to "give herself to the policeman to save Matigari and his

inmate prisoners, who after sleeping with her” (Ngugi, 1989, p. 95) agrees to give her the key of the prison gate.

On the other hand, women also turn to prostitution as a way of survival. A good example is Wanja in *Petals of Blood* who owns a brothel. As a prostitute herself, she decides to promote prostitution as a way of earning a living. She then builds a brothel in Ilmorog where men go for women. It becomes well known even beyond the borders of Ilmorog, such that it attracts both locals and foreigners, including high dignitaries who come to visit the area. Wanja would seduce any man that comes to her. This is witnessed in the manner she seduces Munira to sleep with her when he comes to her brothel. Wanja looks at Munira and moves around showing an attitude of love through her body language to “alert Munira that she is ready for the next customer” (Ngugi, 1977, p. 26). Through her tactics, she manages to trap Abdulla, Munira and Karega to become her usual customers. In *Matigari* (1989), Guthera, without much ado, walks up to where Matigari is sitting in a restaurant. In an attempt to seduce him she sits on his lap, puts her arm around his neck and then looks at him with feigned love in her eyes. Seeing that Matigari is not responding as she expected, she then asks him, “Why do you look at me like that, dad ... pleasure is very expensive, but at this time of the month, the prices are usually low and credit to be paid at the end of the month is accepted” (Ngugi, 1989, p. 28).

Women have taken it upon themselves to sell their bodies because they cannot find jobs to raise money for their survival. Ngugi describes prostitution as a “doomed life” chosen by people who do not know or understand their history. He explains that prostitution is a practice which was only known in European countries. But since the Europeans came to Africa, they have planted the seed of prostitution in the African countries that they once colonised. As pawns of the latter colonial regime, the elite seem to welcome prostitution and indulge in it without measuring its

cruelty on the victims. Wanja's usual customers are those in high positions, the Mzigos, Kimerias and the Chuis, who are supposed to condemn prostitution and guard against it. Ngugi, therefore, reminds the Kenyans to respect their tradition and culture, and do away with the bad culture of the colonisers that they are copying.

3. 12 THE MASSES' EXPECTATIONS OF KENYAN INDEPENDENCE

This section concerns itself with the independence expectations of the masses by analysing how Ngugi wa Thiong'o portrays Kenyan independence in *Petals of Blood* (1977), *Devil on the Cross* (1982a) and *Matigari* (1989). A cursory look at Ngugi's fiction reveals the political injustice practised by Kenyan leaders. The first time such a situation occurred was during the colonial dispensation when all the Kenyans were fighting for the independence of their country. After independence, the leaders start to exploit the middle class even more than the colonisers treated them during colonial period. Ngugi therefore portrays Kenya as a revelation of the exploitation, class division and class struggle as the starting points in his early writing and continues to expound on the same issues with the other writings. The latter three aspects draw attention to the nature of power and its actual execution in a postcolonial country.

Ngugi portrays Kenyan independence through the physical conflict between the elite and the masses in the struggle for economic control; he argues that the masses will win in the end. Ngugi's interest is based on the fact that the lowest class is exploited by the high class. He, therefore, suggests that the wide gap between the masses and the ruling class needs to close, and the only people who can do that are the masses through their liberation struggle against exploitation by those in power. The masses are grovelling in deep poverty, as can be seen in the type of transport they use, the matatu, which Ngugi describes as "having different colours just

like patches on a torn garment” (Ngugi, 1982a, p. 23). This type of vehicle and the conversation of the passengers in Mwaura’s *matatu* give an overview of the extent of the exploitation the country has been experiencing since independence.

In the *matatu* bus, each of the passengers, Wariinga, Muturi, Wangari and Gatuiria, except for Mwireri wa Mukiraai, who is a member of the elite, explains how he or she has been a victim of the social and economic conditions that prevail in Kenya. Gatuiria points out that the British education system he has gone through did not prepare him for the educational revolution that his country needs. On the other hand, Wangari complains about the repossession of her land by the bank after she has failed to pay back the loan as agreed, while Wariinga and Muturi condemn their unfair dismissal from their jobs. Exploitation is not affecting women alone, but men also as can be realised from Muturi’s statement. Therefore, Kenya’s independence that resulted from fierce guerrilla warfare against the British colonisers means nothing to the middle class. This *Uhuru* (independence), acquired after a hard struggle, was celebrated with great joy, but this joy did not last long. Within a short period of time, people’s enthusiasm vanished because they were still faced with the same problems and hardships as before. Therefore Matigari asks:

They have really milked us dry. Yesterday it was the imperialist settlers and their servants. Today it is the same. On the plantations, in the factories, it is still the same duo. The imperialist and his servant. When will we, the family of those who toil, come to our own? Therefore I say: imperialist foreigners and their servants out! (Ngugi, 1989, pp. 78-79)

As alluded to in the previous sections of this chapter, what the people expected most was a real and positive change in their daily lives, such as an improvement in their living conditions,

employment, enough land for settlement and farming, accommodation facilities, good roads, good infrastructures, education for all, as well as freedom of expression and movement. But what they are experiencing is exploitation in the form of unemployment, the corruption of the elite, the lack of land and poverty in an independent Kenya (Ngugi, 1981a). For instance, Karega is dismissed from his teaching job for refusing the curriculum as anti-Kenyan culture. Offices are, in addition, still run by colonial leaders, who are said to be the trainers of the new leaders. Ngugi observes Kenya's independence, and states that very little has changed in terms of the rules and policies which are still similar to those of the colonial government. Ngugi (1981a), therefore, questions why Kenyan leaders agreed to wage war against their colonisers where most of the people lost their lives, yet, in the end, they continue to promote the interests of the same people in the country.

Ngugi retraces the process of Kenyan independence in the novel, *A Grain of Wheat* (1967), where the people posed some questions to their leaders about what would happen after their country had attained independence. People were excited about their freedom from the colonisers, hoping for things to change for the better. People expected that independence would bring about freedom and there would be no more imprisonment and beatings. Their assumption was that independence would bring about jobs and no one would suffer anymore. General R, an ex-freedom fighter, gives a speech in which he wants to know if *Uhuru* is contained in the name of the Mau Mau movement. To him the Mau Mau movement and its successes should remain in the history of Kenya for the benefit of future generations. He urges the new leaders to re-dedicate the government of Kenya with all the ideals which the people fought for and never betray the aspirations of the Mau Mau movement. Instead, when Ilmorog is urbanised, the people lose most of their land; it is supposed to be the duty of the newly elected leaders to return it to them.

Families have been scattered and misplaced because of the war; it is another duty of the new leaders to restore peace so that all the people in exile can return and reunite with their families to enjoy *Uhuru* together, but the new leaders resort to grabbing the land from the poor and leave them with nothing only more suffering (Ngugi, 1977).

During the war of liberation against the British colonisers, the leaders were promising education for all, health services, land for the landless, justice for all, freedom of movement and liberty, the list goes on. The government was to declare a war on poverty and concomitant inequality. They were to look at the policies and rules of colonialism and change the inappropriate ones so that the inequality in the nation could be tackled. Moreover, the government was to implement a robust governance framework that would result in sustainable economic growth and diversification to bring about job creation, poverty eradication and reduction of inequalities and disparities (Ngugi, 1981b). To the disappointment of the masses, the new leaders behave in the same way as the former colonialists, and even worse than them. For instance, the poor have no land to escape to. All they have are small farming lands which are no longer fertile, while the farms with rich soil are allocated to the bourgeoisie who can afford to buy them (Ngugi, 1977). Ngugi shows how the people of Ilmorog are suffering because they do not have enough land to settle with their families and animals. The land they possess is not enough for cultivation, and the masses fail to produce good harvests that can sustain their families until the next one. Besides, the elite keep on grabbing the little land that the masses still have. Waweru and his father are driven away from their family land in Muranga by powerful *mbari* landlords. The promise of land to the landless is not fulfilled. Strangely enough, the very people who promised to return the land to the owners are grabbing it from them. Namhila (1997) says that in an independent country she expects freedom from activities that bring unfair redistribution of all the wealth in the country.

The people of Kenya screamed for joy at Independence but in return they received the sorrows of exploitation. As Aidoo writes, “There is no use in screaming about independence by driving away the colonialists if you do not make independence meaningful” (2007, p. 134). In the context of the dynamics of the neo-colonial situation, Ngugi calls for a new socio-political order. He, therefore, presents Kenyan independence as “post-colonial betrayals with all its wounds from the pre-colonial faithfulness” (Ngugi, 1981b, p. 46).

After Kenya had gained its political independence in 1963, Kenyan nationals inherited the leadership of the country from the colonisers with the expectation that the new leadership would be more concerned than the British colonisers about the socio-economic welfare of all the Kenyans. The people expected comradeship and the spirit of unity that existed during the war of the liberation to continue and gain momentum in an independent Kenya but, to the surprise of many, the former leadership indirectly still controls the affairs of the country and the new leaders are aping them. The experience of the new leaders aping the former ones evoked the idea in Ngugi to start criticising the new neo-colonial regime, using literature as his means of conscientising the people of Kenya about the postcolonial exploitation unfolding in his country.

3.13 CONCLUSION

The analysis in this chapter shows that the independence of Kenya is mainly dominated by exploitation, oppression, self-interest, division of classes, the lack of land, unemployment, office abuse and corruption. Women are sexually abused by the elite and some have accepted prostitution as a way of life and a business that makes a great deal of profit within a short period of time. It is reported in *Devil on the Cross* that Boss Kihara wants to buy Wariinga’s piece of land in order to build a tourist hotel where prostitution is to be promoted to cater for the sexual

gratification of tourists and foreign dignitaries (Ngugi, 1982a). The new Kenyan elite are aping the Western system, even in things, such as prostitution, which they clearly know are immoral. The life style of the elite has a great influence on the socio-economic relationship they have with the masses.

Another revelation is that there is instability in Kenya, especially within the borders of Ilmorog. The inhabitants of Ilmorog have vowed to take the law into their own hands. The land grabbers are chased away and their houses and farms are burnt down by the exploited. Wanja plans to eliminate the three directors of the Theng'eta Brewery while Munira burns down Wanja's brothel where the three directors are all killed before Wanja can fulfill her ambition. Finally, the four protagonists, Karega, Munira, Wanja and Abdulla, are arrested for the murder of the three directors of the Theng'eta Brewery. The police are everywhere, to search for criminals who are bringing instability to Ilmorog. All the instances mentioned above prove that Ilmorog is facing a period of instability after Kenya has achieved its independence. Ngugi associates instability with the lack of economic development in the country. He further says that, once a country does not grow economically, there can be no democracy and, once democracy is not in a country, the country is forced to move to dictatorship in order to secure and maintain the positions of the oppressors. Therefore, in his fiction, Ngugi states that such bad social and political conditions imply the need to change. Using Ngugi's three selected postcolonial novels, this chapter has pointed out the influences of neo-colonial elitism in Kenya. The chapter has shown that Ngugi focuses much on the political issues, maybe because of the influence of the Marxist ideology. Hence, through this experience and the influence of the Marxist ideology, he sees neo-colonial exploitation in his country from a political perspective.

Analysing the facts that allude to elitism in the three selected novels, the chapter has also demonstrated that Ngugi considers the capitalist economic system, which the colonisers brought to Kenya, as the main cause for the problems that are being experienced by Kenyans. He shows that capitalism has an adverse effect on the the Kenyan elite, because social, cultural and religious institutions are becoming corrupt and used for financial gain by the people in power, with the assistance of the West. However, Ngugi still challenges the perpetrators of exploitation, and urges the masses to continue the struggle until they win the battle. This chapter has examined and analysed the aspects of social and political structures within the Kenyan society focusing on elitism and its influence.

CHAPTER 4: NEO-COLONIAL EXPLOITATION IN *PETALS OF BLOOD*, *DEVIL ON THE CROSS* AND *MATIGARI*

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the influence of neo-colonialism as portrayed in the three novels studied was discussed extensively. Throughout the chapter, the study attempted to explain aspects related to elitism and their influence on the socio-economic and political structures of postcolonial Kenya. It has been observed that one of the trademarks of European imperialism is the imposition of the capitalist economy.

The chapter has revealed that neo-colonialism replicates the colonial structures in most cases, even though the Kenyans are supposed to be in charge of the affairs of their independent country. This neo-colonial phase has been dominated by ill feelings against the ruling political class whose members assumed power when the colonialists reigned. Ngugi blames the dependence of his independent country on the departed colonialists as the reason why Kenyans are failing to gain the benefits of their independence; thus, their post-independence expectations have largely remained unfulfilled. While the ruling political elite enjoy power, the aspirations of the common people, the masses, have not been given the desired attention; because there is massive corruption in the country, unemployment has escalated, causing some unemployed youths to indulge in a variety of crimes.

Ngugi traced the theme of neo-colonial elitism from colonial times to the post-independence period when he wrote *Petals of Blood* (1977), *Devil on the Cross* (1982a) and *Matigari* (1989). Essentially, these three novels were written based on Ngugi's persuasion of the Marxist ideology where the social problems of the masses become the theme because of his sympathy for them.

He wrote these three novels as a way of conscientising the masses about what the ruling group is doing, motivating and persuading them to use the power they have to fight corruption. At the same time, he advises them to act within the parameters of their knowledge and power. *Petals of Blood*, *Devil on the Cross* and *Matigari* reveal the efforts of the masses to free themselves from exploitation by the elite. Ngugi regards such efforts as a positive step towards the creation of a future social order which is not discriminatory and class-based.

During the pre-independence era, there were two groups of people in each colonised country, namely the colonisers and the colonised. Though living in one country, these two groups lived distinctively from each other. After independence, most of the African countries fell back into that same pattern, and Kenya is no exception. Ngugi shows some shortcomings of independence in Kenya, such as social, political and economic betrayal, as depicted by the protagonists in the three novels. This study argues that the protagonists and antagonists in the three novels portray the situation in contemporary Kenya. Because of the elite's blind imitation of the West, they refuse to identify with the common Kenyans and consistently exploit the masses. Through these three postcolonial novels, Ngugi presents the new elite leadership in Kenya as misguided and a threat to the country's true liberation. He thus uses fiction to unmask the actions of the new ruling elite which eventually forces the masses to resort to a revolutionary struggle. Therefore, each of the three novels is examined according to its contribution to the story of neo-colonial elitism, the exploitation of the masses and how the masses react to exploitation by the elite.

4.2 PETALS OF BLOOD

The novel, *Petals of Blood* (1977), begins in *medias res* with the arrest of four protagonists, Wanja, Munira, Karega and Abdulla, who are accused of the murder of three directors of the

Theng'eta Brewery: Mzigo, Chui and Kimeria. Ilmorog has grown from a traditional Kenyan village to a modern industrial town. The modernisation of the area brings changes which Ngugi regards as examples of neo-colonisation. Ngugi does not accept the urbanisation of Ilmorog because it has destroyed its original beauty and, as such, brought suffering to its inhabitants. This can be witnessed when Ngugi gives glimpses of the pre-urban Ilmorog by stating that Ilmorog's community experienced prosperity, commitment and a sense of belonging before the intrusion of foreign values:

Ilmorog has not always been a small cluster village with mud huts lived in by only old men and women and children with occasional visits from wandering herdsmen. It had had its glory with thriving villages with a huge population of sturdy peasants who had tamed nature's forests and breaking the soil between their fingers, had brought forth every type of crop to nourish the sons and daughters of men. How they toiled together ... how they all fervently prayed for rain and deliverance In those days, there were no vultures in the sky waiting for the carcasses of dead workers or insect-flies feeding on the fat and blood of un-suspecting toilers. (Ngugi, 1977, p. 120)

The focus of neo-colonialism in *Petals of Blood* is land and is based on social abuse, oppression, exploitation and injustice. The novel shows the failure of the ruling elite to meet the masses' needs concerning land ownership adequately. The elite still maintain their connections with the departed colonisers, thus, creating a rift between the middle class and the bourgeoisie. A speech given by Nyakinyua contrasts the working class and the elite; this motivates her to agree to make a trip to Nairobi:

I think we should go. It is our time to make things happen. There was a time when things happened the way we in Ilmorog wanted them to happen. We had power over the movement of our limbs. We made up our own words and sang them and we danced to them. But there came a time when this power was taken from us. We danced yes, but somebody else called out the words and the song. They ate our forest. Then they sent for our young men. They went on swallowing our youth. Ours is only to bear in order for the city to take ... that is why Ilmorog must go there and see this *Ndamathia* that only takes but never gives back. (Ngugi, 1977, pp 115-116)

Nyakinyua argues that, once they are in the city, they should surround it and demand back their share and, once they have it, they will be able to sing and dance to their songs as in the past. She relates how, in olden days, the warriors would follow their stolen goats and cattle and would not return until they managed to recover their stolen wealth. Likewise, the Ilmorogians' wealth has been stolen; it is their turn to bring back that which belongs to them. Ngugi shows that bureaucracy is responsible for the neo-colonial exploitation of the masses in connection with the appropriation of land by the capitalists. They grab the land from the peasants and later build structures that bring them much money. According to Cabral (1980), the capitalist system allows the rich to become richer while the poor become poorer. As a result, the elite become the 'petty bourgeoisie' whose culture is to exploit their own people. This is seen with Nderi wa Riera, the Member of Parliament (MP) representing the community of Ilmorog. Nderi wa Riera owns houses which he manages to build from the money he collects from the people of Ilmorog. The houses are rented out at a high cost and, in the end; he becomes one of the richest people in the area (Ngugi, 1977, p. 85). Mzigo, Chui and Kimeria, as well, grab land from the masses and turn it into commercial farms which make them wealthier. The three 'giant businessmen' who are

also the directors of the Theng'eta Brewery continue to exploit the masses, especially the women, until they are eliminated by Munira when he burns down Wanja's brothel.

4.2.1 THE JOURNEY TO NAIROBI CITY

Ngugi relates a drought that has hit Ilmorog. The drought brings substantial damage to the community of Ilmorog. Karega, therefore, proposes that the Ilmorogians should march to Nairobi, where their MP lives, in order to confront him over problems they are facing. The proposal is accepted, and a group of volunteers march to the city in search of their representative, Nderi wa Riera. The result of the journey to the city changes Ilmorog completely. The government starts to pay attention to the village. The rich, together with Kimeria, Mzigo and Chui, bring their businesses, such as housing estates, banks, factories and tarmac roads, to Ilmorog. These developments change the traditional way of life in the area to that of a modern one. Owing to the modernisation of the area, most of the peasants lose their ancestral land to the local elite and their international counterparts. All that is left for the Ilmorogians to survive is to work on the farms and plantations of the elite. Their life is full of misery, inequality, uncertainty and inadequate housing. The new Ilmorog is now divided along class lines. There is a place called Golden Heights or Cape Town with big houses, and only the rich live there. There is also a place for the downtrodden in society, called New Jerusalem. The division along class lines noticed in *Petals of Blood* (1977) is one way how neo-colonial elitism impacts the socio-economic and political structures in Kenya.

Karega, who has been dismissed from his teaching post, leaves Ilmorog, and later comes back with a new vision for the community of his home town, Ilmorog. He becomes one of the employees of the Theng'eta Breweries, and this gives him a good opportunity to campaign for a

workers' strike against exploitation by the employers of the company. He manages to arouse the consciousness of the peasants and the workers at Theng'eta Brewery to stage a strike against low wages, which ends in Karega's dismissal from his work at the company. Karega becomes the leader of the trade union, organising activities that advocate for the mobilisation of the workers and peasants to get rid of the society of exploitation. His union activities mobilise the workers who defy the employers of the Theng'eta Breweries. Karega has planted the idea of a struggle for freedom from exploitation in the minds of workers, students and peasants, and Ngugi hopes the struggle in *Petals of Blood* will continue and bring "petals of revolutionary love" to the Kenyans (Ngugi, 1977, p. 225). Through Karega, Ngugi demonstrates that the Ilmorogians can still go back to their original life where there was equality in sharing the resources of their ancestral land. The masses are fighting to bring about change that will be good for all the people of Kenya, while the rich strive to maintain control over the institutions of the government, so that they can continue to live in luxury.

The delegation from Ilmorog finds the journey to be a sad one because of the cruelty of the people they come in contact with in the city. The delegation faces class division and humiliation from the leaders who are supposed to sympathise with them. Once in Nairobi, the delegation passes through Blue Hills, the place where the rich and over-privileged elite live. In Blue Hills they meet Kimeria, who is now known as Mr Hawkins, a typical representative of the elite. Since he is from their area, they have high hopes that he is going to welcome them but quite the opposite happens. The delegation is asked "not to show their dirty faces in his area of jurisdiction anymore" (Ngugi, 1977, p. 99). Furthermore, the delegation is also ill-treated by a household of foreign priests who deny them anything to eat or drink, except prayer. Generally, the priests are people who have come from Christian lands, eager to convert the people through their faith and

education, yet in Kenya, the priests practise religious fallacy. Therefore, Ngugi implicates the church in the exploitation and oppression of the masses as is depicted in all three novels selected for this study. In *Petals of Blood*, for instance, Ngugi shows the treatment of the delegation from Ilmorog by Jerrod Brown, a black clergyman. He shows Jerrod's actions as the failure of Christianity in Kenya, and that such failures contribute to the rise of oppression and the exploitation of the poor.

The delegation's final disappointment is experienced when they visit the office of their MP, Nderi wa Riera. They are told to wait for a day or so by his secretary because he has gone to Mombasa for a business inspection and investigation of two tourist resorts which have been advertised as special places while, in reality, the MP is just around the city enjoying life with his girlfriends and colleagues. Therefore, Ngugi remarks, "Just now, people in the city and other places were drinking and laughing and eating and making love out of excess of fullness, and here people were fainting with hunger and malnutrition" (Ngugi, 1977, p. 112). On hearing about the problems which are faced by the people of Ilmorog, Nderi immediately concludes that their mission is nothing but a plot to smear "his good name", then remarks:

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 – those Muthungucu, Mwomboko – things like that. Our culture, our African culture and spiritual values should form the true foundation for this nation. We shall, we must, send a strong representative delegation to Gatundu. (Ngugi, 1977, p. 182)

After his short speech to the delegation, the MP leaves them unexpectedly, hurrying to attend to his own issues which are less urgent and unimportant when compared to the issue of the Ilmorog delegation. One of the members of the delegation angrily shouted at his behaviour, “Those are the people who are misusing our freedom” and, outraged by Nderi’s lack of willingness to help them, the delegation throws stones at him, but to their dismay, they are arrested by the police (Ngugi, 1977, p. 183). Then, what Munira was unable to explain fully to the pupils in the field about the worm-eaten bean flowers which can no longer bear fruit, is revealed in his eyes! The peasants of Ilmorog can no longer do anything for themselves because of being handicapped by their lack of resources. Ngugi likens them to those bean flowers that are eaten by the worms to the extent of becoming unable to bear fruit (Ngugi, 1977, p. 183).

In like manner, the delegation gradually becomes aware of Nderi’s cunning behaviour and associates it with that of the leaders in their society, who still play the game of colonialism where leaders can rob their subordinates of their sweat, and then “deny them the right to air and sunlight that can cease them to grow to beautiful, full flowers” (Ngugi, 1977, p. 22). The MP’s reaction brings about a turning point in Munira’s life. His life changes from indifference to an awareness of how life is in his time under the leadership of the new ruling elite. At the same time, Karega also informs the delegation of the oppression and exploitation that are taking place throughout Kenya. He uses the outcome of their encounter with the MP to urge the delegation to start a struggle for liberation from the laws of exploitation. He furthers his argument by saying that Kenya needs higher laws which are pure, eternal, absolute and unchanging, so that all Kenyans can enjoy the fruits of independence.

Equally, Munira becomes a different person after the experience in the city. Convinced that the world is full of corruption, he takes it upon himself to bring others to see the light that he has

seen in the city. He has discovered a new world, and now he wants others to see that world too. In so doing, he can save his people from their plight. His opinion is that the people who can bring the change are the exploited. Munira's idea of a new world that can replace the present, corrupt one is in relation to Ngugi's plea with the masses that they continue with the liberation struggle against neo-colonialism until a new world without exploiting leaders is put in place. Munira, therefore, burns Wanja's brothel which he considers as "the place of the Devil" (Ngugi, 1977, p. 299). According to Ngugi (1977), Munira's actions has drifted him into irrationality and has therefore become a radical through the mirror of religion by burning down Wanja's brothel, though his understanding is that what he has done constitutes the freedom of the exploited.

Furthermore, Ngugi portrays Munira's burning of Wanja's brothel as a symbol of the failure of the ruling Kenyan elite to carry out the socio-economic changes expected of independence. The ruling elite are failing to execute people-oriented decisions on their own without involving the West. What they do, is to follow the laws of colonialism which bring class division in society. Munira is thus embittered by the fact that his colleagues are being unfaithful to him for falling in love with Wanja, yet at the same time, he claims that he has burnt down Wanja's brothel to save his colleagues from the "evil spirit which was in that hut" that killed Mzigo, Kimeria and Chui (Ngugi, 1977, p. 299). Ironically, his only expression of comradeship is his lust and sexual desire for Wanja's body, and not to serve his friends. Ngugi, therefore, argues against such false justification as it does not bring the good harvest of the struggle.

On the other hand, Ngugi also portrays Karega as a prototype of the revolution that he is advocating for among the masses. Karega understands the situation of the masses because he is in the same shoes with them. The protagonist, Karega, comes from a poor family in which his mother is the sole supporter of the family. Karega and his mother are among the numerous

squatters who live on Brother Ezekiel's property. Unlike Munira, he is convinced from the beginning, even before meeting Nderi wa Riera in Nairobi, that the life of the poor is full of suffering and exploitation by the rich. The journey only introduces him to the lawyer who assists him in acquiring more knowledge regarding the search for the meaning of neo-colonialism. In the lawyer's books he uncovers the political aspects of the masses' plight and their exploitation by the elite brought about by the capitalist economy which obscures the forms of oppression. He makes it clear to the investigating Inspector Geoffrey, during his interrogation in prison that he will continue to strive for the liberation of the oppressed until they attain freedom from their oppressors. Thus; Karega becomes the herald for change regarding new possibilities for the outcome of the struggle that the masses are engaged in.

Karega's past experiences and the information he receives from the lawyer's books assist him in understanding what exploitation means and how the exploited can come out of it. Applying the Marxist ideology, Karega concludes that change in Kenya can only be attained by sensitising the exploited community regarding the cunning behaviour of their leaders. He, therefore, encourages the masses not to resort to spears and arrows in the struggle for their freedom, as they had already done that, but rather sing the songs of courage and hope, and continue with mass demonstrations; in that way, they will end the oppression and exploitation in their country. Karega encourages the masses not "to fear any type of harassment by the authority" but to continue the struggle until "a human kingdom would come to Kenya" (Ngugi, 1977, p. 298). Through Karega, Ngugi shows that independent Kenya is now a world where there is no "goodness, beauty, strength and courage but only cunning leaders who have created an appalling world where monopoly rules" (Ngugi, 1977, p. 299). He repeatedly calls for the struggle, striving for a new world and a total transformation of the systems of inequality and oppression in Kenya.

Wanja is another character who features much in *Petals of Blood*. She becomes a victim at the hands of Kimeria who impregnates and then dumps her. Wanja later regrets her actions when she says:

Boys are always more confident about the future than us girls. They seem to know what they want to become later in life: whereas with us girls the future seems vague. It is as if we know that no matter what efforts we put into our studies, our road will always lead to the kitchen and the bedroom. (Ngugi, 1977, p. 37)

Moreover, Wanja's pregnancy sends her down the road to prostitution. She goes deeper than she expected into the life of sex and alcohol, a life that undermines her personality. She, furthermore, builds a brothel where she traps men from all corners of Ilmorog and beyond. She manages to be involved with Munira, Karega and Abdulla, even though they live in the same vicinity. She only runs away from the prostitution business when her brothel is set on fire by Munira who kills Kimeria, Mzigo and Chui. But the killing of the three directors becomes as a total redemption from the evil ones. Wanja's sexual abuse becomes a symbol of the Kenyan government failing to implement self-governance, according to which each class group can be treated equally. Wanja is deprived of her womanhood and left to wander alone with an illegitimate child while, at the beginning of their love affair, Kimeria promised to marry her.

The government also fails to honour the promises of independence where everyone would be treated equally. As the novel reveals, the independence expectations of the people and their socio-economic and cultural realities are shattered by the elite clinging to the western life style. They ridicule and tread upon the rights of the masses. Thus, independence turns out to be a mere continuation of colonial rule. Wanja is able to eliminate Kimeria, Mzigo and Chui without fail

because of their obsession regarding their position and status in society. When she invites them to her brothel, they find the invitation to be in accordance with the respect they are accorded in Ilmorog, and cannot think that they might be trapped by a prostitute like Wanja. The novel, *Petals of Blood* (1977), reveals how the four protagonists (Munira, Karega, Wanja and Abdulla) assist in the struggle for freedom from the ruling elite. The protagonists challenge the establishment of an unjust social order by the government and to some extent, arouse the masses to an awareness of their plight.

4.3. DEVIL ON THE CROSS

The combative spirit against neo-colonialism which starts in *Petals of Blood* gains momentum in *Devil on the Cross*. Just like *Petals of Blood* (1977), the novel, *Devil on the Cross* (1982a) encapsulates Ngugi's critique of neo-colonialism in Kenya through fiction. The novel critiques the fossilisation of Kenya and the Kenyan people by the elite's exploitation. Like *Petals of Blood*, the story sets off in Ilmorog and Nairobi. It focuses on six protagonists who embark on a journey to Ilmorog in a matatu. These six are Wariinga, Wangari, Muturi, Gatuiria, Mwireri wa Mukiraai and Mwaura, the matatu driver. On their way, they mysteriously discover that they are all invited to the Devil's Feast in Ilmorog. The journey reveals the experiences of each protagonist's life in postcolonial Kenya while trying to make ends meet.

Devil on the Cross (1982a) relates Wariinga's predicament as his life is devastated by circumstances. Wariinga suffers a series of misfortunes, maltreatment and deprivation at the hands of men of high status but who behave irresponsibly in the society. Firstly, she is used and later abused and abandoned by the Rich Man of Ngorika. During her school life, she is trapped in a love affair with the Rich Man of Ngorika who promises her a life of enjoyment once she

marries him. With all the sweet words of love that he uses, Wariinga falls into his trap, thinking that the old man means what he says. He bribes her with some gifts, such as money, riding in a BMW car, taking her to expensive hotels around Ilmorog and even promises to marry her in substitution of his current wife who has now grown old. Life seems to hold a better future for Wariinga. She falls pregnant and The Rich Man of Ngorika deserts her. Just like what happens to Wanja in *Petals of Blood*, when Wariinga reveals the news of her pregnancy to the Rich Man of Ngorika, their relationship turns sour. The Rich Man of Ngorika becomes furious and humiliates Wariinga with abusive words, “stupid girl, why didn’t you use family planning, take that rubbish to the owner I am not responsible, from today never mention my name or talk to me or else I will finish you up, go and abort that rubbish” (Ngugi, 1982a, p. 146). As a consequence of the pregnancy, the Rich Man of Ngorika takes her back to where he used to pick her up, dumps her there and vanishes into thin air. It is this state of affair that makes Wariinga to seek redress and take sides with the victims of exploitation.

Failing to understand her predicament, Wariinga decides to commit suicide because she is afraid to tell her mother about her situation. According to her culture, to conceive a child outside marriage is an embarrassment to the family. The once happy girl, before meeting the Old Rich Man of Ngorika, becomes miserable and her future is destroyed by the sexual exploitation of one of the elite. Wariinga goes to her aunt who reassures her that she can still do better if she learns a lesson from her predicament. Forthwith the council by her aunt, Wariinga later trains as a automobile engeer. Wariinga’s realisation to train as an automobile engineer shows how the underprivileged people can work hard to improve their condition in spite of the exploitation by the powers that reduce them to nothingness.

Wariinga pulls herself together and when the baby is born, she enrolls for a secretarial diploma which she completes successfully. With her secretarial diploma, Wariinga acquires a job at the Champion Construction Company in Nairobi under Boss Kihara. She becomes happy again, thinking that all will be well since she is now working. Eventually her happiness becomes a nightmare when her boss makes sexual advances on her. She turns him down. She is then dismissed from her only job. While still figuring out what to do after losing her job, her landlord informs her of an increase in the rent of her room to which Wariinga declines since she is no longer working. In a few minutes, the landlord returns with two thugs who throw her and her belongings out of the room. They also threaten to finish her off if she ever tries to report the matter to the authorities (Ngugi, 1982a). When Wariinga reports her dismissal and why she has been dismissed to her boyfriend, John Kimwana, he abandons her, accusing her of being Boss Kihara's mistress. Having nowhere to stay and no one to lean on, she decides to go back to her parents in Ilmorog. *Devil on the Cross* exposes the plight of the masses and the workers as can be seen with what happens to Wariinga. In light of what happens to Wariinga, Ngugi commits himself to the masses of Kenya and not the elite who fail to build a successful society along the lines of capitalist ideology.

Wariinga is dismissed from her work and at the same time kicked out of a tiny room by her landlord. The only option left for her is to go back to her parents in Ilmorog. On the matatu, Wariinga is joined by Wangari, Muturi, Mwireri wa Mukirai, Gatuiria and the driver, Mwaura. It is important to realise that all the passengers in the matatu bus are invited to attend a Devil's Feast in Ilmorog. In this case, it is observed that wa Mukirai knows more about the invitation cards that each of these passengers have received because he informs his colleagues in the bus that the feast is not organised by Satan but by the organisation of modern theft and robbery in

Ilmorog to commemorate a visit by foreign guests from an association of the thieves and robbers of the Western world (Ngugi, 1982a). It is during the journey that Wangari, one of the passengers, tells about her nightmare in Nairobi. She informs her fellow travellers on the matatu how she was apprehended by the police when she was moving around Nairobi looking for a job. She was accused of moving around without carrying a passbook, a rule that existed during colonial times by Britain's regime. This shows that colonial rules are still practiced in a free Kenya.

The most compelling evidence is that the creation of the Devils' feast, to which the six protagonists are invited, is to reveal the strategies, tactics and motives of how the national thieves and robbers and their international allies rob and steal from the masses without the masses' knowledge. At the feast, the boastful Kenyan bourgeoisie appreciate their alliance with the foreign representatives for coming to this gathering. The chairperson of the gathering points out that the foreigners are experts in modern theft and robbery; therefore, the local thieves and robbers will learn more if they unite with them. The foreigners are in attendance at the Devils' Feast to show that they still rule Kenya indirectly. The involvement of foreigners at the meeting confirms the Marxist observation that in most cases of a neo-colonial state, the administration policies are often controlled by the imperialist powers for their own benefit (Hobsbawm, 2011).

The presenters at the cave support the involvement of foreigners in such meetings as the one at the cave so that the foreigners can "perfect the skills of improving the economy of the country and hasten its ascent into the heaven of foreign commodities and other delights" (Ngugi, 1982a, p. 87). The encouragement and appreciation of the feast are seen in the introductory speech of the leader of international representatives of thieves and robbers when he boastfully says:

We have come from many countries, far and wide: USA, England, Germany and the Scandinavian countries. We have come as friends to you as the local watchdogs who guard our investments. Though you were recently initiated into the ways of modern theft and robbery, you seem to grasp and master the essentials quickly. This is assurance to us that if you continue on the same pace, you will soon be real experts in modern theft and robbery just like us. (Ngugi, 1982a, p. 88)

Notwithstanding the utterances of the presenters at the cave, Wangari decides to invite the police to come and arrest the competitors of theft and robbery who are gathered at the cave, admitting that they are the watchdogs of imperialism hired by the imperialists to represent them in Kenya. But when the police arrive, they arrest Wangari, accusing her of being a liar who has no respect and spreading rumours and false accusations against successful businessmen and women whose responsibility it is to bring wealth to the country. After arresting her, the police assure the robbers and thieves of their continuous protection. The police then encourage the thieves and robbers to continue to steal and rob the masses because they are doing a good job regarding development in the country as Kenya needs people like them who work hard to eradicate poverty in the country (Ngugi, 1982a). Wangari's agonies show that the execution of law and order in post-independence Kenya depends on the decisions of those in power. The irony is that those who obey the law are punished as long as what they grieve upon affects the welfare of the elite. Because of the law that is not correctly followed, there is always exploitation followed by conflict between the elite and the masses, the exploited. Wangari is not only arrested but is brutally beaten by the police. Ngugi, therefore, argues that the independence of Kenya is just window dressing but in reality, it does not exist (Ngugi, 1982a).

Wangari is arrested, together with Muturi, a worker and a student who are accused of leading a strike to chase away the thieves and robbers at the cave. The strike leaves five members of the masses and two policemen dead. In court, the judge rules in favour of Muturi. The worker and the student are released to the joy of the workers, peasants and the students. Wanja was immediately released after being severely beaten by the police. But this does not please Mwaura and his colleagues. After two weeks the police re-arrest Muturi, the worker and a student because of the accusations labelled against the three by Mwaura. After the re-arrest of the three and the assassination of Mwireri wa Mukiraai, Mwaura is well paid for a job well done, and a month later he is able to buy three brand-new vehicles which he converts into matatus and forms a transport company known as Matatu Matata Matamu Modern Transport Company. The person who served as the master of ceremonies at the feast at the cave becomes one of the directors of the company, while Kimeendeeri wa Kanyuanjii, one of the thieves and robbers that presented a speech at the cave, becomes a shareholder. Mwaura receives the money, with which he buys the brand-new vehicles, from the leaders for giving them more information by labelling Muturi and his two colleagues a threat to their administration. The authorities believe that if Muturi, the teacher and the student are left moving freely in society, they may organise more strikes that may bring their government down. Mwaura's actions show how the elite exploit and eliminate the masses for their own gain.

Wariinga opens a garage after graduating with a diploma in mechanical engineering. When Wariinga's garage starts to boast a reasonable surplus, the forces of exploitation, that is Boss Kihara and his foreign business partners from Japan, USA, and Germany, bribe the Town Council and buys the garage and the surrounding area so that they can build a tourist hotel that can be used as a place of prostitution to attract more tourists (Ngugi, 1982a). Boss Kihara owns

almost all the land in Nairobi and Ilmorog but because of his greed, he still wants to grab the only piece of land that Wariinga owns. Ngugi sees Boss Kihara's action as exploitation and oppression of the poor. Nevertheless, the students and the peasants vow to help Wariinga recover her property. After hearing what has befallen Wariinga, one of the workers says, "It will be terrible if we let them cut off our hands without offering any assistance" to recover Wariinga's garage. What happens with Wariinga's garage confirms what Lilemba (2003) refers to as "Power is Sweet" and further comments that it is a common tradition in Africa that once one gains power, it becomes so sweet that it blinds him or her so that he or she fails to differentiate between bad and good, "as long as it pleases you, it becomes sweet" (p. 33). Granted that Boss Kihara has power to do whatever he wants to do, he decides to sell Wariinga's only garage without consultation with the owner.

The gathering of The National Organisation of Robbers and Thieves of Ilmorog and those of the international representatives at the cave in Ilmorog reveal issues pertaining to how the elite exploit the masses. At the feast, each presenter reveals how he exploits the masses. One such presenter is Gitutu wa Gataanguru whose Christian name is Rottenborough Groundflesh Shitland Narrow Isthmus Joint Stock Brown (Ngugi, 1982a). Gitutu reveals how cunning he is in getting the money that has made him rich. His riches come from his father's ideas about getting rich quickly. His father was once a friend to all members of the tribunals in Iciciri district who used to judge the people unfairly. Most of the people lost their lands when his father was still in control of the Iciciri district. His father acquired much land through bribery and grabbing. Where the poor did not have land to pay him for their cases to be acquitted, he used to demand their daughters to be his wives. In that way he ended up married to many wives. His luck was that, when independence came, he was among the elite group of Kenya (Ngugi, 1982a). It goes

without saying that the lives of the competitors at the cave are committed to wealth and power, and as the result, money, power, land and property are what count.

Entrenched in his father's advice, Gitutu starts some small businesses and follows his father's words, "a salary is not enough for a person with a family, emulate the cunningness of the white man who came to Kenya holding a Bible in his left hand and a gun in his right hand then stole the people's cattle and goats and their fertile land under the cover of fines and taxes, robbing people the labour of their own hands" (Ngugi, 1982a, p. 102). Thus, Gitutu uses the same cunning to acquire his riches, making a tremendous profit from the poor. Through building small houses on the land he grabs from the poor, he makes headlines in newspapers and Government gazettes as one of the richest men in Kenya. People start to praise him as a man of his word, who has love for the poor by selling plots at a cheaper price that they can afford. The irony is that the poor are ignorantly being cheated because the houses that Gitutu sells are built on the land that once belonged to them. Gitutu then boasts, encouraging his colleagues to follow his tactics, by saying:

My fame is fanned and spread like fire in the wilderness in a dry season. It is said I am a man of his words, who is able to get land and sells it to them cheaply; you see what can be achieved by cunning? My friends, when we reach the stage of selling soil to peasants in tins and pots, we will really be making money! Imagine the whole population holding trays or plates or baskets, queuing for soil at your place! Later they will hang their grains of soil from their roofs or verandas and plant in the potatoes to bribe their crying children to be quiet". (Ngugi, 1982a, pp. 105- 107)

But Mwireri wa Mukiraaai decides to differ from the rest of the presenters though he is one of the thieves and robbers. He urges his friends to stop exploiting their own people by stealing the little that they have but his plea is misunderstood by his business partners. He agrees to robbing one's people but this should be done by taking over those businesses owned by the foreigners so that the wealth stays in the country, and the economy of the country can be boosted (Ngugi, 1982a). Mwireri's friends hail insults and threats at him, and a loud noise follows his presentation. As a result of his resignation from the business of stealing and robbing, he is eliminated by the Devil's Angels, a hit squad used by the thieves and robbers to eliminate those who oppose their decisions for fear that their secrets may be publicly revealed. With this in mind, Mwireri is eliminated by the ruling elite to avoid exposure of their activities.

The climax of exploitation is the one presented by Kimendeeri's scheme which is revealed to Wariinga in a dream where the Devil proposes exporting blood, sweat, energy, as well as the physical bodies of the masses, so that these can be used as a fertilizer for the soil to enhance the productivity of the riches of the elite (Ngugi, 1982a). Ngugi uses the proposal of the Devil to Wariinga in a dream to show the extreme oppression of the masses by the elite, where the ruling elite feed on the blood of the poor. Therefore, Ngugi (1981a) classifies them as a class of people that are oppressive and do not show remorse for their actions. In postcolonial Kenya, it is the local ruling elite that are oppressing their own people, not the whites.

In another dream, Wariinga is tormented when she sees the Devil crucified by the masses who are fighting for freedom but, ironically, the devil is resuscitated by the new elite. Wariinga's dream refers to the time when Kenya was still colonised by Britain. Instead of the foreigners disappearing from Kenya, there are still those Kenyans who assist them to stay through collaboration with them in the affairs of the country. Foreigners still own businesses in Kenya

and the new leaders still consult with them, as can be witnessed in the Devil's feast at the cave. So, the happenings at the cave show that the foreigners still control Kenya socially, economically and politically though indirectly.

At the end of the novel, misfortune befalls Gaturia who loses both his future wife (Wariinga) and his father, who is killed by Wariinga at a time that is supposed to be the happiest of his life. The guests are confused why Wariinga has killed her future father-in-law. When the truth is revealed, Gaturia becomes angry at what his father has done to Wariinga, especially, when he learns that he has a sister he does not know! The Old Rich Man of Ngorika's exploitation of Wariinga and his selfish behaviour bring suffering and pain to Wariinga, who will now spend her life in prison, her daughter Wamburi, who will be without a mother and a father, his son, Gaturia, and his wife who will now live without him. Because of the greed of the Rich Man of Ngorika, Gaturia's father, Gaturia, his son, becomes the victim of circumstances not necessarily brought by himself. As shown above, Ngugi effectively uses the novel to sensitise his audience with regards to the consequences of elitism in postcolonial Kenya.

4. 3. 1 CLASS DIVISION IN *DEVIL ON THE CROSS*

One of the issues that Ngugi addresses in *Devil on the Cross* is class division. Ngugi uses class division to characterise neo-colonial Kenya. The novel shows a distinction between the masses and the elite, which is allegorically shown by Ngugi as a struggle between the masses and the elite. Ngugi (1982a) critiques this liberation struggle between the masses and the elite as a struggle for political and economic power. For Eagleton, this struggle, which he refers to as class struggle, is a characteristic of modern capitalism which, in a sense, is "an economic structure of work and property" (2013, p. 66). In like manner, Ngugi is aware of this type of economic

system, and sees it as a rift which is dividing the two groups, the poor and the rich. As a result of the effects of this economic system, the masses continue to suffer and thus decide to demonstrate so that they can also be accorded a proper position in their country. He is also aware of the social and cultural tension which is rife between the masses and the ruling elite. Hence, Ngugi regards this social and cultural division as the basis of the social and economic structure brought by capitalism, which has bred neo-colonialism. He continuously demonstrates his disapproval of neo-colonialism in Kenya because it brings suffering to the masses. The masses live by their sweat while the elite live by the sweat of the masses (Ngugi, 1982a, p. 57). Muturi hints at the condition brought by modern capitalism when he argues:

Our lives are a battlefield on which is fought a continuous war between the forces that are pledged to confirm our humanity and those determined to dismantle it; those who strive to build a protective wall around it, and those who wish to pull it down; those who seek to mould it and those committed to breaking it up; those whose aim is to open our eyes, to make us see the light and look to tomorrow, asking ourselves about the future of our children, and those who wish to close our eyes, encouraging to care only for our stomachs today, without thinking about the tomorrow of our country. (Ngugi, 1982a, p. 53)

Ngugi calls this class division between the masses and the elite a misfortune which is tearing the two opposing classes into pieces. He terms it as “a war without spectators”, where the masses become part of the forces that have been recruited for creating, building and making humanity grow and blossom in order to nurture and create heaven for the elite while the elite become the forces that destruct, dismantle, harass and oppress the humanity of the masses, creating hell for them to live in. Therefore, Ngugi sees two types of people in Kenya: those whose hearts are built

by the clan of parasites and evil, who are the elite, and those, whose hearts are built by the clan of producers and good heart, who are the masses.

What is more is that Kenya has moved from one oppressive colonial regime to another, which is now the neo-colonial regime led by the natives of Kenya and not the foreigners. The elite practise corruption, and because of corruption exercised by the government, there is continuous economic inequality between the ruling forces and the masses where the masses, as the lower class, are always disadvantaged. The fact that there are two different residential areas where the two opposing classes live is testimony of a social division and economic gap that has been created between the masses and the elite. Ngugi shows clearly that the elite live in the Ilmorog Golden Heights residential area, with good and clean air, with big homes for the wealthy and powerful, while the other area for the masses, New Jerusalem, is wretched and full of slums (Ngugi, 1982a). From the description of the two residential areas, it becomes clear that there is class division and an economic gap between the elite and the masses. Significantly, *Devil on the Cross* shows that neo-colonial Kenya is dominated by the local elite whose conduct and actions bring most social and economic changes.

In addition, in *Devil on the Cross*, the masses are represented by Muturi, Wariinga and Wangari. These are the ones exploited by the elite with their capitalist social system which, according to Ngugi (1982a), was imported to Kenya by its former colonisers and now takes centre stage in neo-colonial Kenya. On the other hand, there is Kimeria, Boss Kihara, the Rich Man of Ngorika and the presenters at the cave who are the robbers and thieves representing the new elite with the political and economic power; they are the rulers of contemporary Kenya. Though the elite are in the minority, they are able to exploit the masses and the peasants because of the power they have. Because they are rich, they manipulate the authority, the law and the poor, to be on their

side. A good example is the notorious hit squad known as the Devil's Angels to which Mwaura, the matatu driver, belongs.

Moreover, this notorious organisation works for the elite in exploiting and eliminating the masses and those who side with them in the struggle against exploitation. Ngugi, therefore, uses class division and class struggle as a mirror of the situation that exists between the elite and the masses in postcolonial Kenya. What is displayed through this mirror is that the social and economic division that existed between the colonisers and the colonised is the same as that between the elite and the masses, the difference being that the neo-colonial class division is between the natives of Kenya. According to Ngugi, nothing has changed; the neo-colonial ruling elite have adopted the governance and life style of the West in which capitalism is their base of economic development.

Instantly, the elite are fascinated by the ways and actions of the former colonisers, and ape them by exploiting the masses, becoming even worse than the former colonisers, so much so that the once colonised behave worse than the colonisers in their exploitation of the masses. He cites the behaviour of the thieves and robbers at the cave as a good example of how exploitation and oppression take place in Kenya. Ngugi reveals that the thieves and robbers, who are competing at the cave for the highest position in stealing and robbing, are seen to have been influenced by the West. Their presentations appear to be pathetic and awkward when it comes to the social and cultural etiquette that appears to destroy their origins as Kenyans or, generally, as Africans (Ngugi, 2009). These robbers and thieves show that they are those who have taken the political leadership of the country directly from the British coloners and are determined to oppress the whole land.

The customs and cultural etiquette that destroys tradition is observed in the way Gaturia's family organises his wedding with Wariinga. Gaturia's father uses invitation cards to invite the guests to the wedding according to western wedding traditions. In addition, he prescribes the type of outfits guests have to wear at the wedding reception, as well as the shops where the outfits can be bought. Ngugi argues that it is dangerous for Kenyans to ape the manners of the West because they bring shame to themselves and Africans in general. Ngugi says, "It is terrible for a person to swallow foreign culture as a whole without chewing it, as a person can become a mere parrot" (Ngugi, 1977, p. 247). He reflects on the plight of postcolonial Kenya and the manifestation of colonial practices which the new leaders practise through neo-colonialism, as well as a capitalist society based on political and economic inequality between the masses and the elite. With his political experience and the influence of the ideology of Marxism, Ngugi wrote *Devil on the Cross* to reveal the class division and struggle in postcolonial Kenya without any hesitation.

4.3.2 NEO-COLONIAL ELITISM IN *DEVIL ON THE CROSS*

As already mentioned, *Devil on the Cross's* context is based on political, economic and social issues that qualify it as a novel based on a Marxist vision. The characters, which Ngugi pictures in the novel, represent both the elite and the masses of all sexes. The novel reveals the destructive effects of neo-colonialism and the system of capitalism. In addition, *Devil on the Cross* reflects Ngugi's deep concerns for the masses being exploited by both the former and new elites who have assumed power after the independence of Kenya. Ngugi's concern marries with Gugler (2011)'s ideas when he says that "the standard objection of the Marxist and socialist writers is that democracy depends much on economic, individualism and some version of elitism" (p. 11).

Ngugi portrays the elite as those who are privileged to occupy important positions within the parameters of the government and who are politically and economically stable. Ngugi uses the Devil's Feast as an attempt to show the exploitation of the masses by local and foreign companies, as well as the greed of their employers. *Devil on the Cross* exposes the greedy and nasty behaviour of the elite through what takes place at the cave. At this feast, the competitors start to believe that, for them to get richer; they should drink the blood and eat the flesh of the masses, a practice that was once committed by the colonisers (Ngugi, 1982a, p. 89). Ngugi uses the characters in *Devil on the Cross* to open the minds of the Kenyan masses to see the destructive nature of the new leaders who came on board when the colonisers were defeated.

While in Ilmorog, Wariinga works hard and obtains a qualification as an automobile engineer. Ngugi uses the scenario of Wariinga owning a garage to show how the underprivileged can improve their living conditions, despite those in power who try to reduce them to nothingness. Wariinga and her colleagues in business rent a piece of land where they erect a garage. Her society is happy and utilises the garage to its fullest. Because of this, Boss Kihara becomes jealous and envious of Wariinga. He then organises with foreign partners to buy the land where Wariinga's garage is erected. This means that Wariinga can no longer operate from this building unless Boss Kihara authorises her to do so. To prove that Boss Kihara is in control, Wariinga is never consulted regarding the new ownership of her plot. Selling Wariinga's plot to foreigners angers the society and all stand up with Wariinga and her partners to fight such corruption. Fighting and shooting erupt between the society and the elite, resulting in many of the elite, including Boss Kihara, being killed. After this incident, normal life returns to Ilmorog and Wariinga's business continues to flourish in this part of the country.

4.4 MATIGARI

Ngugi's *Matigari* can be situated in the country of the reader's choice, as it is advised in the prefatory. This study, therefore, relates the novel to the country of Kenya, the focus of this study. The story is imaginary, so are the actions and characters in the novel. The novel *Matigari* is about a man who has remained behind in the forest after the war of liberation in Kenya. He comes into the story as a man whose profile is unknown. In the story, he portrays the character of a man who has a mysterious capacity to "look old, complete with wrinkles within a minute, and young and fresh the next few minutes" (Ngugi, 1989, p. 29).

Various aspects of the exploitation of the masses are revealed in the novel. The first act of exploitation that Matigari encounters is when he sees some children who are chasing after a tractor that takes rubbish to the dumping site, since that is their only way of survival. Matigari sees them running, and decides to follow them to find out what is happening. When he reaches the dump, he finds a security guard at the entrance, sitting on a chair while the children are queuing up at the entrance. Every child has to pay a fee to the security guard as a requirement before entering the garbage site. After leaving the garbage site with one of the boys, Muriuki, whom he has rescued from being beaten by an older one, he continues his journey, looking for justice and truth in different places in Nairobi. To his surprise, he finds the security guard sharing the money collected from the boys with the driver of the tractor and two police officers. Matigari then asks, "So a handful of people still profited from the suffering of the majority, the sorrow of many being the joy of the few?" (Ngugi, 1989, p. 12). Sometimes the security guard and the tractor driver grab those good things which the boys collect from the garbage. Ngugi questions the attitude of the elite with "hardened hearts" who fail to sympathise with the poor. The police are supposed to uphold the law but they break it and choose to exploit the boys. It is revealed that

the police would beat and forbid the boys from entering the garbage site if they refuse to pay or give them what they have picked from the rubbish, claiming that the boys are thieves (Ngugi, 1989). The struggle of the kids to enter in the rubbish heap for food and pieces of clothes distinctively indicates the perpetuation of neo-colonialism by the local leaders.

After leaving the garbage site, Matigari and Muriuki come near a scrapyard where cars of all makes are heaped – Ford, Mercedes, Volkswagen, Peugeot, Volvo, Fiat and Datsun; one could easily call it the graveyard of cars (Ngugi, 1989). Then the boy shows Matigari the cemetery of cars which is their settlement, and asks him to leave as they do not want any elderly person like him to come near their compound. The reason is that elderly people, who usually come into their scrapyard, beat them and take what they have collected from the garbage site. Therefore, they do not trust anyone older than them. Similarly, the same mistrust existed during colonialism between those who were loyal to the colonisers and those who were against.

But Matigari's mission is to liberate 'his family', the people of Kenya, from exploitation in all its manifestations; therefore, he cannot just go back without addressing the boys regarding their plight. He wants to inform them that their suffering will soon be over if they join him to find justice and truth in Kenya. But when the boys see him coming towards them, they throw stones at him, shouting, "kawalala, kawalala" in Kiswahili which means 'thief, thief' (Ngugi, 1989, p. 23). This incident attracts more spectators than helpers; passengers in cars passing by, pedestrians, shopkeepers and their customers, cyclists and pedestrians, all come closer to watch little boys wanting to injure or even kill an old man. Some even likened Matigari to a madman, concluding that children do not mingle with madmen as the two hate each other like "Satan and the Cross" (Ngugi, 1989, p. 17). In like manner, during colonial time the people betrayed their

own brothers and sisters who went into exile to fight for the independence of their countries, Kenya included, because of the misunderstanding of the mission of the freedom fighters.

In another incident in *Matigari*, the police set a dog on Guthera. Onlookers come around and start to laugh at the poor woman who is in shock, without giving her any assistance, until Matigari comes to her rescue. The barmaids are still talking about Guthera and her behaviour towards the stranger when they hear “the blood-curdling growl of a dog, followed by the chilling scream of a woman” (Ngugi, 1989, p. 30). Matigari dashes outside towards the scene, and to his amazement, he sees a helpless woman being humiliated by two policemen. Matigari reaches for his waist to take a gun as he used to do when he was still fighting with Settler Williams on the mountains. He then remembers that there is no gun as he is wearing but the belt of peace. He then turns to the crowd watching another person being exploited by the police, and he shouts:

What is going on here? Are you going to let our children to be made to eat shit while you stand around nodding in approval? How can you stand there watching the beauty of our land trodden down by these beasts? What is so fun about that? Why do you hide a cloak of silence and let yourselves be ruled by fear? Remember the saying that too much fear breeds misery in the land ... (Ngugi, 1989, p. 31)

With a voice like thunder that shakes the ground where they are standing, he tells them his name: Matigari ma Njiruungi, which means “The Patriots who survived the bullets”, and informs them that his mission is to protect his people from the hands of those who are still humiliating them in a free country like Kenya. He then returns to the bar with Guthera and treats her to lunch before proceeding to his business. Ngugi uses the character, Matigari, to show the comradeship that he wants to prevail in independent Kenya.

Matigari has returned to give back the freedom to the people of Kenya whom he addresses as his “family, wives, sons, daughters, sons, in-laws, wives” (Ngugi, 1989, pp. 38-39). He moves around in search of his family, to bring them together so that they can live under one roof. Since he had spent a long time in the forests and mountains to fight so that his family could have a home, his family is scattered and it is difficult to search for each one of them. Some are still slaves on plantations, some are sexually abused in the bars of the exploiters, while some are out there at garbage sites in search of rotten food, and they do all these odds things to quell the hunger of their children. Significantly, the Guthera incident has become common practice among the police and those in leadership who also exploit women. Ngugi regards the behaviour of men towards women and children as a bad practice that does not promote the spirit of comradeship which the people preached and fought for during the colonial era. When Kenya was still under the British, the colonisers and the colonised could not mix and there was no relationship between them, apart from the exploitation and oppression by the colonisers of the Kenyans. Ngugi, therefore, suggests that the human rights of both categories of people in Kenya should be treated with love and respect now that Kenya has achieved its hard-won independence. His wish is that history should not repeat itself, especially the history of colonialism (Ngugi, 1981b).

After rescuing Guthera from the police’s humiliation, Matigari, Muriuki and Guthera become a team, and vow to support one another until they find Matigari’s family. The presence of Guthera and Muriuki to follow Matigari shows that it is the unity and the power of the group that can lend them strength to fight the enemy, that is, oppression. Despite the police’s humiliation to Guthera, she decides to accompany Matigari and Muriuki on their mission to find the truth and justice in Kenya. On their way to the plantations where they are hurrying to reach Matigari’s family before they knock-off for the day, their eyes are attracted to a convoy of four Land Rovers with soldiers,

who are fully armed with rifles and machine-guns, as well as the police, who are carrying truncheons, shields and tear-gas masks. These soldiers and policemen are going to the factory where the workers are planning to start a strike against exploitation and low wages. Guthera informs Matigari that it is the trend in postcolonial Kenya for the police and soldiers to fight against students and workers. Just recently, the police have badly beaten the workers and some of the workers had their legs broken (Ngugi, 1989). When they come near a hill, they see a tea plantation extending far into the horizon. To Matigari's amazement, this large, fertile, tea plantation belongs to one person who is a foreigner. Matigari feels sad, especially when he imagines the place where Muriuki and his friends live while one person alone owns such a vast piece of land while others do not have even a piece of land where they can build a small squatter structure. This shows the economic gap between the rich and the masses as the middle class.

Meanwhile, Matigari has come back home but his homecoming seems to be threatened by neo-colonial oppression and exploitation which are visible everywhere he goes in search of the truth and justice. When Matigari asks where he can find truth and justice, he is told to listen to the radio that broadcasts the voice of His Excellence Ole Excellence. There is a decree which is repeatedly played over the radio, saying, "This is the voice of Truth" (Ngugi, 1989, p. 9). The Minister of Truth and Justice has said that this is the government of the workers. He forbids all meetings conducted without the knowledge of the authority. He concludes that "all gatherings of more than five people have been banned by the decree of His Excellence Ole Excellence. No explanations are offered for the ban" (1989, p. 7). According to Kurtz (1998), Ngugi is using phonetic discordance probably to paint a typical neo-colonial situation in Kenya when "human voices of truth are over shrouded with multiple synthetic and simulated voices of power" (p. 148). Obviously, in the case of the minister, His Excellence Ole Excellence, his speech literally

shows that he is above the masses, especially when he speaks “standing on a podium above the workers in the hall” (Ngugi 1989, p. 43).

From the plantations, Matigari and his team (Muriuki and Guthera) go to the house which he claims he has built with his own hands before leaving to fight in the forest for the liberation of Kenya from the British colonisers. The house is now occupied by John Boy Junior. Arriving at the house, Matigari informs John Boy Junior that he has come to repossess his house which John Boy Junior is occupying illegally. Attracted by the appearance and words of Matigari and his companions, John Boy Junior confronts them with the following words:

I would want you to learn the meaning of the word ‘individual’. Our country has remained in darkness because of the ignorance of our people. They do not know the importance of the word ‘individual’ as opposed to ‘masses’. White people are advanced because they respect that word, and therefore honour the freedom of the word individual, which means the freedom of everyone to follow his own whims without worrying about others, in other words, I am talking about survival of the fittest. But you black people; you walk about fettered to your families, clans, nationalities, people and masses. If the individual decides to move ahead, he is pulled back by others. What belongs to the masses is something that is carried in a bottomless pail. Go away and let me go mine for none of us is carrying the other. (Ngugi, 1989, pp. 48-49)

Instead of going away when John Boy Junior chases him, Matigari proceeds to the house without any permission from John Boy Junior. Matigari’s move prompts John Boy Junior to call for the intervention of the police who come and arrest Matigari for house-breaking and robbery. In prison, Matigari meets the teacher, peasant farmer, the street vendor, the drunkard, the worker

and a student. The peasant farmer is in jail because he was selling one bottle of milk without a license. His reason for selling the bottle of milk was to buy candles for his home because where his home is situated there is no electricity. Someone else was arrested for stealing food because he had been famished for some time; yet another is in jail accused of murdering a wealthy landowner who failed to pay him his wages for three months. Similarly, another prisoner is arrested for vagrancy in his own country. Among them is a student who is arrested for asking the Provincial Commissioner why police officers and soldiers still wear colonial uniforms. The teacher is also in police custody for the allegation of teaching Marxism and communism in school, and someone is arrested for being drunk. Ngugi reveals all this information to show how the leaders in postcolonial Kenya have no mercy for their people, just as it was with the former colonial leaders as one of the prisoners' remarks, "It is true that our leaders have no mercy. First they arrest us for no reason at all; then they bring us to a cell with no toilet facilities and we end up pissing and shitting on one another" (Ngugi, 1989, p. 55). To say the least, the prison walls may demonstrate how a bond is forged between the prison inmates as they treat each other openly and share the food. This is confirmed by Matigari's statement when he points out that "it is not the quantity that counts but the act of sharing what we have" (Ngugi, 1989, p. 55).

Still in *Matigari*, Ngugi aims to show the expected discontinuity between the colonial and postcolonial times as just an illusion when he refers to the operation of the police:

How long is this police oppression going to go on for? In the past, before the whites brought imperialism here, did we ever have police and soldiers? Never! Were there any prisons? No! Was there as much crime as there is today? No! We used to rule ourselves, didn't we? (Ngugi, 1989, p. 76)

Ngugi illustrates this illusion through Matigari, who is going to all places asking only one question: Where can one wearing the belt of peace find truth and justice in a postcolonial society like Kenya? Matigari's question can be divided into two parts: the first part seeks to find out where truth and justice can be found in Kenya, especially when one relates the stories of the prisoners that are prison inmates like Matigari. The second part has to do with the issue of whether anything has really changed between then and now that Kenya is independent. Matigari's numerous, depressing experiences surface when he is touring the country, asking his question because no one gives him the answer he expects, even the people he refers to as his family. Matigari queries the result of the liberation struggle by asking whether there are still people without land and those who are oppressed. Ngugi uses Matigari's version of postcolonial Kenya to reveal a contest between the oppressor and the oppressed to show whose reality counts (Ngugi, 1989). According to Ogude (1994), neo-colonial Kenya as experienced by Matigari represents "a monolithic force which fights to maintain hegemonic control" (p. 73). Ngugi is able to show this monolithic force of the representatives of the neo-colonial regime when the Provincial Commissioner says:

Now listen to me carefully. I have banned that song of praising Matigari wa Njiruungi. Let us with one accord, like loyal parrots, agree that Matigari wa Njiruungi is just a bad spirit and never existed. We have qualified professors who can write new history for us. Let us forget about this madness about Matigari and look forward in order to preserve our peaceful life for the sake of the good peace-loving Kenyans. (Ngugi, 1989, p. 118)

The Provincial Commissioner adds that the existence of such a person like Matigari wa Njiruungi should not occupy anyone's mind because this bit of history is just a bad dream, a nightmare in fact. The quotation above shows that there is still a connection between the past and

the present, between colonialism and postcolonialism. It is this continuation of the ideology of colonialism that Matigari and the other compatriots are targeting. Matigari passes judgement on the present state of affairs in Kenya but at the same time projects a new world that will only come through the unity of the oppressed to fight the oppressors. In a way, the novel *Matigari* explores the various ways in which the neo-colonial state can control and exploit the people it leads. It reveals the dictatorship of those in power as it is observed in the Provincial Commissioner's address where he gives laws and orders that everyone should follow, and insists that the order cannot be changed or questioned. Therefore, the Provincial Commissioner's address points out that dissent is unacceptable and also impossible in independent Kenya. This can be so because the rulers act to know best, not the country as a whole or the masses but rather, for their own sake.

In a way, the protagonist, Matigari, becomes an allegorical figure that is meant to embody the spirit of the freedom fighters. This embodiment is seen in the statement he makes while meeting the people, especially the answer he gives to John Boy Junior, "My child, I did not begin yesterday. I have seen many things over the years. Just consider this; I was there at the time of the Portuguese and at the time of the Arabs, and at the time of the British" (Ngugi, 1989, p. 45). Therefore, Matigari represents all allegorical figures that are fighting against social and political forces that exploit the masses, while Settler Williams represents the former colonial forces who have come through the back door into independent Kenya by using the name of economic cooperation; Robert Williams and John Boy Junior represent the Kenyans who still collaborate with the colonisers to continue claiming a share of their country's national pie. These are the local elite who have usurped political power from the imperialists and continue to share power

with them. In a way, the masses still suffer from the ill will of those from the upper class such as John Boy Junior.

Moreover, Ngugi's explicit attempt in *Matigari* is to show that Kenyans should try to be as brave as Matigari who cannot be shaken by the intervention of the police. Ngugi is looking for such brave Kenyans who can stand up for the rights of the masses without any fear, in order to curb the injustices that are taking place in postcolonial Kenya. It is clear when John Boy Junior calls the police that the comradeship that existed and was preached during the struggle for independence has vanished. People who were regarded as important, for example, the soldiers of the Liberation Movement, are no longer carrying the same status as before. Likewise, Matigari, a man who fought until the end, is suffering on the streets of Nairobi without anyone recognising him. When he asks John Boy Junior whether he is the boy who was sent to study abroad through the contributions of the communities in Nairobi, John Boy answers, "Where did you sign a contract with my father, so that I can pay your money back at once, you monkey?" (Ngugi, 1989, p. 19). Ngugi regards John Boy's answer, calling Matigari a monkey, as another form of exploitation and disrespect. People are still exploited in various ways, for instance, when the police arrive at the scene to arrest Matigari, they address him as a thief in Kiswahili, "*Wapi ule mwivi*: Where is that thief?" (Ngugi, 1989, p. 51).

On the other hand, Guthera becomes a victim of continuous harassment by the police just because she refuses to sell her body to them as they demand. She makes it a fact that, although she indulges in prostitution, she will never give her body to a policeman, since she witnessed her father being killed in prison because she had refused to sleep with the policeman who handled her father's case (Ngugi, 1989). In prison, Matigari meets some people who were arrested

unfairly, just like him. Ngugi refers to all their crimes as too small to spend a life in jail, but he sees it as mere exploitation of the masses.

After escaping from prison, Matigari is re-arrested and sent to a psychiatric hospital because they believe that he is mad because of his behaviour but he again escapes unnoticed. Believing that Matigari is a dangerous man, the police embark on a hunt so that, once arrested, he can be brought before the law, whether dead or alive. The authority does not seem to bother finding out more about Matigari's mission and why he behaves the way he does. All they are interested in is arresting him. Ngugi is arguing that there is no trust among the Kenyan leaders and the masses anymore, and this leads to fear; this same fear is ruling the entire continent (Ngugi, 2011). The police's hunt and re-arrest of Matigari symbolises the attitude of distance that the government has to the masses. Particularly, the government do not seek to build a relationship with its people; all they do is to involve the police force to bring order in the country. As a result of mistrust between the rulers and the ruled, the experiences that feature in the life of Matigari since his homecoming change his mission from bringing the people together to deciding to pick up his weapons and fight again, as he realises that there is still neither justice nor peace and truth in Kenya.

On their way (Matigari, Muriuki and Guthera) to the place where the weapons are hidden, Guthera is shot dead by the police who are following them, before they can cross the river. But before the police could catch up with them, Matigari, carrying Guthera's corpse, jumps into the water and the two are never seen again. Believing that Matigari is a man with supernatural powers that aim to destroy the leaders of Kenya, the police continue the hunt for him, using violence. Ngugi thus reveals how the authority in Kenya silences the people who stand for the truth and speak up against the exploitation of the masses. It is important to realise that the police

is the government's arm of justice; therefore, their presence signifies not only power but authority as well.

In fact the novel, *Matigari*, shows that the relationships between the characters symbolise the inequality that exists between the two opposing groups. The police make women share a bed with them or pay the consequences for refusing. This is the situation between Guthera and the police who are haunting her because she refuses to share a bed with them (Ngugi, 1989). Ngugi shows how the roots of the imbalance of power and wealth are ingrained in the community who persevere, despite a revolution and Matigari's attempts to reach a peaceful solution.

The gulf between the oppressed and the oppressor is clearly observed when the characters interact. For instance, when Matigari approaches John Boy Junior's house, claiming it to be his, he is "flung" into a small, dark cell with ten other people parked there (Ngugi, 1989, p. 110). Not only does the police come to arrest Matigari because he has annoyed John Boy Junior, but the other inmates also suffer from the ill-will of the ruling class. In this scene, Matigari and his fellow inmates symbolise a down-trodden class and, at the same time, symbolise the way this oppressed class is suffering under neo-colonialism. Matigari and the inmates' situation in prison show the social division, inequality and denial of human rights that the masses in Kenya suffer.

Ngugi uses the prison cells into which Matigari is flung to refer to the idea of communism. He focuses on the ideology of communism to show the presence of conflict in Kenya and elsewhere in the world. On the other hand, he uses his Marxist leanings to show how capitalism is influencing class division which was brought by the colonisers. One example of the colonial ideas is seen in the government's use of the KKK which alludes to Ku Klux Klan, showing that social division is not a product of Kenya, but of the West. The police symbolises the attitude of

the ruling class towards the masses, proving that they do not want to build a relationship with the people but they want the armed forces to bring order.

Meanwhile, the aim of the government of involving the security forces to tackle the problem of the demonstrating masses also shows how the government indicates to the masses how powerful and undefeatable it is, compared to the masses that lack such machinery. In the end, the police hunt for Matigari, who is “being tracked from every direction” by mounted policemen accompanied by a pack of police dogs (Ngugi, 1989, p. 100). This clearly reveals how the police are scattered everywhere, and by extension, it shows how the government dictates to the armed forces. This is also witnessed in the hall when the Minister of Truth and Justice is addressing the striking workers. The police are standing in battle formation outside the hall to defend the minister from any imminent danger from the crowd.

Another example where the relationship between the masses and the ruling elite is strained is the “Voice of the Truth”. This is the only platform of communication that is used for communicating with the nation by His Excellency Ole Excellency, despite his importance in the country. This shows the distance between the government and the masses. Despite this obvious distance between the two groups, the medium of communication has an effect on the masses. It is heard several times throughout the novel, and when Matigari inquires from the kiosk where he can find justice and truth, the kiosk owner does not answer himself but he simply says, “As for the rest let me put the Voice of Truth for you” (Ngugi, 1989, p. 83). This is an indication that there is no relationship between the ruling class and the ruled, which signals inequality between them. The relationship observed in the scenarios in *Matigari* reveals social status differences, and depicts which class is considered higher and powerful and which one is considered socially inferior. It

can be said that this contrast between the oppressed and the oppressor builds resistance and conflict between the two classes, and pivotal for Ngugi's disapproval of the current status quo.

For one thing, Ngugi uses the town of Ilmorog in *Petals of Blood* and *Devil on the Cross*, and the city of Nairobi in *Matigari*, as settings for dialogue, actions and events that unfold between the two opposing classes. The novel *Matigari* foregrounds the wishes of Matigari who is facing difficulties to exist. He craves to find a place in Kenya where there is that justice and peace which are no longer experienced in the new Kenya. Matigari represents the postcolonial Kenyan masses in their difficult time of existence, which points to their frustration and doom. Through this character, Ngugi shows the Marxist concept that one has to continue pushing until he or she reaches a point of death as the final point of reference in all actions against any unfavourable condition that could have befallen them on their way during the struggle (Cabral, 1980). One such character, sharing the philosophy of pushing until one dies, is one of South Africa's heroes, Bantu Steve Biko, who resisted Apartheid until he was brutally killed in 1977 (Ngugi, 2011). Therefore, Ngugi uses the character of Matigari to encourage the masses to push forward, even if the situation threatens potential death.

As much as Matigari wants to help his people to understand his mission, he ends up being attacked by the children whom he calls his own. He goes from place to place looking for his family but the people he refers to as his family rejects him. Ngugi, through Matigari, wants to convey messages that remove fear among the masses. The suffering of Matigari on the streets of Nairobi is typical of that of the Kenyan masses and elsewhere, and his reactions to his agonies reveal the reactions of the masses to their agonies as human beings. Actually, Matigari's suffering shows that he has reaped nothing from his sacrifices to fight for the independence of Kenya, so are other people of the middle class.

4.5 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE MASSES AND THE ELITE

In his analysis of the impact of neo-colonialism on the Kenyan people in the three novels, Ngugi portrays a close relationship between the characters and their immediate physical and social environments. These characters demonstrate the acute state of the suffering of the masses in their respective areas, for example, the Ilmorogians in *Petals of Blood* who go to seek assistance from their MP, Nderi wa Riera in the city of Nairobi. The delegation goes through hell at the hands of the leaders who are supposed to help them. The group faces many challenges and suffers on their journey to the city. Wanja in *Petals of Blood* and Wariinga in *Devil on the Cross* also face many problems in their lives, such as unemployment, the lack of proper education, exploitation and sexual harassment. Workers are regarded as ignorant people who do not know their rights. This is portrayed in *Matigari* where the people are forbidden by the Provincial Commissioner to gather in groups of five or more people (Ngugi, 1989). In this way, the people are unable to share ideas regarding the political decisions that their masters impose on them that can assist them. Ngugi therefore, reveals through *Matigari*, that the life of the masses is full of pain and injustice, and has become worse than during colonialism.

Furthermore, the poor society is haunted by the presence of the police in their villages. Those so-called law enforcement officers instill fear rather than security in the society. The incident that befalls Guthera and the Provincial Commissioner's address to the village of Trampville, which he changes to Progressville, testify to such actions of the so-called keepers of the law. The masses are humiliated, oppressed and exploited by their leaders to the extent that they have to accept that their fate has been designed by the Creator (Ngugi, 1989). Tortured by the reality of life in the city of Nairobi, Wangari, Muturi and Wariinga decide to go back to Ilmorog, their home village. Some of the masses, for example, Guthera, in *Matigari* and Wanja in *Petals of*

Blood, turn their anger outward and channel their frustrations into self-destructive ways as they indulge in acts of prostitution and murder.

Ngugi portrays that the quest for wealth by the ruling elite as another problem in postcolonial Kenya. The masses become poorer because they have no opportunity for competing with the rich. Independence and the system of capitalism have both brought with them an increase in the status and wealth of the ruling elite who are the politicians and government officials. A good illustration is the group who sacrifice to embark on a long journey from Ilmorog to Nairobi on foot because of poverty. The journey, which the Ilmorogians embark on, shows that postcolonial Kenya is a place where only the fittest can survive (Ngugi, 1977). In addition, Wood (1986) stresses the point that Ngugi's novels are political novels when he says that if "Ngugi is cut, he will bleed politics"; nevertheless, he supports Ngugi by saying that his work mostly reveal the social ills which, amongst others, include corrupt employment processes, the unjustified dispensation of justice by those charged with that responsibility, deplorable social services and sexual harassment; in so doing, Ngugi informs his readers about the exploitation that is still happening in Kenya.

To further the situation of unemployment and sexual harassment, in *Petals of Blood*, Wanja fails to acquire a job because of refusing to sleep with her boss; in *Devil on the Cross*, Wariinga is dismissed from her job merely for refusing to become her employer's mistress, and Wangari, in the same novel, is arrested for moving around the city of Nairobi, looking for employment without a passbook, and she is ordered to pay an admission of guilt fine by the judge, even though she fails to prove her guilty. In *Matigari* (1989), Guthera becomes a victim of harassment and humiliation by the so-called law enforcement agents, the policemen who, at one stage set, a police dog on her for refusing to sleep with them, but Matigari saves her from that terror. The

MP, Nderi wa Riera in *Petals of Blood* fails to deliver the required service in a drought that hits the area of Ilmorog where he is the representative.

Furthermore, the living conditions of the masses continue to deteriorate, and the gap between the rich and the poor widens. *Petals of Blood* shows the treatment that Karega and his team receive at the hands of the rich just because of their physical appearance and their attire which resembles that of the lower class. Wherever they go, they receive negative hospitality, except from the lawyer. The masses come to a point where they accept living conditions which are so primitive that, at some point, they come to regard themselves as useless in life and that they, therefore, should accept what they are (Ngugi, 1977). This inferiority complex is observed in Abdulla, a former freedom fighter who had lost one of his legs in the Mau Mau liberation war. After realising his condition and that he is not recognised for what he has contributed towards the independence of his country, Kenya, he turns to selling sheep skins and oranges along the dust roads of Nairobi (Ngugi, 1977). Indeed, the decision that Abdulla takes is a confirmation of Ogude's argument when he states that "capitalism engendered a denial of man's potentiality for creative intelligence and the building of a truly humane society" (Ogude, 1994, p. 7). Furthermore, the three novels reveal another factor that contributes to the exploitation of the masses by the elite: the emphasis of the colonialists on race and class. This is indicated in the encounter between John Boy Junior and Matigari at the house when John Boy Junior outlines the differing behaviours of the whites and the blacks (Ngugi, 1989, p. 102). In contrast, the encounter between John Boy Junior and Matigari reveals that there is still no freedom of the individual.

4.6 MISUSE OF OFFICE BY THE ELITE IN THE THREE NOVELS

The Minister of Truth and Justice issues a warning statement against any gathering of more than five people among the masses. The masses suffer at the hands of their rulers, and when they decide to come together to dissolve their predicament and find ways to fight for their rights, the forces of law will not allow them to do so. Thus, the ruling elite impose their will on the masses. The workers are sacked at will, as happens to Karega in *Petals of Blood* and Wariinga in *Devil on the Cross*. When some of the masses die, they are never mourned nor are their deaths taken seriously. This happens to Mwireri wa Mukiraai, who decides to leave the ranks of neo-colonial elitism in *Devil on the Cross* (1982a). After he has been killed in a planned car accident, he is not remembered and his death is never reported as of the three directors of the Theng'eta Brewery or investigated so that the offender can be apprehended. This depicts what is considered classy and powerful and what is considered to be socially inferior by the elite and the rulers of the country.

Social inequality and oppression, as well as the indifference of the elite to the suffering of the masses, are what Ngugi registers as the plight of the masses. The three novels show social indifference in postcolonial Kenya, where the rich class distances itself from the lower class. This social indifference is witnessed in *Petals of Blood*, where Karega is denied marrying a girl he loves because he is from a poor family, and Munira, is discriminated against by his father because he does not possess the qualifications that his brothers and sisters have obtained. Munira is denied an opportunity to mingle with his age mates from the slums on the farm because they are regarded as people of low class. It is now, in all matters of life, a case of the class or groups and family to whom one belongs. The novel, *Matigari*, vividly portrays small boys living in an abandoned scrapyard being left to sort out their lives on their own. The policemen only come there to inflict more pain by collecting money from the boys or beat them up if they refuse to

pay. In this scene the small boys symbolises how a lower class is suffering under the neo-colonial regime. This is abuse of power by office bearers to an extent that even the law makers, the police, can break the law unnecessarily.

Similar to the situation of the boys to survive on collecting things from a garbage, prostitution in the three novels is depicted as a way of life for young girls and women who desire to make money for a living. Wariinga in *Devil on the Cross* is seduced by the Rich Man of Ngorika because of money; Wanja in *Petals of Blood* and Guthera in *Matigari* both turn to prostitution because they want money in order to survive. The restaurant in *Petals of Blood* is known for its sexual activities which Ngugi refers to as a “place where the thighs of girls are the writing tables of men” (Ngugi, 1977, p. 198). Because of the harsh, socio-economic situations in their respective places, these young females, Wanja and Guthera, are pushed into prostitution. This sexual activity is a clear indication of how poverty reigns in postcolonial Kenya. It is a situation where women, without shame, sell their bodies in exchange for money. Guthera, in *Matigari*, pushes herself on Matigari’s thighs without being invited by him. It amazes Matigari to see a woman proposing to a man first (Ngugi, 1989, p. 78). Therefore, poverty and sexual seduction bring misery to women. Moreover, Wariinga cannot continue with her school because she is pregnant, and wants to commit suicide. She later murders her future father-in-law because he is the one who had seduced her in her youth. Wanja, in *Petals of Blood*, aborted her pregnancy, an action which nearly left her barren. The actions by these women are done out of despair because of what transpire to them at the hands of their oppressors.

Ngugi portrays the upper class as more magnificent and victorious than the wretched lower class. The various reactions of the political elite in *Petals of Blood*, *Devil on the Cross* and *Matigari* show their determination to use all their strength and power to fight back against the workers’

revolutionary movements, which the elite term as disturbing their interests (Ngugi, 1989). All three novels deal with problems that, Ngugi (1989) argues, are brought by capitalism due to neo-colonisation in Kenya. Ngugi's argument is that the independence of Kenya is not honoured by the ruling elite who took over power from the former colonisers. Instead of trying to change the socio-economic and political situation in Kenya, the elite use their positions to enrich themselves at the expense of the poor. Ngugi is pessimistic when he argues that the retention of a capitalist economy is itself a "huge mistake for the Kenyan leaders because it has left an open door for the exploitation of the masses by both the local and the international elites" (Ngugi, 1989, p. 103). Ngugi classifies the capitalist economy as an economy of modern theft that supports social disintegration and the exploitation of both the country's human and material resources. He, therefore, continues to call upon the exploited to stand up in a joint effort to fight with all their power through protesting, using their unions and even taking up arms again, if necessary, to bring down the regime of capitalism.

Changes of urbanisation come to Ilmorog after the delegation's journey to Nairobi. At first, the people of Ilmorog are reluctant to welcome the changes brought by urbanisation. But Karega and Wanja continue to sensitise them regarding the economic exploitation of the people by the elite through the system of capitalism. When they become aware of the cunning of the ruling class, the masses decide to face the invaders with resistance. The resistance results in protests and even the assassination of some prominent members of the elite who are considered the perpetrators of exploitation in the area. *Petals of Blood* reveals the assassination of the Directors of Ilmorog, the Theng'eta Breweries and landlords in Mathere Valley by protesters. A land grabber, Lord Freeze-Kilby who develops a tendency of grabbing land from the herdsmen and peasants and ill-treats them, is chased away. His wife is taken and his shop and house burnt

down. Another land grabber by the name of Dharamashah follows in the footsteps of Kilby. The peasants also chase him and take his buildings as they did with Kilby (Ngugi, 1977). This shows the determination of the masses to return what belongs to them with no fear or fail.

Likewise, in *Matigari*, the strike is organised by the workers when Matigari comes from the forest to demand better wages that go together with the rising prices of commodities in the land. Even when the Minister of Justice and Truth is called in to address the workers, the workers refuse to bow down on their request for better wages. Wangari and Muturi also organise a strike after they have heard the revelations of the thieves and robbers at the cave about how the elite rob and steal from the people. These demonstrations and strikes are brought by the refusal of the elite to work together in sharing the economic produce of their country with the masses. The refusal of the elite to share the national pie equally among all Kenyans is regarded by Ngugi as a direct confrontation by the exploiter of the exploited. The control of the economy by all parties is seen by him as the only solution to the revolutionary actions planned by the masses. Even though Ngugi views capitalism as one of the colonial legacies that keep the Kenyan nation under the control of the West, on the other hand, he expects the masses to form a collective struggle that will challenge the elite or those who are responsible for their exploitation (Ngugi, 1989).

4.7 CONCLUSION

In the foregoing analysis, it has been revealed that *Petals of Blood* and *Devil on the Cross* portray the beginning of the revolution while the novel *Matigari* sets the motion of the revolution by the masses. There is cohesion in how these three postcolonial novels expose the exploitation of the masses by the elite. In *Petals of Blood*, the masses come to learn how they are exploited and start to plan how to start the struggle to free themselves from the bondage of suffering

inflicted on them by their leaders. In *Devil on the Cross*, the workers take the actions that they have already planned in *Petals of Blood*, while the novel, *Matigari*, resolves the actions that have to be taken because of the refusal of the elite to change the status quo.

In a nutshell, the novels *Petals of Blood* (1977), *Devil on the Cross* (1982a) and *Matigari* (1989) mirror the exploitation of the masses in postcolonial Kenya which, according to Ngugi, is brought by the capitalist economic system left behind by the colonisers. The masses in Kenya, in particular, suffer hardships through the corruption of social structures and values, a lack of development in some areas, the weak economy, predatory governance, persistent conflicts, the decline of proper infrastructures, stunted livelihood, as well as both internal and external abuses of power. According to the information on the exploitation of the masses by the elite which is gathered in this chapter, Ngugi has managed to conscientise the masses about their plight through the use of a novel as a genre.

CHAPTER 5: THE MASSES' RESISTANCE AND REBELLION AGAINST EXPLOITATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

After portraying the neo-colonial landscape of suffering and exploitation of the masses, this chapter focuses on the possibilities regarding resistance and rebellion by the exploited group. The three novels in focus have revealed that the masses in Kenya have had enough of the dehumanisation through the acts of the ruling elite. According to Ecclesiastes in the Bible, there is always time for everything under the sun. The time has come for the masses to bring an end to the exploitation and oppression they suffer from their leaders. The masses want the return of Kenya's natural and human resources that they are denied by local and foreign agents of exploitation. For the resources to be returned to their rightful owners there is a need for a revolution, organised and carried out collectively by the exploited group. Ngugi uses *Petals of Blood* (1977), *Devil on the Cross* (1982a) and *Matigari* (1989) to highlight the exploitation of the masses and his quest to support them in their fight against it. He further states that the revolutionary struggle is the only way that the masses can engage in to bring Kenya's resources back to them. Revolution is a struggle to shift the ruling class of a country from the current economic or political group to another, as desired by the opposers. Ngugi sees the revolutionary action as a product of poverty in that poverty engenders resistance, revolt and insurgency, as well as the search for a way out of exploitation and misery. Gutierrez (1988) also urges the masses to continue with the liberation struggle until a world of goodness and beauty will be seen. He advises them not to be cunning when he says:

... not in how cunning one can be, not how much power to oppress one oppressed but only in one's contribution in creating a humane world in which the inherited inventive

genius of man in culture and science from all ages and climes would not be a monopoly of a few, but for use of all so that flowers in all their different colours would ripen and bear fruits and seeds. And the seeds would then be put into the ground so that they can sprout and flower in rain and sunshine. (1988, p. 312)

This chapter analyses the themes of resistance and rebellion in *Petals of Blood*, *Devil on the Cross* and *Matigari* by examining the modes of resistance and rebellion in the three texts. In this chapter the onslaught of neo-colonialism is conceptualised in the light of the betrayal of the masses by the new ruling elite. Therefore, the concept of neo-colonial exploitation is studied in comparison with British colonialism in order to give a clear picture of why the masses have decided to rebel against the present government. The chapter also focuses on the division of people into classes. To do this, the chapter will pay attention to some of the aspects, such as power and the misuse of office, that show postcolonial elitism in Kenya. Therefore, this chapter examines and discusses the rebellion and resistance resulting from the exploitation of the masses by the ruling class.

The masses understand the need to liberate themselves from their suffering. Gugelberger defines the term liberation as “an outcome or resistance to a power or authority” (1985, p. 51). Gugelberger states that resistance can only occur if there is an oppressor and, in the process, the oppressor becomes the opposable. This becomes true in Ngugi’s three novels focused on in this study. The scenarios in the stories contained in the novels reveal situations where the masses have become the oppressed who want to free themselves from the neo-colonialist forces, and because the elite have acquired the role of the oppressor, they have become opposable. Ngugi’s advocacy for resistance by the masses seems to have gained its highest point, and the masses are

determined to win the race in the fight for their redemption from neo-colonialism and its system of capitalism.

5.2 RESISTANCE IN *PETALS OF BLOOD*

In *Petals of Blood*, the masses are exploited by the ruling class. They have no proper accommodation whereas the ruling elite all own several big houses all over the country. Most of the masses have lost their land through expropriation and forceful grabbing by the elite. The masses are largely unemployed. The march to the city marks the beginning of the people's exposure to knowledge about the inefficiency of the government and its representatives in leading the nation. Though the MP has promised to meet the people in Ilmorog to bring charity and aid, these all are illusions as nothing takes off from the ground.

Firstly, it is capitalism that is entrenched in Ilmorog through the businessmen who move in and build houses, banks, roads, factories and set up estate agencies. Secondly, it is the arrival of modernisation in Ilmorog that brings about the destruction of the old Ilmorog and its traditional values. When roads are being constructed, a bulldozer destroys the hut of Mwathi, the oracle of the people, which shows the complete destruction and dilution of the values of the community. As a result, Ilmorog is transformed into an industrial and capitalist area; issues, such as prostitution, social inequality and inadequate infrastructure, crawl in. Ngugi reveals that the people also have to undergo a process of rebirth.

Moreover, Wanja realises that she needs to use all her weapons, in order to survive in the new Ilmorog. She was once a prostitute, but now she resorts to helping the exploited to discard the system of capitalism that has made its uninvited way to Ilmorog. Wanja represents Kenya's young women who are deprived and can only earn a living through selling their bodies. *Petals of*

Blood thus reveals the evils perpetrated by the black imperialists in an independent Kenya. It deals mainly with exploitation, oppression, social abuse and injustice. As already mentioned, the novel is grounded on four protagonists, Karega, Abdulla, Munira and Wanja. Karega turns out to be the revolutionary in the community of Ilmorog. Karega is detained on suspicion of the triple murder of Kimeria, Chui and Mzigo, of the Theng'eta Breweries in Ilmorog. Karega manages to attract both workers and students to join the struggle for the economic freedom of which they are deprived by the ruling elite. Even when Karega is in jail, his influence is still seen among the workers and the young people who support the revolution struggle. Support for Karega is substantiated by the visit of a young girl, named Akinyi, who comes to convey 'good news' to Karega and informs him that the workers and the students still support the struggle; furthermore, they are fully rallying behind him. When Karega inquires why Akinyi has come to see him, she simply answers, "You will surely come back to us" (Ngugi, 1977, p. 228). With these encouraging words from Akinyi, Karega gains strength, even though he is in prison. This is reflected in his words when he says:

The exploiters are bound to fail; can't you see, we, the workers, peasants and ordinary people are too awake to be deceived by tribal loyalties, regional assemblies, glorious pasts, all that, when we are starving and we are jobless, or else living on miserable pay. Do you think we shall let foreign companies, banks, insurances ... do you think we will let these owners of stolen property to continue lording it over us forever? No ... tell them this: there are a million Karegas for every ten Kimerias. They can kill the lawyer, or ten such lawyers, but the poor, the disposed, the working millions and the poor peasants are their own lawyers. With guns and swords and organisation, they can and will change the

conditions of their oppression. Never shall we let them harvest that which they never planted. (1977, pp. 326-327)

Karega's words show the determination of the masses now that they have realised the illtreatment they receive from their local leaders. All that they plan to do is to rebel against the exploitation and oppression of the masses. According to Karega, the past does not need to be "preserved like a museum so that we can draw from it to assist us in understanding the present and the future" (Ngugi, 1977, p. 323). He further concludes: "But to worship it again, no. Maybe I used to do that, but I don't want to continue worshiping in the temple of the past without tarmac roads, without electric cookers, or a world dominated by slavery to nature" (Ngugi, 1977, p. 323). Ngugi is trying to encourage the masses to shun the empty promises of the ruling elite and keep up the banner in the struggle to emancipate themselves from the snares of exploitation. *Petals of Blood*, therefore, becomes a novel that awakens the masses into realising and understanding the treatment of the exploiters which gives them a true reflection of the behaviour of their masters. Ngugi's role in *Petals of Blood* therefore is to conscientise the masses, urging them to redeem themselves from exploitation by means of a revolution against the class division that is rampant in Kenya.

Moreover, Karega informs the police inspector who is investigating the murder case of the three directors of the Theng'eta Brewery that man is a thinking being from the time he is born till the time he dies. He tells the inspector that since he is also a human being, he also thinks, looks, hears, touches, smells, tastes and he sifts all the impressions in his mind to arrive at a certain outlook in life from where he makes a decision. Karega continues to let the inspector know that he has reached a point where he has to continue the struggle against exploitation by the ruling regime. To reinforce his point he says:

The oppression of the poor is a fact. The scattering of the masses into the four corners of the country is a fact. That our people resisted European intrusion is a fact: we fought inch by inch, ridge by ridge, and it was only through the superiority of their arms and the traitorous actions of some of us that we were defeated. That Kenya have a history of fighting and resistance is therefore a fact. Liberation has no child ever too young to engage in it because it is the only way he can experience himself to discover himself, therefore, we are now creatively formed into a new breed of men and women who are not afraid to link our hands with children from other lands on the basis of an unashamed immersion in the struggle against those things that dwarf us. (Ngugi, 1977, pp. 246-247)

Karega's utterances show how bold he is now to face the authorities and continue with the struggle without fear. His message is that the Kenyans are used to fighting for what is theirs and have never lost. He tells police inspector Geoffrey that though he is imprisoned, the masses will continue the struggle and win at the end in the same way as they did against the other exploitative forces that were there before the current ones. This is an encouragement to the masses to decide for themselves whether to continue to be ruled by exploiting leaders by obeying their orders or not.

Another character who joins in the struggle is Wanja. She is robbed of her young womanhood by the cunning Kimeria. She then turns to prostitution as the only way she can earn a living. She arrives in Ilmorog to start a new life in which she can earn a decent living to assist not only her, but other people as well; however, the death of her grandmother and the commercialisation of Ilmorog drag her back to prostitution. She even erects a brothel that attracts more customers. Later Wanja realises that prostitution is one of the weapons that the colonisers and their successors use to exploit women. She then decides to invite the three known women exploiters,

Kimeria, Chui and Mzigo, to come to her brothel so that she can eliminate them all at the same time. But before she can accomplish her plan, Munira sets her brothel on fire out of jealousy and lust for Wanja's body. Consequently, all the three women abusers die. The burning down of Wanja's brothel, where the three exploiters die, is a symbol that Wanja's life is purified by fire and re-directed to a new life other than that of prostitution. At the same time, Wanja is expecting Abdulla's child, symbolising that Kenya will soon be reborn. Therefore, Ngugi's message to the masses is to remain hopeful and not give in to life's miseries.

Still, the transformation of old Ilmorog into a commercial area comes with problems, such as class division, social inequalities, misery, inadequate accommodation, prostitution and uncertainty. These problems are associated with class struggle which can influence the social cultural, economic and political concepts of the society. Wood contends that "a new hybrid identity emerges from the interweaving of elements of the oppressor and oppressed, challenging the validity and authenticity of any essentialist cultural hybrid" (1986, p. 180). This new identity which Wood refers to is seen in the fragmented identity of the new Ilmorog which, in turn, destroys the people's identity leading to losing the struggle against exploitation. The loss of the struggle is seen in Karega and Munira who, in the first place, are both united in raising their voices against the exploitative administration of the British headmaster, but later become jealous of each other because of their desire for Wanja. The two fail to direct the struggle, and end up pulling in different directions (Ngugi, 1977, p. 209). Wanja also comes back to Ilmorog with a strong passion for the road to liberation from the second colonial rule led by the local leaders, but she is dragged back to her former business and impregnated by one of the neo-colonial exploiters. Nevertheless, Ngugi's voice is clear: though they may seem frustrated, the masses

should join the struggle, and clear up the mess brought by capitalism practised by the new ruling class in Kenya.

The Marxist literary theory teaches that the manipulation and diplomacy of neo-colonialism can lead ambivalent people to feel frustrated and dispossessed of their identity (Fanon, 1990, p. 23). Fanon encourages the masses to continue staging demonstrations and strikes to alert their leaders of their disapproval regarding the manner in which they are governed. Fanon's encouragement is drawn from the ideology of Carl Marx who encourages the oppressed to strike back whenever the oppressors try to dissolve their problems through peaceful negotiations. Wanja's leaving the life of prostitution to serve the people is in line with the ideas of Marxism. In a statement to the foreign capitalists who want to take Nyakinyua's land after she has joined her ancestors in the land beyond, she iterates that "Her land cannot be occupied or settled by strangers" (Ngugi, 1977, p. 328).

There is socio-economic betrayal of old Ilmorog by the government. The betrayal by the government can be substantiated through Nderi wa Riera who betrays his duties to the community of Ilmorog. When he meets with them in the city, after having stones thrown at him because he left the delegation with unanswered queries, he promises to visit the area. Munira, in turn, blames the decision of the delegation to go to the city because, according to him, the journey to the city is a betrayal of the people of Ilmorog. His despair is witnessed in his utterances when he remarks, "We went to the city to save Ilmorog from drought, but, instead, we brought back drought from the city which is more severe than the Ilmorog drought" (Ngugi, 1977, p. 195). The novel, *Petals of Blood*, shows the completion of the struggle of the masses of Ilmorog through the intervention of Kimeria, Chui, Mzigo and Nderi wa Riera. The first three are killed while in Wanja's brothel, and Nderi is gunned down by unknown assassins. The

elimination of the three women abusers points to the end of the masses' suffering from the hands of their oppressors as well as new beginning with new leaders.

Meanwhile, the new Ilmorog is reconstructed because of the politicians' agenda of modernisation. There are now two distinctive locations for the two opposing classes, the rich and the poor. Marxists are against the system of capitalism because they believe that it creates class division between the poor and the rich where it is applied. This is what is happening in Ilmorog where capitalism is favoured by the ruling elite who continue benefiting at the expense of the masses. In *Petals of Blood* capitalism has brought immoral practices, such as prostitution, as can be seen in Wanja. Because of the influence of capitalism, Abdulla becomes a drunkard, for he is rubbished by the government as a useless, handicapped person, though he fought for the freedom of Kenya to the extent of losing one of his legs. On the other hand, Munira becomes a fundamentalist Christian while Karega joins the trade union. People received religion with mixed feelings and as a result brought separation between communities and even families as it is between Munira and Karega.

On the other hand, former freedom fighters also contribute to the second struggle against capitalism that is breeding so much suffering among the poor. The exploitation of freedom fighters is seen in Abdulla in *Petals of Blood*. The struggle and heroic role of former freedom fighters do not count in the new government of the independent Kenya and, as such, they have to fight yet another internal battle, this time a revolutionary struggle against neo-colonialism. Abdulla is mocked by the new ruling elite who make him suffer economically. Abdulla is the first person to call for the throwing of stones at Nderi wa Riera, reiterating that such leaders must be brought down. He accuses Nderi of being one of those leaders who still practises the rules and policies of colonialism. Abdulla gives a promise regarding victory, and he says, "We shall fight;

we have fought before ... the other communities want to reap where they never planted, no, we won't allow that anymore, for there are no free things in Kenya" (Ngugi, 1977, p. 98). Surely, the statement shows that the masses have realised the pretency of their masters thus they have chosen to change their attitudes so as to defeat and overcome systems that are not of any good to them.

5. 3 THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE IN *DEVIL ON THE CROSS*

As already noted, the novel, *Devil on the Cross* reveals and exposes the evils and the corruptibility of the local leaders who took over from the colonisers. As a result, the destructive power of neo-colonialism has bred resistance in a once obedient society. Because the masses are politically and economically oppressed by the neo-colonial elite, Ngugi awakens them to engage in a political and economic liberation. He points out that the liberation struggle can only be achieved by the masses themselves. He encourages them to adhere to the voices of their leaders, such as Muturi in *Devil on the Cross*, saying that the voices of their leaders are like the voice of God (Ngugi, 1982a). Ngugi's thoughts are anchored in the ideology of the Marxists who believe that this liberation struggle can be achieved if the masses exert pressure on the elite through resistance and revolution, working in unity against continuous exploitation by the elite. He informs the masses that democracy and justice can only be achieved when the group voices its opposition to oppression by the ruling elite, and until they unite, things will continue to worsen, "no matter who sits on the throne of power" (Ngugi, 1981a, p. 28). In that case, Muturi supports Ngugi's statement regarding changing the status quo when he urges the people of Ilmorog to chase away the thieves and robbers who are gathered at the cave to celebrate their greedy gains. To him these thieves and robbers are corrupt capitalists who are threatening their rights. He supports the Marxist idea that the fruits of each worker should go to him or her, and everyone

should receive rewards according to how he or she works. The time to work for others is over; everyone should sweat in order to reap what he wants. He further explains to the masses of Ilmorog why they must chase away the thieves and robbers:

I know that the forces of law and order are on the side of those who rob the workers of the products of their sweat, I am sure that the system of theft and robbery will never end in this country as long as people are scared of guns and clubs. We must fight against the culture of fear, and there is only one cure for fear: a strong organisation of the workers and peasants of the land, together with those whose ears and eyes are now open and alert to come and join the strike, that is the only way. (Ngugi, 1982a, pp. 204-205)

Meanwhile, Ngugi urges the masses to listen to the voices of rebirth and revolution if they want to achieve total liberation. He refers to the words of Muturi in the above quotation as the voice of rebirth and revolution. Significantly, the masses are able to chase the devil (thieves and robbers) from the cave because they have listened to Muturi's voice of revolution.

Ngugi applauds the spirit of unity that the masses show in chasing away the devil as he considers it a convincing step towards the removal of capitalism and neo-colonialism in the near future. The spirit that is shown in chasing away the agents of exploitation is a clear indication that the masses are well-informed about their suffering and are thirsty for liberation. They are now determined to fight against their fate and for their future on their own because they are united, as Ngugi puts it, "they all come from the same womb, the common womb of Kenya. There is no more Luo, Gikuyu, Kamba, Giriama, Luhya, Maasai, Meru, Kallenjin or Turkana, but we are all children of one mother and that mother is Kenya, the mother of all Kenyans" (Ngugi, 1982a, p. 234). This liberation, if attained, will not only bring freedom and total independence from neo-

colonialism, but also a new Kenyan identity that will lead to a new Kenya and a new future where “the exploited can become the exploiter, the hunter become the hunted, the rich become the poor and the dominated becomes the dominator” (Ngugi, 1982a, p. 25). The action of the masses who chase away the thieves and robbers from the cave also show significant progress in the liberation process that has just started.

Devil on the Cross shows Ngugi’s political position in the struggle against neo-colonialism in his country. His determination to see the masses win the struggle shows that he favours the side of the masses and is against the corrupt ruling elite subverting the masses to nothingness in society. His belief in the principles of Marxism and the way he fictionalises his work in *Devil on the Cross* through the different characters makes the Marxist literary theory the most obvious theory for this current study. Capitalism, as manifested in the same novel, shows the exploitation of the masses by the new ruling elite. Furthermore, it is revealed that capitalism is a social, political and economic phenomenon, inherited from the former colonisers that bring class division, elitism and exploitation of the masses. Regardless of the independence that was achieved in Kenya, the masses still feel the presence of the colonial power socially, politically and economically. Capitalism has bred neo-colonialism and elitism. The two are the sources of all the conflicts between the exploiters and the exploited (Ngugi, 1982a). Therefore, it can be said that the novel, *Devil on the Cross*, is an analysis of the influence of neo-colonial elitism in Kenya. It can also be concluded that *Devil on the Cross* foregrounds the ill-treatment of the masses.

The four protagonists, Muturi, Wariinga, Wangari and Gatuiria, make a commitment to push Kenya forward until it attains a new identity which is based on freedom and independence, which is Ngugi’s wish of seeing a liberated country. Such reformation and liberation are difficult to achieve because the masses lack wisdom and have no machinery to fight the exploitative rule

of the elite, but the masses are awakened and have come to understand that freedom can only be attained by their strong determination to fight for it. This is the strength and determination that Muturi uses to organise the peasants and workers to chase away the thieves and robbers at the cave. The same awakening motivates Wariinga to kill her oppressor, the Rich Man of Ngorika, and his associates.

In support of the struggle for freedom from exploitation, Muturi echoes words of determination in the hearts of the oppressed, telling them which is best, summed up in the words of Mbeki when he states:

Whoever we may be, whatever our immediate interest, however much we carry the baggage from our past, however much we have been caught by the fashion of cynicism and loss of faith in the capacity of the people, let us say: nothing will stop us from fighting for our human rights from now onwards. (Mbeki, 2002, p. 36)

In the same manner, Biko's black consciousness encourages faith in the capacity of the people to reject all exploitative systems and practices that reduce the dignity of the exploited and that make them foreigners in their own land (Biko, 2000). Rooted in his vision is the wish to see a society where there is no segregation based on colour, race or status. All he wanted to see was the resources and freedom returned to all South Africans. His call, which is vital today, was a call for the continuous struggle by the victims of exploitation by the ruling class. In like manner, Ngugi urges the masses of Kenya to learn from Biko's positive spirit of self-affirmation (Ngugi, 2009, p. 131). Ngugi suggests that it is time that all Africans disengage from the hegemonic tyranny of the Western memory and reconnect with the memory contained in the living matter of Africanism.

The struggle in *Devil on the Cross* can be seen as the worst form of neo-colonialism. Ngugi gives a scenario of the local and international robbers who gather at the Devils' Feast in order to choose the highest thief and robber who can serve both the local and international groups and assist to secure their wealth. The competitors at the gathering boast how they always rob and steal from the masses and become rich. Furthermore, Ngugi personifies the system of capitalism as the devil that is destroying the lives of the masses. The winner again has to carry the dictates of former colonisers in the form of repressive capitalism so that the former colonisers can continue to rule Kenya indirectly from abroad. The testimony of Gitutu Gataanguru is witness to how the neo-colonialists plunder public money through land grabbing. Gitutu inherited his wealth from his father who became rich through grabbing land from the poor. Gitutu says that his father used to abuse girls sexually and that the poor, who did not have a girl, donated their land to him. Gitutu's testimony, therefore, shows how the conscience of the new ruling elite is conditioned through neo-colonialism and capitalism, a system where the rich become richer and the poor become poorer. At the same time, the participation of the international thieves and robbers at the competition is a clear indication that the West is still indirectly controlling the economy and policies of Kenya.

Notwithstanding the miseries of pregnancy outside marriage and whose father has refused responsibility, Wanja terminates her pregnancy. The killing of Wanja's unborn child results from betrayal and here exploitation is also symbolic. Wanja terminates the pregnancy resulting from her relationship with Kimeria who is one of the exploiters of the people of Ilmorog. On the other hand, Wanja willingly accepts another pregnancy with Abdulla as the father of her child as he is a contestor to end the system of exploitation. She sees the child as representative of the future of a new Kenya that will be free from exploitation. The child, who Wanja is expecting, is also a

symbol of the new means and a new struggle, with new implications for surviving the corrupt, neo-colonial rule.

Furthermore, Karega and Munira in *Petals of Blood* come to understand the type of leaders they have after their experiences on the journey to Nairobi, and decide to inform the people of their class about the cunning of their leaders. They vow to fight for their rights until they win the battle. In a way, Wariinga, Wangari and Muturi in *Devil on the Cross* become activists in the hanging the devil, which is capitalism, on the cross to end the exploitation of the masses, the class of people they identify with. In *Matigari*, Matigari comes from the forest where he has been fighting the war of liberating Kenya from colonial Britain, hoping to enjoy the freedom he has been fighting for. After realising that there is still no freedom in Kenya, he decides to go back to the forest and continue to fight to free his people, the Kenyan nation. Literally, Matigari's return to fight shows that there is no peace in Kenya and Africa as a whole, the people fought for independence which they attained, but they are still fighting.

The three novels discuss the falling apart of the communities in Kenya. There is male oppression of the female, the oppression and the exploitation of the poor, peasants and the ordinary workers. People's lands are grabbed by those who have power. Therefore, in order to end this exploitation, the masses should unite to fight their enemy together. This is seen in the statement of Wariinga when she says:

Come one and all,
And behold the wonderful sight
Of chasing away the Devil
And his disciplines

Come one and all. (Ngugi, 1982a, pp. 74-75)

The colonial period has brought many new things to Kenya that changed Kenyans drastically, as is reflected in *Petals of Blood*, *Devil on the Cross* and *Matigari*. Ngugi sees the Kenyan society undergoing a whirlwind of conflicts of all sorts and, therefore, advises them to stop the practice of elitism to save Kenya from being driven into the deep dungeon out of which the white man claims he has taken it. Moreover, Ngugi continues to write, informing sympathisers and those who are interested, to assist the masses, guiding them without fear, leading them in their struggle. If they do that, he is optimistic that it would be the first step towards a possible revolution that can bring peace to Kenya.

5.4 RESISTANCE IN *MATIGARI*

The resistance of the masses in *Matigari* is ignited by Matigari who has come from the forest where he remained fighting the colonisers until the last coloniser, Robert Williams, was killed. Matigari ma Njiruungi, which means “the Patriots who survived the bullets”, then decides to come back so that he can be with his family and enjoy peace and freedom in independent Kenya. But what Matigari finds when he returns is the opposite of his hopes. He finds no peace and justice with the people he calls his family. Wherever he goes, near the garbage site where boys queue and are asked to pay in order to enter the garbage site, near the bush where he finds two corrupt policemen and the tractor driver sharing the money they collected from the boys and at the bar, where he rescues a woman being humiliated by the police, his search for truth and justice seems to be in vain. Matigari then decides to blow the trumpet of patriotism by going from place to place, calling his family to start a liberation struggle that can bring peace and justice to Kenya.

Matigari substantiates his intended victory in the struggle he wants to start in the following words:

The seeker of the truth never loses hope. The seeker of real justice never tires. A farmer does not stop planting seeds just because of the failure of one crop. Success is born of trying and trying again. Truth must seek justice and justice must seek the truth, and justice triumphs, truth will reign on earth. (Ngugi, 1989, p. 84)

Through Matigari, Ngugi encourages commitment and perseverance until victory is achieved. He wishes to present a coherent model of the liberation struggle challenge in terms of truth and justice that he is searching for in the various places within the city of Nairobi. When Matigari comes from the forest and mountains, he walks along the banks of the river. Ngugi remarks:

Then he sees what he is looking for: a huge mugumo tree, right in the middle of a cluster of other trees. It is remarkable for its very wide trunk, and its four roots are visible, with one jutting out from the middle, and three others sticking out at the sides. He then smiles as he stands his AK 47 against the tree and draws his sword from where it is hidden beneath his coat. He begins digging the ground next to the central root and covers the bottom of the hole with dry leaves. (Ngugi, 1989, p. 3)

The quotation above emphasises the actualities of resistance, and the burying of the weapons of war suggests an impregnation that will later bring forth revolutionary fruit. Cantalupo (1995) suggests that Matigari's burying his weapons of war is concealment or military caution which shows political awareness of the place where one finds oneself. Matigari assumes there is now justice and truth in independent Kenya, since he has killed the last oppressor, Robert Williams. After burying the weapons, he washes his hands and his face in the cold water of the river. The

cold water reminds him of the past, how they used to “sing throughout the night in the open air with the stress usually on belonging and loyalty and plans for the future where they shall gather, go home together, light the fire together and build their houses together” (Ngugi, 1989, pp. 4-6). This atmosphere encourages him to continue to search for justice and truth so that one day he can sit together with his family singing their songs the whole night without any interference from the government.

Matigari continues to direct revolutionary notion in the minds of Muriuki and Guthera through his utterances. With Matigari's utterances, Ngugi emphasises the regeneration and the continuity of resistance by the masses. Clough (1990) says that Ngugi's use of the struggle songs, especially in *Matigari*, is to evoke the mood and participatory element from the masses so that the struggle that started in *Petals of Blood*, through *Devil on the Cross*, should not fail, but continue until it yields its intended results. Similarly, Cantalupo (1995) refers to liberation songs used by Ngugi in his works as the Mau Mau's practice of special commitment when he says, “There is nothing peculiar about the men of a revolutionary army singing songs about the reasons for their rebellion although they seem to spend a remarkable time doing so” (1995, p. 117). Likewise, Ngugi (1982b) also says that songs can soothe the broken soul and the songs that people of revolution sing in *Matigari* do the same.

Furthermore, Ibrahim (1990) argues that Ngugi's primary concern for using liberation songs is political motivation for a liberation struggle which can better be communicated to the ideal audience through using a traditional way of communication, which is composing songs. He, furthermore, says that it is through songs that there is a great capability of mass appeal because songs can be heard in buses, offices, public bars and in homes. Accordingly, Ngugi (1989) supports the idea of using songs stating that it is a quick and wide way of informing people about

something because “songs spread like wildfire in a dry season. They spread through the villages and the people sing them day and night” (p. 95). It is a good thing to use songs to spread the message to the people as most people, literate and illiterate, can listen to them at the same time, far and near.

The masses are determined to continue with the struggle even though the government threatens them with arrests. This is seen in the address of the Minister of Justice and Truth when he speaks to the striking workers. The Minister informs the workers that they will be detained without trial because their strike is based on the ideology of Karl Marx which makes people crazy and confused. The workers are also informed that anyone who goes on strike against the company is actually striking against the government. Provoking the company is equated to sticking a finger in the nose of the ruling party which is the government; therefore, the ruling party will do all it can to preserve the peace in the country (Ngugi, 1989). The workers are urged to respect the words of His Excellence Ole Excellence to stop the strike and go back to work. The spirit of the workers in favour of the revolution is realised in the answer of Ngaruro wa Kiriro, one of the workers:

Our dispute is between the company owners and us, the workers, and is a dispute between labour and capital but your verdict shows that you, the government and the ruling party, are on the side of capital, then where is our government, we the workers? The labour of our hands is all we own, our own property and we sell our labour in the labour market. Tell me, if the buyer refuses to pay the price being asked by the buyer, has the seller not got the right to refuse to part with the wares until he gets a suitable price for them? Our strike is just such a refusal. We are withdrawing our labour from the market unless our demands are met. (Ngugi, 1989, p. 109)

Ngaruro's speech angers the Minister who accuses him of breaking the law against sedition and treason. The Minister then orders the police to throw him into jail where the other prisoners are. He informs the other workers to refrain from such utterances as those of Ngaruro, pointing out that the same will happen to any worker who chooses to defy the Minister's order.

In the first place, the minister forbids the workers to question his orders, and in the end, Matigari is arrested for asking questions. He is thus put in the same cell where Ngaruro (who first made some utterances against the speech of the minister) and other workers are kept. Before being thrown into the prison cell, Matigari tells the police that his country (referring to Kenya) will one day be delivered from exploitation and the corruption of those in power. He assures the Minister that the prisoners' silence does not mean they are cowards but it is because they are taking precautions so that they are not contaminated by the wickedness of the government. What Matigari is referring to as 'taking precautions' is that the workers who have been arrested are only preventing themselves from being eliminated before they accomplish their goal. He then tells his colleagues to keep on struggling for their freedom and not fear the threats of the police for "too much fear breeds misery in the land" (Ngugi, 1989, p. 112). With the past experiences of Matigari during the war of liberation from British colonialism, he is optimistic that the masses can win this new war of neo-colonialism.

The government expects everyone to dance to its tune when it comes to its administrative policies. Anyone found contravening the orders of the Minister of Justice and Truth cannot be spared by the law. As a result, the teacher and student are also arrested and being detained without trial for disobeying the minister's orders. Thus, the minister says that the court cannot allow educated people to mislead the public with Marxist doctrines and communist teachings. Fearless and with signs of confidence, the student informs the minister that even if he is detained

until he dies, he will continue to sing songs of revolution with those who are detained with him, “those who were gaoled the day before yesterday and the fifty who were killed this morning by the security forces”. With an upsurge of courage coupled with much bitterness such as he has never felt before, the student shouts out to the police:

Even if you detain us

Victory belongs to the people,

Victory belongs to the people! (Ngugi, 1989, p. 121)

The masses have been informed about the cunning of their rulers through songs and strikes by the workers. Everywhere, the people are preparing for strikes and demonstrations against their common enemy: exploitation and oppression by the ruling elite. The masses show bravery by continuing the struggle that they have started. After the student’s shouting, the teacher also takes over the campaign of defiance, informing the police of his intention to support the struggle. The teacher echoes that the student has revealed two truths: one for the oppressor and the other one for the oppressed. The teacher vows that he is not going to sing the song of the parrot, but his song will be a song of courage and hope that is sung by the brave and courageous students. As the police are covering the student and the teacher’s mouths, from somewhere in the crowd the student’s song is heard being sung by the crowd in one voice even though the police are cocking their guns and the minister is silencing the crowd. To affirm his mission, Matigari comes out of the crowd and stands before the minister in the form of a youth, pointing at the minister, saying:

And you, imperialist, and your servant John Boy, with all your other lackeys, ministers and leaders of the police force, the army and the courts, the prisons and the administration, know it today that your days are numbered, it is either you or us and the future belongs to us. (Ngugi, 1989, p. 124)

As a result, the minister feels that he is being disrespected. He thus orders the police to arrest Matigari after his brave speech, but this arouses the people to sing their songs of praise to Matigari even louder. The minister growls and tries to silence the crowd; he pleads with them to go home but to no avail. The police commissioner blows the whistle but still the people continue to sing. They rise and heave towards the minister, still singing loudly, as though they want to free Matigari and the other political prisoners. Eventually, the police and the army dash into the hall where the people are gathered and manage to chase them away. On their way back to their homes, the people keep on singing songs that praise Matigari and those which defy the government.

Matigari uses his mysterious power and escapes from prison. But soon after Matigari has escaped from prison, he is rearrested and sent to a mental hospital from where he escapes again. He then manages to steal a Mercedes Benz which he uses to go to John Boy's house. The police surround the house and later start shooting, not knowing that there is a bomb planted in the house by Matigari. The house of John Boy burns down but Matigari escapes unhurt. The incident of burning the house of John Boy's house culminates the hunt for Matigari wa Njiruungi by the security forces. At last, the police shoot Guthera and injure Matigari while Muriuki escapes unhurt.

Matigari's reason to come back home is to settle and enjoy freedom with his family in independent Kenya but, to his surprise, he is confronted and arrested by the police. As a result, Matigari searches for the justice and truth but fails to find the place where there is justice and truth. He then starts his campaign for a new rebellion against the corrupt government of Kenya. His first intervention starts with his encounter with the police who sets a dog upon Guthera, a woman, who after being saved by Matigari, later decides to join him to bring an end to the

exploitation of the down-trodden. Guthera becomes a changed person, and she reassures Matigari that she will strive to bring change to Kenya to liberate the oppressed from the claws of the ruling elite:

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 will we continue to follow the paths carved out for us by men? Aren't we in the majority anywhere? Let's go! From now on, I want to be among the vanguard. I shall never be left behind again. Matigari, stamp your feet to the rhythm and let the bullets jingle. May our fears disappear with the staccato sounds of our guns. (Ngugi, 1989, p. 140)

5.5 RESISTANCE AND REBELLION ACROSS *PETALS OF BLOOD, DEVIL ON THE CROSS AND MATIGARI*

Ngugi's views in the three novels emphasise a collective resistance against exploitation of any kind. Ngugi draws much of his influence from Fanon's (1990) works especially, *The wretched of the Earth*, where the main focus of his text is based on encouraging the masses to rebel against exploitation, and continue to struggle for their freedom from the elite. In *Detained: A writer's prison diary*, Ngugi emphasises that the universal dimension of resistance is a collective means of redemption. He, therefore, urges the masses to work as a unit in order to face their problem (Ngugi, 1981a).

Petals of Blood and *Devil on the Cross* can be juxtaposed regarding the common theme of neo-colonialism. The two books both show how the Kenyans were first enslaved through racism by the colonisers and now they are enslaved by their own, native, neo-colonial elite, for instance, in *Petals of Blood*, Mzigo, Kimeria and Chui become the directors of Theng'eta Brewery which

was first owned by Wanja and Abdulla as a small scale business. Theng'eta is a community drink which is made with care in a traditional way, but now it is commercialised and sold for a profit, as a result, the community, who used to enjoy the drink, cannot do that anymore because it is now patented.

The possible remedy to end exploitation is hinted at by Ngugi through the characters in all three novels selected for this current research study. Ngugi suggests revolution as the only option that can assist the masses to win their freedom from their oppressors. In *Petals of Blood*, Wanja supports the struggle by murdering Chui, Kimeria and Mzigo, the three key figures known as the neo-colonialists, who have ruined the beauty of Ilmorog for their own selfish gain. One other person, like the Kimerias, Nderi wa Riera, is also gunned down by an unknown assassin in Nairobi. First, Wanja allies with the neo-colonial oppressor, Kimeria, who impregnates her. Neo-colonialism is also symbolic in Wanja's introduction of a brothel and becoming a prostitute, as Karega argues, the whole nation of Kenya is now "prostituted and turned over to foreigners for thorough exploitation, because, it seems, the new ruling elite class has not bargained their bodies only, but they have done so with their souls as well" (Ngugi, 1977, p. 344). In support of the fruits of capitalism, Wanja adopts an ideology of "you eat or you are eaten" (Ngugi, 1977, p. 234). In contrast to Wanja, Wariinga does not betray her own self-respect and her society. Wariinga, instead, decides to rear her child even in difficult circumstances, namely being young, unemployed and the child being fatherless. Though, like Wanja who is deserted by Kimeria after he has impregnated her, Wariinga too, is sexually exploited by the Rich Man of Ngorika and oppressed by her employer, Boss Kihara.

One of the similarities between Wanja in *Petals of Blood* and Wariinga of *Devil on the Cross* is that they both sell their bodies and, in so doing, they unknowingly support the aims of

capitalism. The second similarity is that they both kill their exploiters in the end. Though the struggle against exploitation seems to be ongoing for them and even harder for Wanja and Wariinga because they will be in jail for terms which are unknown to them, the better side of it is that they have contributed towards the struggle by striking back in a violent way. Muturi and the group that he has organised in *Devil on the Cross* (1982a) manage to stop the ceremony and chase away the thieves and robbers; however, Karega, a worker and a student are arrested. The revenge by Wariinga may be seen as an individual achievement, but the fact that she uses the gun which Muturi has given her to kill the Old Man of Ngorika and his allies constitutes that her revenge is for the whole group that is being exploited.

It is revealed in the three chosen novels that the power of exploitation rests heavily on issues of the economy of the country, Kenya. Because the masses are helpless and live in dire poverty, they have no choice but to rebel against the people responsible for exploiting them. Since exploitation and oppression rest heavily on economic issues, the state of the economy in the country becomes a source of resistance by the exploited group in the country (Kessler, 1994). Ngugi shows the resistance of the masses who feel that they are economically exploited by their leaders. Ngugi, therefore, urges the Kenyan government to adopt the ideology of Marxism because he sees socialism as the only solution to the continuing struggle between the oppressors and the oppressed in postcolonial Kenya (Ngugi, 1982a).

Keeping his promise to carry the banner of the struggle forward, Karega becomes the herald of change and of the cause for new possibilities. From his past experiences, he is quick to understand what exploitation really is and what can possibly bring it to an end. Karega's political awareness leads him to realise that change in Kenya can only be attained by revealing to the suffering community what the bourgeoisie are doing. Unlike Munira who understands the new

world in the context of religion, Karega understands the existence of the new world from the standpoint of the Marxists. He believes that the victims of the capitalist economy, the masses, should not take up spears and arrows to struggle for their freedom as they have already done that; all they are supposed to do this time is to sing the songs of courage and hope, and continue with mass demonstrations and strikes in order to end the oppression and exploitation in their country. He encourages the masses not to fear any type of harassment by the authorities but to continue the struggle until a humane kingdom can come to Kenya to replace the inhumane kingdom which is in existence. When the police inspector asks him if he still plans to kill more of his enemies, he replies:

I do not believe in the elimination of individuals. There are many Kimerias and Chuis in the country. They are the products of a system, just as workers are products of a system. It is the system that needs to be changed and only the workers of Kenya and the peasants can do that. (Ngugi, 1977, p. 308)

As Ilmorog becomes industrised by the capitalists, the relative social and political weight of the middle class diminishes. Karega sees that things are not done as promised by their leaders during the struggle for independence. To him the masses are still exploited and, therefore, the struggle for liberation has become a betrayal by the leaders for failing to keep their promises. Karega is then joined by two senior members, Abdulla and Nyakinyua, and they march together to present their grievances concerning their MP who is failing to attend to their requests to the leaders in Nairobi. Nyakinyua and Abdulla also come to realise that the struggle for the liberation of Kenya has been betrayed by the elite after they had helped them to achieve independence. When the elite procured high positions in the independent government, they forgot their own suffering, as well as the people who sacrificed their lives for the sake of freedom for all. The elite retain the

colonial structures for their own benefit while the people, who actually fought in the forest, remain landless and poor. The only hope to the masses is to continue with their revolution against neo-colonial forces.

Ngugi (1977) uses Wanja's sexual abuse as a symbol of the Kenyan government being unable to implement self-government accordingly and eloquently, signals that pre-independence equals post-dependence in Kenya and, by extension, Africa. The dreams and aspirations of the people and their socio-economic and cultural realities are shattered by the elite's worship of the western life style, namely that of ridiculing and treading upon the rights of the masses. Thus, independence turns out to be a mere continuation of the colonial policy and, therefore, an exclusion of the local culture. Blinded by his position and status in society, Kimeria and his two colleagues fail to realise Wanja's cunning plan and, as a result, she is able to carry out her plan of eliminating both of them without fail. Wanja is now determined for a new transformation and refuses to accept the new status quo created by the neo-colonial elite.

The contrasting environments and situations of Nairobi and Ilmorog help to make clear the economic situation and international capitalism represented in the contrast between the city and the moral standards of the developing Ilmorog. The city of Nairobi represents an economy where extreme greed and individualism are exercised. On the other hand, Ilmorog reflects the spirit of communal existence and group economy that is later changed by the capitalist activities of the internal elite. Unlike in the past, Ilmorog is no longer a community with thriving villages and a huge population where everybody enjoys its glory. The peasants enjoyed whatever was in their forests and rivers, and they ploughed the soil as much as they could with the fertile soil bringing forth every type of crop to nourish the sons and daughters of this village. This can be seen in a statement by Ngugi (1977) when he states, "How they toiled together, clearing the wilderness,

cultivating, planting: how they all fervently prayed for rain and deliverance in times of drought and pestilence!” (p. 120).

The journey to the city manifests the spirit of unity among the people as it was in the past; it includes Nyakinyua, who is regarded as the mother figure in the community. Through her, the past and the present are merged to give the group moral strength to continue with what they have planned. As a way of encouragement she informs the group how, in the past, the people of Ilmorog resisted the arrival of the Whites in their area, telling them that all was possible because of the unity they had among themselves. This journey also reminds her of the courageous spirit that they had to resist the Whites. She then continues to encourage the group to undertake such a march in the spirit of co-operating against their common enemy. Nyakinyua assures them that together they can achieve their goal through their great effort, but if they are divided they would all fall. Because of the many stories and words of encouragement from Nyakinyua, the group is dedicated to this journey, carrying on the waves of hope and promises as they move on, despite suffering hunger and thirst. A new feeling among them all is that the community’s crisis needs to be solved, and that it needs a communal response which can emerge from the group. Consequently, everyone is ready to push forward as far as his or her strength will allow.

Moreover, Ngugi portrays the major characters in *Petals of Blood* (1977) as being sufficiently exploited because they are challenging the establishment of the unjust social order of the government, and as a result of their challenges to the ruling class, the masses are aroused to an awareness of their plight. On the other hand, there is the group of conformists, the national bourgeoisie, who seem to be determined to keep the unjust, social system in place. These are represented by the Nderi wa Riera, the MP, the priests, Chui, Mzigo, and Kimeria, who are at ease with this polluted system of capitalism. This group of conformists continues to lust for

wealth, power and worldly pleasures at the expense of the masses. They continue to rule the masses with injustice, and continue to be selfish, not paying attention to the grievances of the people they lead.

As a novel written in the post-independence milieu, *Petals of Blood*, illustrates the combative will of the masses to battle and triumph over their oppressors and thus it is in this novel that manifests the revolution of the masses against the elite. In the first chapter, the novel provides the mirror through which the happenings in neo-colonial Kenya are projected. Faced with a drought, a delegation from Ilmorog, acting on the advice of Munira, Karega, Abdulla and Wanja, decides to embark on a journey to the city to meet their representative, Nderi wa Riera. The journey is portrayed as cumbersome, hazardous and immersed in bitter experiences, such as hunger, thirst and the wickedness of the city elite, such as Reverend Jerrod Brown, Raymond Chui and Hawkins Kimeria.

After the journey, there is a gradual transformation that comes to Ilmorog, changing it from a rural community to an urban settlement bubbling with industries and economic activities. This change brought wealth to the elite, such as Raymond Chui, Kimeria, Mzigo and Nderi wa Riera, while, at the same time, the change brought the beginning of gradual gravitation towards the death of old Ilmorog. The death of old Ilmorog signals the rise of the exploitation of the masses: they are marginalised and pushed to the fringes of old Ilmorog, as well as displaced from their jobs and lands by a combined group of Kenyan capitalists, acting in alliance with foreign interests. This, therefore, provides Ngugi's comprehensive statement of his commitment and humanism, which is summed up by Killam (1984) in the following statement: "I believe that every Kenyan has a right to decent housing, decent food and decent clothing. I also believe in the national economy which is free from any foreign domination and imperialist control" (p. 97).

Ngugi, therefore, opts for a revolution as the only viable method to enforce changes in the condition of the masses and prevent their further exploitation by the ruling elite. The deaths of Chui, Mzigo and Kimeria in the fire that consumes Wanja's brothel can be interpreted that their dying is not a solution in itself; however, it is a symptom of the final destruction of the base of exploiters in Kenya.

Then Wariinga decides to go back home though she does not know what to do there and where to start in life. Fortunately, on her way back home, she meets Wangari who, through her interaction with Muturi, raises her awareness about neo-colonialism, capitalism and their practices as the source of the poverty in Kenya. Sexual harassment is one weapon that the men in position use to trap and abuse women in Nairobi. Those who refuse, like Wariinga, go through exploitation of some kind without any sympathy. Filled with the lessons from the past and her present experience, Wariinga takes on the responsibility of being a spokeswoman for her community. She, therefore, gathers the means and skills, as well as shows her concern for the welfare of the masses, workers, peasants and students above her personal pleasure and satisfaction. Wariinga does not give up to life amid what happens to her. Disguised as Kareendi, her message to the society, especially to modern Kareendis is to be strong and hopeful. Even after giving birth, Wariinga strives to get back to school, takes up secretarial studies and later ends up as a mechanic erecting her own garage that assists her community.

Furthermore, the novels, *Petals of Blood* and *Devil on the Cross*, portray the beginning of the revolution while the novel, *Matigari*, reveals what the masses are about to do because of the maltreatment they are receiving from the elite. There is cohesion in how the three postcolonial novels expose the exploitation of the masses by the elite. In *Petals of Blood*, the masses learn how they are exploited and start to plan how they will free themselves from this bondage. In

Devil on the Cross, the workers take action regarding what they have already planned, while the novel, *Matigari*, resolves the actions that have to be taken because of the refusal of the elite to change the status quo. In the following section, the context of resistance and rebellion of the masses against exploitation across *Petals of Blood* (1977), *Devil on the Cross* (1982a) and *Matigari* (1989) are explained, and thus, the theme of an active revolution is discussed.

5.6 ACTIVE REVOLUTION IN THE THREE NOVELS

The first exploitation that Matigari encounters is the children who are chasing after the tractor that is carrying rubbish to the dumping site. These kids are after the rubbish as this is their only way of survival. Matigari cannot understand why these kids are running after the rubbish tractor and, therefore, decides to follow them. When he reaches the dump, he finds a security guard at its entrance, sitting on a chair. The children are queuing at this entrance, and whoever enters the site pays a fee to the security guard. When Matigari asks one of the children why they are paying money to the security guard, he says that it is the rule for permission into the site, and failure to pay something means that one cannot have access to the rubbish being dumped there. The little boy also informed Matigari that the security guard shares this money with the driver of the tractor. This sends a wave of shock through Matigari who asks, "Could such things be possible in this day and age in a country like this? Is this happening in broad daylight?" (Ngugi, 1989, p. 11). Thus Ngugi compares the hearts of the new regime to that of Pharaoh who had a cold heart with no remorse for others.

In the two novels that have already been discussed, *Petals of Blood* and *Devil on the Cross*, Ngugi focuses on the aspiration for revolution, but in *Matigari* he is responding to the repression and exploitation by the regime. Ngugi, through Matigari, projects a vision of a New Jerusalem,

that is, a new hope for a better future for Kenya which is only possible if the people of Kenya can come together and chase away the exploiters. In the novel, *Matigari* (1989) Matigari departs in the midst of thunder and lightning and is never seen again. The departing and no return of Matigari amidst thunder and lightning symbolises the victory of the masses over exploitation though there are hardships involved in their struggle for freedom from exploitation. What Ngugi wants to see in Kenya is justice and truth. Matigari echoes the same sentiments when looking for a place where he can find justice and truth in Kenya (Ngugi, 1989). These values conform to equality and brotherly love that are solidly based on Christian ethics. Not only this, but such values match well with the traditional Gikuyu or Kenyan values which are expressed in the traditional songs that are found in the novel. If these values can be implemented, they can assist and rescue Kenya from destruction. Matigari decides to put his belt of war back on after realising that there is nothing he can do to return the justice and truth that can bring peace needed in Kenya unless he uses the gun again. His blood and that of Guthera mix and are dripping to the ground. To Matigari, it is significant that both men and women's blood will water the soil as a sign that the soil will bear fruit for a new nation in Kenya.

Again there is a very heavy rain that falls when Matigari and Guthera dive into the waters and are never seen again. This rain puts out the fires started by Matigari that are burning the houses and fields of the elite. The fire symbolises the cleansing of the land from the evils, while water symbolises the revival and growth of a new nation. Ngugi acknowledges other perceptions of reality which can help the people he wants to address in their dilemma, for example, the rain and the fire. In this way, he acknowledges the cultural roots of the Kenyan peasants and workers, and at the same time, he links up with the old, cultural environment which he has been deprived of; therefore, he has decided to go into what he refers to as "eternal exile" because he does not know

whether he will ever return to his home country. Nonetheless, the irony is that Ngugi now has gone into capitalist America.

Another revelation is that Ngugi uses a large number of songs in the novel, *Matigari* just like in *I Will Marry When I Want* which he co-authored with Ngugi wa Mirri, and most of the songs are about the Mau Mau liberation struggle and the legendary man, called Matigari. This is an indication that the masses are now involved in the struggle for socio-economic and political liberation as the people were during the struggle for the independence of Kenya from Britain. The only difference is that the struggle of the masses is now against the economic instability among them brought by the neo-colonial elite, while the former struggle was for both economic and political independence from the British colonialists. These songs demonstrate some of the exploitative activities committed by the elite against the masses. This shows that the novel, *Matigari*, is about a renewed war that is raging between the masses and the elite of Kenya.

Matigari's crucial mandate is to tell stories that will wipe away the lies that have encroached the minds of his nation. He does this by presenting a version of history about the contemporary political situation without a time frame, so that the conceptual reality which is being addressed can have meaning for the reader. Readers can apply this historical presentation at any time, and to any place by contemplating the real state of affairs in the postcolonial situation in their countries, apart from Kenya. In the entire novel, the concern is about the truth and the linking of the past to the present, and it tries to restore voices to the land. Matigari focuses on the reaction of the oppressed against the oppressor. So what Ngugi is aiming at is the voice for the poor who, he feels, are betrayed by their leaders, and the engine that makes him write this novel is his longing for a new Kenya so that he can also live in his home country again without any fear of intimidation or maybe, detention, as happened before he went into exile. Ngugi observes the

failures and betrayals of independence in his native country and, therefore, insists that the oppressed should be helped to regain freedom in this new era.

To say the least, Ngugi seems to have offered the most interesting examples of neo-colonial elitism in the three novels selected for this study. These novels show that there is a constant struggle for survival that promises good fruits to Kenya's poorest sectors. Ngugi uses the town of Ilmorog in *Petals of Blood* and *Devil on the Cross* and the city of Nairobi in *Matigari* as the settings for dialogues, actions and events that unfold between the two opposing classes. The novel, *Matigari*, foregrounds the craving of a man in the face of existential difficulties. Matigari craves for a place where there is justice and truth which are no longer experienced in the new setting of Kenya. This character is used by Ngugi as representative of the postcolonial Kenyan masses in a very difficult time of their existence, which points to their total frustration and doom.

Equally, the novel, *Matigari*, features the story of a man in postcolonial Kenya who is in an endless, futile struggle for recognition, power and personal glory. Thus, Ngugi's fictional works convey a situation where a human being is a victim of his society. As much as Matigari wants to help his people to understand his mission, he ends up being attacked by them. His desire is to help his family to come out of their doldrums, but the people he refers to as his family reject him. What Ngugi is conveying through this character is the fact that there is hatred among the masses though they want to accomplish one objective. The suffering of Matigari on the streets of Nairobi is typical of the suffering of the Kenyan masses and those in other regions of Africa. His reaction to his agonies reveals the reaction of the masses to their agonies as human beings.

Out of despair and irritated by the acts of the elite at the cave, Muturi organises a demonstration with the people of the villages around the town of Ilmorog, which includes peasants, teachers,

students and the illiterate; he incites them to attack the national and international thieves and robbers who are gathered at the cave to compete for the top position to represent international thieves and robbers in Ilmorog. In the same vein, Wanja, in *Petals of Blood*, sets a trap where she manages to eliminate Mugo, Mkize and Kimeria. In *Devil on the Cross*, Wariinga is also able to kill her lover and potential spouse's father on the day that she is supposed to marry him. These incidents are proof enough that the masses are starting to reason together as comrades and are able to cause the destruction of some of their exploiters. This trend of events points to an active revolution that is taking place (Ngugi, 1993).

Moreover, in *Petals of Blood*, Ngugi's social intentions are forcefully reiterated through the characters he draws, as well as the setting of the story. At the same time he shows that revolutionary politics is the only way to freedom for the masses. It is in this novel that Ngugi uses the theme of neo-colonial elitism to reflect the prevailing images of disintegration, decay, despair and the exploitation of the Kenyan peasantry by the national bourgeoisie allied to international forces. Through that, a general situation of malaise is thus created among the masses that inspire alienation and apathy between the two groups. While the rural inhabitants are threatened by the lack of water, hospitals and strong hands to till the soil, the city people are "drinking and laughing and making love out of excess of fullness" (Ngugi, 1977, p. 112). Nevertheless, the masses are determined in their social war against injustices and are committed to grab every opportunity to reach their goal for freedom.

However, *Devil on the Cross* ends in a manner that suggests some possibilities of a new social order in the future. In a twist of irony, Ngugi reveals that the Rich Old Man of Ngorika, who has earlier tarnished Wariinga's image, is no other than the father of Gaturia, her fiancé, who is arranging to marry her. Though this discovery shocks the two lovers, the situation affords

Wariinga an opportunity to avenge her earlier humiliation as she kills the old man and two of his guests at the reception organised to receive her and her intended husband, Gatuiria. Although this is Wariinga's individual achievement, it is seen by Ngugi also as an action that forms part of the revolutionary process meant to exterminate the oppressors completely. In *Petals of Blood*, an extreme appetite for property acquisition and ownership by the bourgeois is revealed. The bourgeoisie, in alliance with international allies, is pitted against characters, such as Karega, Munira, Nyakinyua, Abdulla and Wanja, who are all freedom fighters. Wanja represents the exploited class of women in Kenya, and prostitutes her talent in order to survive. It is the totality of these characters and their acts that energises Ngugi to advocate for a revolutionary alternative and endorse it as a viable method of enforcing changes in the conditions of the workers and preventing their further exploitation by the elite.

The death of the Chui, Mzigo and Kimeria, the three well-known exploiters of women, is a sign that soon the exploitation of the masses will come to an end. Although it can be argued that the death of the three women abusers is not a solution in itself, it is, however, a symptom of the final destruction of their base. In *Matigari* (1989), the showers of rains that occur after Matigari and Guthera have fled the scene where the police have shot her symbolises a new beginning that awaits the country of Kenya. Therefore, this study concludes that political violence by the masses will soon bring the corruption and the exploitation of the masses by the elite to an end.

Thus, Ngugi's analysis of the relationship between the elite and the masses mirrors more or less the same situation that existed between the colonialists and the colonised. The fact that the colonialists did not totally leave Kenya as planned during the liberation struggle makes it easy for them to indulge in the affairs of the country, and at the same time train the new leaders in their own ways of governing. The three novels, *Petals of Blood*, *Devil on the Cross* and

Matigari, reveal that the new Kenyan elite have become exploitative and corrupt in nature and are worse than the former colonisers. Their behaviour is seen in how the police, for example, treat the delegation from Ilmorog.

Nonetheless, Ngugi wants to see justice, truth and peace prevailing in Kenya. Matigari says the same when he moves about in Nairobi, looking for a place where he can find ‘justice and truth’, (Ngugi, 1989, p. 62). If equality and brotherly love should rule in Kenya, there would be no class division and exploitation of other people. Matigari decides to go back to war because he has failed to find a place in Kenya where peace and justice prevail. Guthera is shot by the soldiers who are chasing after them and she is bleeding heavily from the wounds caused by the gun shots. In this way, Ngugi, being part of the society of Kenya, writes to acknowledge the cultural roots of the Kenyan peasants and workers; at the same time, he links up with the old cultural environment which he has been deprived of.

The chapter reveals that many songs which praise the Mau Mau liberation struggle and the legendary man, called Matigari, are used in the novel *Matigari*. When the people watch as Matigari set the house of John Boy Junior on fire, they spontaneously burst into a song:

Everything that belongs to those slaves must burn!

Yes, everything that belongs to these slaves must burn!

Their coffee must burn!

Yes, their coffee must burn!

Their tea must burn!

Yes their tea must burn! (Ngugi, 1989, p. 167)

As the song is being sung by mostly women, the rest of the people make some torches from the burning house and join in the singing:

Their cars must burn!

Yes, their cars must burn!

Let all the oppressors' and traitors' cars burn!

Yes, let all their cars burn! (Ngugi, 1989, p. 167)

The praises to Matigari and the Mau Mau movement indicate the involvement of the masses in an active struggle for liberation from exploitation. The involvement of the masses shows that there is a renewed war that is raging between the masses and the elite, a war against the repercussions of elitism. Though Ngugi believes that Kenya has gone an extra mile from its reality, but still, it can be reversed but only if the masses unite to fight their common enemy without retiation of some kind. The collapse of the dream for a better, post-independence future has just created an atmosphere of repression and fear, transforming the people from saying the truth to self-interested egoists blatantly exposed in the answers of the inmates who are with Matigari in prison cells. Matigari acts as a prophet who tries to reinvigorate the spirit of the Mau Mau by representing the ideals of resistance and rebellion against oppression. He, therefore, embodies the role of the prophet by projecting the truth to the people and, at the same time, passes judgement on the present state of affairs of the government. Therefore, Ngugi through Matigari tells the stories that will wipe away the lies that have encircled the minds of the Kenyans.

In a nutshell, the novels, *Petals of Blood*, *Devil on the Cross* and *Matigari*, mirror the exploitation of the masses in post-colonial Kenya that, according to Ngugi, is brought by the

capitalist economic system left behind by the colonisers. The masses in Kenya, in particular, suffer hardships through corruption, the lack of development in some areas, a weak economy, predatory governance, persistent conflicts and the decline of proper infrastructure, as well as stunted livelihoods caused by the decay of governance.

5.7 WOMEN IN PROTEST

Kenyan women are represented by some women protagonists in the three studied novels. These women also decide to join the liberation struggle against exploitation by the ruling elite. They are the most exploited, especially when it comes to employment in both the government and private sectors. A heroine in *Devil on the Cross* (1982a), Wariinga, suffers a series of misfortunes at the hands of men of high status. Wariinga is betrayed, firstly, by her uncle who conspires with the Rich Man of Ngorika to make her his girlfriend. Ogude (1994) points out that the action of Wariinga's uncle to sell her to the Rich Man of Ngorika shows the exploitation of the poor by the rich in neo-colonial Kenya. Because of his poverty, Wariinga's uncle engages in an act which he knows will not benefit his niece but only destroy her, but he does that to gain some money in return. The Rich Man of Ngorika is one of the neo-colonisers whose aim is to milk the resources of Kenya just to enrich themselves. Her second misfortune is when the Rich Man of Ngorika abandons her after he has deflowered her and made her pregnant. She attempts suicide twice but, fortunately, she is rescued by unknown persons. The rescuers try to teach Wariinga that to commit suicide is not a good way of solving a problem but rather to try to find a solution to the problems as they arise.

The third blow is Wariinga's culture which teaches her that she has no worth in life once she becomes pregnant out of wedlock. The neo-colonial culture also contributes to her misery

because it causes her to feel that the colour of her skin and her appearance are the causes of all her misfortune. This perception of herself makes her listen to the voice of the exploiter, which misleads her regarding the meaning of the beauty of a woman. She becomes despondent with no direction, except to commit suicide and, therefore, she easily falls prey to the circumstances surrounding her. When she is driven away from her work by Boss Kihara, she decides to go back to her home area, Ilmorog. On her way there she becomes aware of the type of people in leadership in postcolonial Kenya. She discovers that for a woman to acquire or keep a job in Kenya, she must give in to the immoral behaviour of her employers. This is bolstered by Boss Kihara when he clearly states that there are no free jobs for women in Kenya:

Ah, Kareendi, jobs are very hard to come by these days. But a girl like you ... it should not be too difficult to find something for you to do. But, Kareendi, a matter like this cannot be finalised in the office. Let us go across to the Modern Love Bar and Lodging to discuss the question more fully. (Ngugi, 1982a, p. 19)

Kareendi refuses the advances but, when she enters another office, she meets another boss with the same smiles, questions, rendezvous, and the target is still Kareendi's thighs, not her resume. Now Wariinga, who disguises herself as Kareendi, comes to know that the devils that always traumatise her in her dreams are nothing else but these exploiters, such as Boss Kihara and his like. These are the people who exploit the poor and, at the same time, ruin the country's resources with the help of their allies, the foreigners from western countries. She now questions the position of the working class and peasants in independent Kenya:

Who are we? Who are we? Who are we? First, our arms which we use to type their letters and our hands become theirs, our power becomes theirs, second are our brains which we

use to do whatever they ask us to without fail. Third, is our humanity... they work out their frustrations on us, ... we are insulted, but we keep quiet because we are supposed to have hearts that are not easily moved to tears, and the fourth one is our thighs, most of us can only get a job or keep them only by allowing the likes of Boss Kihara to paw our thighs. (Ngugi, 1982a, p. 206)

Wangari is disappointed in the act of the police for failing to arrest the thieves and robbers. She therefore goes and organises a crowd to chase the thieves and robbers away. When Wariinga is convinced of who the exploiters are at the gathering in the cave, she then decides to join the Njeruca crowd who have been organised by Wangari (a woman) and Muturi to chase away the thieves and robbers. The place is completely burned down by the crowd. All the thieves and robbers, who are gathered to celebrate their riches gained through exploiting the masses, leave “darting away like arrows while others escape through the windows like birds in flight. There is chaos of running feet as the owners of the palaces and mansions in Ilmorog Golden Heights are being chased by the poor Njeruca shanty dwellers. While the rich are running from the cave, some of their expensive cars are burning and the poor run after them roaring like thousand angry lionesses whose cubs have been taken away from them” (Ngugi, 1982a, p. 207-208). Wariinga and other women gather some sticks and join the men in chasing away the foreign thieves and robbers though they are surrounded by their local home guards who are armed with guns. In this scene it shows that women are no longer idle in the struggle but have joined their men actively to change the status quo of the current oppressive regime.

Hence, the picture seen at the cave attests to the fact that the liberation struggle is now on and the women are also taking part and they are in the lead. The mastermind of the strike at the cave is Wangari who also summoned the police to come and arrest the thieves and robbers. According to

Aidoo (2007), today's African women have changed their identity from being listeners of men to women of action. In her novel, *A Love Story* (2007), she chronicles the lives of three women who were once victims of male abuse but all decided to join the struggle for survival and happiness. Wangari is arrested in the process but vows to continue fighting on the side of the exploited because she is also exploited. Muturi is also arrested, but before the police apprehend him, he gives a gun to Wariinga. Wariinga uses the same gun to kill the Rich Man of Ngorika, Kihaahu wa Gatheca and Gitutu wa Gataanguru who she meets outside the door after shooting Gaturia's father. Wariinga's killing of the three neo-colonisers points to a spirit of resistance which strengthens her desire to rid her community of the humiliation and exploitation by the capitalist elite. Ogude supports the idea of killing the capitalists and says that it is also Ngugi's hope in the "victim type and the possibility of regeneration" (Ogude, 1999, p. 81).

Another heroine who vows to take the banner of the liberation struggle further is Wanja in *Petals of Blood* (1977). Wanja traps the three directors of the Theng'eta Breweries, inviting them to her brothel. She intends to burn them to death but is beaten to it by Munira. Wanja becomes an activist of change in the commercialised Ilmorog where the poor are oppressed and exploited by those in power (Ngugi, 1977). A girl named, Akinyi, visits Karega and promises him that the girls and boys are behind him in the struggle to chase away the land grabbers from Ilmorog so that they will return their ancestral land to its true owners. In *Matigari* (1989), another woman, Guthera, decides to join Matigari wherever he goes in order to bring justice and peace to Kenya. She does not turn back and is shot dead by the police who are following them when they are on their way to take the weapons that Matigari once buried under a mugumo tree near the river. In all three novels, women are also at the centre, striving to bring about a new identity, different from their past experiences and circumstances. Ngugi's message on the role that women play in

the struggle against exploitation is that they also have a fighting spirit and are without fear. This spirit is seen in Wariinga who decides to murder her exploiter even when she is about to enter into a loving relationship with Gatuiria.

Kessler (1994) states that Ngugi's female characters become increasingly resourceful as the novels progress, as is witnessed in Wanja, Wangari, Wariinga and Guthera. The three novels reveal how the female protagonists begin to acquire new identities, for instance, all the women protagonists move from self-ignorance to awareness, assurance and self-reliance. Wanja relinquishes prostitution and becomes an activist for the masses who manages to kill the three cunning rich men; Wariinga reorganises and becomes an engineer and community activist who manages to kill her exploiter, and Guthera leaves prostitution and joins hands with Matigari to fight for justice and truth in Kenya. According to Daabu (2008) the women have acquired a new identity and have become powerful superwomen and leaders who sponsor and mastermind resistance movements that aim at freeing the exploited masses.

5.8 A NEW KENYA IS IMMINENT

In each of the three novels selected for this study, there is a possible solution to the struggle that the masses are embarking on. In *Petals of Blood*, Ngugi reveals that Wanja aborts Kimeria's unborn baby but accepts that of Abdulla. Her child with Abdulla represents a new Kenya which Wanja and her team have vowed to fight for. To prove that Wanja and her colleagues will soon win the struggle against neo-colonialism, she manages to kill Kimeria, Mzigo and Chui by burning them all at the same time in a fire in her brothel. The three are regarded as the pillars of neo-colonialism in Ilmorog, and their elimination is a step forward in overcoming the obstacles brought by neo-colonialism and its system of capitalism.

Another hint of a possible solution to the end of neo-colonialism is observed in *Devil on the Cross* through Wangari, Wariinga and Muturi. Wangari and Muturi organise a strike and manage to chase away the thieves and robbers who are gathered at the cave in Ilmorog, though under heavy security by the police. Though they lose five of their members, they also manage to kill two policemen. The fact that the police, the local, as well as international, thieves and robbers run away from the scene is an assurance that the struggle will soon be over. On the other hand, Wariinga kills The Rich Man of Ngorika and Kimeria at her wedding reception. The elimination of the two capitalists is symbolically the elimination of neo-colonialism and capitalism in postcolonial Kenya. Once capitalism is removed in Kenya, socialism may be set up (Ngugi, 1986b).

Just like what happens in *Devil on the Cross* and *Petals of Blood* where the exploiters are killed, the end of the novel, *Matigari*, where John Boy Junior's house is burnt, the elite cars are burnt, and elite run away signifies the end to neo-colonialism. After his encounter with the children who are exploited, Matigari is convinced that nothing has really changed in independent Kenya. Matigari manages to escape from the mental hospital. His aim is to collect his weapons of war and start a new struggle against neo-colonialism. On his way to the river, Guthera is shot and dies, and Matigari is injured in the process. Nevertheless, Matigari manages to dive into the water before the police catch them. They are never seen again. Symbolically, vanishing, and never being seen again represents the vanishing of the system of neo-colonialism from the face of Kenya forever. After they have gone, and the police not able to find them, rain start to fall. John Boy Junior's house is still burning but the rain puts out the fire. The rain putting out the fire in John Boy Junior's house symbolises that soon the exploitation will be torn down by the actions of the oppressed while the burning down of John Boy Junior's house symbolises the end

of the system of capitalism brought by the colonisers, such as John Boy Junior. Ngugi therefore has managed, to evoke the spirit of a fight, a liberation struggle, against neo-colonialism and its influence in contemporary Kenya.

5.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter has examined and analysed the topic of resistance and rebellion of the masses in the three novels selected for this study, *Petals of Blood* (1977), *Devil on the Cross* (1982a) and *Matigari* (1989). It has been revealed that, though there are failures in the struggle for selfhood and liberation from neo-colonialism, there are successes at the end. The revelation shows that the masses are eager to continue with the struggle, no matter how hard it may be.

Ngugi blames the suffering of the masses, firstly, on the former colonialists who planted the system of capitalism in the name of religion, education and modern development (Ngugi, 1981b). The Kenyans fought colonialism but now they have to fight neo-colonialists who are exploiting them for their personal interests. At the same time, Ngugi argues that the only solution to the problem of exploitation is to engage in an economic struggle which can solely be achieved by the masses through their comradeship. Ngugi encourages the masses to continue their struggle without any fear so that class division can end and peace and freedom can return to Kenya. His only wish is to see the end of the dehumanisation and exploitation of the masses in Kenya.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND CONTRIBUTION TO THE STUDY

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This research study has been necessitated by the desire to analyse neo-colonial elitism and its influence in postcolonial Kenya using Ngugi's *Petals of Blood* (1977), *Devil on the Cross* (1982a) and *Matigari* (1989). Ngugi's three novels have revealed how the liberation struggle by the masses can become a success. The study has shown how Ngugi mediates in cases that can fan a rebellion by the nation, by making the masses aware of issues that are likely to destroy their existence and by encouraging them to fight against oppression. Thus, Ngugi's experience of imprisonment in Kenya made him reach out to others. It is in this way that he seems to achieve a sense of balance and wholeness in the life of the oppressed. This chapter concludes the study that has been undertaken by giving a summary of the findings, the relevance of the theoretical frameworks that were used to direct the study, a digestion of the questions and a review of the study.

6.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

It has been revealed in the study that Ngugi uses literature of denunciation as a strong weapon to re-order and change the society of neo-colonial Kenya, as well as shape its history. He has vowed to support the struggle for the liberation of the masses, as he clearly states, "the exploitative systems are terrified at the sound of the wheels of literature for denunciation" (Ngugi 1993, pp. 96-97). This is evident in *Petals of Blood*, *Devil on the Cross* and *Matigari* that were studied and analysed in this study. Remarkably, Ngugi shows that the previous champions of liberation are now the perpetrators of the same oppression and exploitation they risked their lives fighting against. Owing to the consequences brought by capitalism, there is now a crisis in

Kenya. In order to end neo-colonial elitism, Ngugi advocates for reforms in Kenya that would be ideal for all the classes of people. Oddly enough, Ngugi points out that Kenya has remained politically charged; this is because of reforms brought by the capitalist system which is in crisis, as the neo-colonial elite are misdirecting development in the country and working for self-gain. Because of this, supporters, like Ngugi wa Thiong'o, have stepped in to partner with the oppressed to assist in redirecting the country's issues reform, and ask for accountability from the ruling elite that can grant freedom to galvanise his country in demanding a government of the people for the people.

It is further noticed that Ngugi's main function is to inspire the Kenyan masses to coalesce around national issues rather than succumb to the elite's cunning activities, which are grounded in exploitation and, in so doing, help them to advance their self-enriching interests. The themes in *Petals of Blood*, *Devil on the Cross* and *Matigari* are exploitation of the masses by the elite, the struggle for neo-colonial freedom by the masses and the effects of the capitalist system brought by neo-colonial elitism in Kenya. These themes and the role of characters in the targeted novels show Ngugi's effort to make his work accessible to the community at large. Ngugi's success in conveying the revolutionary message is also confirmed in the novel, *Matigari* (1989). In this novel, a fictional hero becomes powerful and influential among the whole nation, so much so, that the government decides to hunt him down and issue an arrest warrant for Matigari. Therefore, this study can conclude that Ngugi has succeeded in conscientising the masses regarding the socio-economic and political situation in neo-colonial Kenya by revealing the ways that the ruling group uses to exploit the masses.

Through his Marxist interpretation of the conditions which he believes were created by the coming of western imperialism to Kenya, Ngugi portrays the West as the source of Kenya's

socio-political and economic doldrums. His stand is that colonialism is bad, regardless of the nationality of the capitalist. This view may seem one-sided in that the author presents only the negative side of colonialism in the three novels because he still feels that the West are the instigators of all the actions of their predecessors. In spite of this, in his fiction, Ngugi argues that capitalism, which he considers as pivotal to all the factors that have a disruptive effect on Kenya's political and social institutions, is not good for Kenya or any other African country. In other words, Ngugi condemns the imposition of capitalism which he regards as an economy that subjects every institution where it is applied to the pursuit of material gain in any community by the West. He continuously blames the Kenyan government for failing to see into the future so that they can reject this economic system and all other systems which are not attainable by the Kenyan government without the aid of the West.

Although Ngugi's views imply awareness of the human plight and the imperative call for self-conscience, it also derives mainly from what he believes; that is another finding of this study. Ngugi aspires to advocate for the fundamental values that can be put in place to improve human life, democracy, social justice and human dignity. These are the values that prompt him to side with the underprivileged. He believes that, if the masses can understand how such values are undermined by the ruling class, their will towards changing the conditions ruling their lives can be strengthened. Characters, such as Karega, Munira, Wariinga and Mukirai show how their will towards change have been developed through the knowledge they gained from their interaction with the other people in their group. They therefore believe that one day their group will reap the benefits that the ruling class is enjoying.

Another factor observed in the three selected novels is the progress in the liberation of the oppressed, as articulated by Ngugi. In *Petals of Blood* (1977), he celebrates the renewed struggle

of the people against oppression and repression that are implemented by local neo-colonialists. It is observed in *Petals of Blood* that Wanja, who once had relationships with the exploiters at her brothel, decides to eliminate them; she becomes the leading activist for her community which, she believes, lacks knowledge and, therefore, is being betrayed by those in power.

The theme of neo-colonial elitism is carried further in *Devil on the Cross* (1982a) and continues in *Matigari*. Ngugi continues to expose the exploitation of the Kenyan masses by the neo-colonial elite and vows to do so until the exploitative regime is brought to an end. Thus, Ngugi continues his attacks on the neo-colonial regime and wishes for a complete rebirth for a new Kenya. These attacks are on the system of capitalism which encourages neo-colonial elitism and brings poverty, class division, misuse of office, corruption, inequality and the sense of insecurity that circles the life of the masses in Kenya and elsewhere. In *Devil on the Cross*, Ngugi shows the greed of the Kenyan leaders and their subjugation to the white man controlling Kenya from abroad. Evidence is the meeting of Kenyan representatives of thieves and robbers and their white masters in the cave. The postcolonial theory reinforces the need for the end of colonial rules and policies once a country attains its independence. Kenya is independent; therefore, Ngugi encourages the struggle of the masses to continue until neo-colonialism is brought to its end.

6.3 THE RELEVANCE OF THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK TO THE TOPIC

Ngugi's advocacy for change and an alternative for the masses provide a perspective to his fiction which is in line with Fanon's definition of natural literature when he states that "it opens before its new and bottomless horizons which the people are unable to see on their own" (1990, p. 4). Ngugi makes it clear in his three novels that there is a need for a struggle for liberation from neo-colonialism and even the possible use of violence to change the existing, oppressive

situation in Kenya. He makes his support for the struggle against exploitation clear by stating that those who profess to favour freedom, and yet criticise the struggle, are “men who want crops without prowling up the ground; they want rain without thunder and lightning and they want the ocean without the awful roar of many waters” (Ngugi, 1981b, p. 39). Since Ngugi lives in a world where politics is the norm, his experience influences him to advocate for the oppressed to remove what he sees as a neo-colonial system in Kenya. He continues to alert his readers that the struggle in which the masses are involved can be both moral and physical but, nevertheless, it is still a struggle, no matter the way it is going. Ngugi’s persuading the masses to push for a revolution is in agreement with the teachings of Marxist and Postcolonial theorists.

Kenya has had different colonial experiences, and these are the experiences that Ngugi addresses in his three novels to inform his audience so that they can stand up as they did during the liberation struggle against colonialism. The Marxist theory states that the world will be in a constant revolution by the oppressed against the upper class until the upper class fades out completely (Hobsbawn, 2011). The Marxists also encourage the working class to sacrifice, with the eventual hope of success against exploitation by the ruling elite. To apply this to this research, one can see a continued rebellion against corrupt leaders in Kenya. The rebellion is seen in *Petals of Blood* through the group of peasants whose farms are taken away by a corrupt communal farmer. The revolution is also seen in *Devil on the Cross* led by Muturi and Wangari and in *Matigari* by the factory workers who are rebelling against low wages. The researcher sees the goal of a happy life and a better future to come for the struggling masses. It is the belief of the researcher that the masses’ sacrifices will gain them a better living standard which will be consistent throughout the future generations.

The use of Marxist and Postcolonial theories gives the notions that tally with some of the cultural beliefs of African nations, and abandoning these theories may result in many Africans abandoning their cultural beliefs. For instance, the two theories teach about respect for one's culture and tradition as being important as this makes people feel free and happy. Ngugi also stresses the importance of culture in the three novels studied for this study. Therefore, using the two theories in this study is like cementing the Kenyans' cultural beliefs because of their similarities with some of the values of the traditions of the Kenyans. Consequently, African writers, such as Ngugi wa Thiong'o, often incorporate these Marxist elements that have some similarities with the situation in their respective countries. With these few reasons, the Marxist and Postcolonial theories still hold an ideology of importance, because the factors supported by the two theories are still relevant, given the conditions of the socio-economic and political situations in Africa.

In *Petals of Blood*, Ngugi points out the determination of the masses to taste freedom after a successful battle for *Uhuru*, and in *Matigari* the war is about to be waged as Matigari has decided to pick up his weapons to start the war again. In *Devil on the Cross*, Wariinga kills his two abusers, The Rich Man of Ngorika and Boss Kihara, without any hesitation and fear to show how determined the masses are to fight the oppressive system, while Karega in *Petals of Blood* stresses the fact that the masses are lawyers for themselves, and even if they detain him or kill him, there are still many Karegas that will continue with the struggle.

The novels have shown that the nation-state is the foremost institution which perpetuates state neo-colonialism through both structural and confrontational violence; consequently, it generates social division among its own people. Like the British coloniser, the neo-colonial elite use violence as a way to suppress the masses that are thirsty for freedom, which in turn results in

greater violence from the masses. It is this vicious circle of violence that prevents the Kenyan society from coming into being, for it alienates the two opposing sides from each other. Fanon (1990) supports violence in an oppressive neo-colonial situation, stating that it is one of the methods that the oppressed can use to liberate themselves from the oppressor, though he again advises that violence should be the last resort when peaceful negotiations fail. Ngugi then takes it from there, emphasising the fact that if the masses continue to fight, using all their energy, he is positive that social change is possible and exploitation can end.

Ngugi uses the journey motif in both *Petals of Blood* and *Devil on the Cross* as a motif to discover the state of things in neo-colonial Kenya. In both journeys (the journey from Ilmorog to Nairobi in *Petals of Blood* and the one from Nairobi to Ilmorog in *Devil on the Cross*), the travellers talk about their personal experiences with the ruling elite of Kenya. The two novels chronicle the exploitation of the vulnerable sections of society, namely workers, women, peasants and students. There is rampant corruption by politicians and businessmen, and Ngugi does not fail to point this out in order to educate the downtrodden group to be aware of the state of affairs in their country. He portrays the new social vision of the forces of revolution, comprising Matigari, the patriot who represents the peasants, Ngaruro, who represents the workers, while the youths are represented by Muriuki and the women by Guthera. These characters confront the forces of exploitation, who are the Minister of Justice and Truth, the police, John Boy Junior and Robert Williams. It can be concluded that Ngugi has succeeded in writing revolutionary novels where the state forces of exploitation live in fear of Matigari, while the masses have overcome theirs.

Ngugi, like Fanon, emphasises that the masses should use violence because it is the only way left for them to make the ruling elite understand their grievances. He suggests that the modern nation

in Kenya should stop imitating Europe, but rather seek its own way to create a more inclusive society where everyone can feel free, or put in Fanon's words, "for Europe, for ourselves, and for humanity, we must turn over a new leaf, we must work out new concepts, and try to afoot a new man" (Fanon, 1990, p. 116). Ngugi is positive that social change to end exploitation is imminent, but this is all in the hands of the masses. As the three novels discussed are political in content, they condemn the views and practices of the bourgeoisie as manifested in the system of capitalism where Ngugi rejects neo-colonialism and all its manifestations. Ngugi, therefore, affirms that the coming together of the peasants and the workers in a united and collective manner against their exploiters will liberate them from the state of bondage and life of misery and poverty. This research reaffirms, therefore, that the three novels have conveyed their author's vision about Kenyan neo-colonial elitism and its influence on the socio-economic and political situation in the country.

6.4 THE REVEIW OF THE QUESTIONS

At the beginning of this research study, four interrelated questions, rooted in the opinion of the author of the three novels which formed the base of this study, were posed. The questions are: To what extent does neo-colonial elitism impact the social-economic and political situation in Kenya? Does Ngugi use the novel effectively in sensitising his audience with regards to the consequences of neo-colonial elitism in neo-colonial Kenya? Has the course of action, whereby the masses should take on action in order to come out of their socio-economic and political doldrums, as Ngugi advocates, directly or indirectly been captured? Has the study established the effectiveness of the neo-colonial and Marxist critical theories in the analysis and examination of the impact of elitism on the Kenyan society? These are reviewed in this chapter to show that the study has tried to answer them.

The current study has analysed neo-colonial elitism and its consequences in Ngugi's Kenya as presented in the three novels. The study does raise questions about the interplay of external and internal influences in Africa, especially Kenya, today as they are portrayed in literature and as sources for the production of literature. The three novels have revealed the influence that neo-colonialism has on the society of Kenya. They have shown that the Kenyan society is still haunted by a neo-colonial system brought by the local leaders. Ngugi's focus on neo-colonial elitism brings awareness of the human plight and the imperative call of conscience to advocate fundamental changes for the improvement of human life, such as democracy, social justice, as well as human dignity. Because these values are violated by the Kenyan neo-colonial elite, Ngugi decides to side with the underprivileged in order to strengthen their will to work towards changing the miserable conditions in their lives. Ngugi does not pose a threat to the Kenyan government, but suggests a way of goodwill in order to move towards a better, alternative reality, than just a simple criticism that can amount to a polluted, self-enclosed environment. Ngugi advocates for the nation to choose the right direction that can prevent further confusion and filth to the already existing one.

Through the information gathered, there is evidence that this study has revealed that Ngugi's work succeeds in outlining the issue of neo-colonial elitism and its impact on the political and social economic situation in Kenya. Ngugi successfully engages the burning issues of his time and, therefore, emerges as a great writer with a positive, aesthetic perspective. He makes use of techniques and language to show how wide and universal his relation is in the human experience of his respective society. He speaks about how the masses are exploited by their leaders in *Petals of Blood* (1977), the humiliation of the masses and how the elite become rich at the expense of the masses in *Devil on the Cross* (1982a), as well as how the country still lacks justice and truth,

even after independence. The lack of justice and truth within the Kenyans bring class division between the two opposing parties in *Matigari* (1989). This indicates that Ngugi is not just a politician but also a realist because realists are writers that take the most important, burning problems of their communities at the time and try to solve them. The great issues of his time and suffering in his society determine his sympathy with the masses which are adequately expressed in the fate of the characters he creates in his three novels.

The study also shows that Ngugi exhibits his conscience through characters to prove his love for his indigenous society, instead of the foreigners whose aim was not to build the country but to destroy it. At the same time the reactions of the masses to the situation show the wisdom which they have accumulated from the years of frustration, exploitation and also from their growing awareness of the situation. Their awareness of the situation is seen in the behaviour of characters, such as Wanja and Wariinga, who both kill and also turn away from prostitution. Ngugi supports their actions and, therefore, he writes, “The necessity for the people to take a violent course of action against its enemies is brought home through the image of the leopard whose scratches prove deadly only to its enemies, no one has ever seen the leopard kill its own cub scratching it” (Ngugi, 1982a). The action of killing their exploiters done by Wariinga in *Devil on the Cross* and Wanja in *Petals of Blood* bear testimonies that the masses are sensitised by Ngugi’s literary works about the suffering of the down-trodden in the independent Kenya.

The revelation in the novels shows that Kenya is haunted by neo-colonialism. Through satire, Ngugi uses the characters in the three novels to describe the characteristics of neo-colonial Kenya as that of exploiter and exploited, and that of dominating and dominated, an indication that Kenya is still interested in continuing with the policies and rules of its former coloniser. The three novels have revealed that Ngugi’s position is political in nature, and that enables him to

gather evidence on the activities of the neo-colonial Kenyan elite. He reveals the oppression, greed and corruption of the ruling group and, at the same time, points out the determination of the oppressed masses to continue their struggle against oppression and exploitation until they attain the freedom they hope for.

Ngugi regards capitalism as a system that brings inequality in a nation. For instance, land distribution affects the poor because they cannot afford to buy the plots from the municipality. As a capitalist country, Kenya nurtures a culture of self-interest by the elite and the neglect of the masses. Ngugi urges the masses to work in unity to solve their problems. This is in line with the idea of Marxists who encourage proletarians of all nations to unite for their liberation from exploitation by the ruling elite. This unity in the struggle has been revealed in all three novels through the commitment and course of action by Karega and Wanja of *Petals of Blood* (1977), Wariinga and Muturi of *Devil on the Cross* (1982a) and Matigari of *Matigari* (1989). The protagonists represent the oppressed, and are widely aware of the oppressive behaviour of the elite towards them. They work towards uniting the masses to create a force that has weight in the political and socio-economic scope of their country, Kenya.

In the first place, the study has shown that Ngugi is clearly siding with the masses by way of galvanising the people not to surrender. His wish is to see the revolution of the oppressed overthrow the reign of neo-colonial elitism in Kenya. He urges the Kenyan society to break away from capitalism which, according to him, is the human culture that cunningly exploits others. He wants them to embrace a socialist economy which can be collectively owned and controlled by the ordinary workers and peasants who are the producers of wealth. According to the findings, the dreams of the Kenyans about the fruits of independence are not enjoyed by everyone but just

a few. Therefore, only a united group of people, thirsty for freedom from exploitation, are able to bring the fruits of independence to everyone.

Secondly, the study has also revealed that there is class division that perpetuates oppression. In *Devil on the Cross*, Ngugi portrays Kenyan independence as that of class division, exploitation and struggle. In addition, the question of Kenyan independence, neo-colonial elitism and the role of the neo-colonial elite within the Kenyan society represent an important feature of consideration. The class relationship between the elite and the masses recalls the one that existed between the colonisers and the colonised which, in this novel, is represented as exploitation and resistance. Ngugi clarifies that independence and total liberation from capitalism, which breeds elitism and neo-colonialism, can only be achieved through a socialist revolution grounded on the social collectivism of the masses. He reveals this in the protagonists, Muturi, Wangari, Wariinga and Gatuiria, who believe that the unity of their sweat is the only weapon that can change their situation. His testing ground seems to be his own life experiences and the relationships he bestows on characters.

It can, therefore, be concluded that protagonists, such as Muturi, Wangari, Wariinga and Gatuiria, take their commitment towards a new life grounded on liberation and freedom seriously. The three novels present the independence of Kenya as tragic and problematic. The Kenyans are only awakened when Muturi awakes ordinary workers and peasants to a revolution and when Wariinga kills her oppressor, while in *Petals of Blood*; the awakening comes when Wanja's brothel is set on fire, killing the directors of the new Theng'eta Brewery Enterprises. The awakening in *Matigari* is motivated by Matigari's escape from prison without being seen and the burning down of John Boy Junior's house from where Matigari escapes without being hurt. As an illustration, Ngugi uses many symbols in the novel, *Matigari* (1989). Matigari uses

words, such as “home” and “my family”. The word “home” in the context of the story symbolises the people of Kenya while the word “my family” symbolises the unity among the people.

In *Devil on the Cross*, Wariinga represents the masses who will crucify the Devil as she does in killing her abusers. Similarly, Wanja’s pregnancy with Abdulla symbolises the rebirth of new Kenya which is imminent. The three novels reveal that the oppressed delegates need no power from anywhere apart from themselves to carry out their assignments, as is the case with Wariinga in *Devil on the Cross* and Wanja in *Petals of Blood*, who both kill their oppressors. Ngugi alerts the masses to guard against the weapon wielded and unleashed daily by neo-colonialism against their collective struggle, which is the culture of alienation to which he refers as a “cultural bomb”. He informs the masses about the dangers of this cultural bomb which annihilates the people’s belief in their struggle to unite and be able to face the common enemy. This bomb, he continues, can make them see their past as one wasteland of non-achievement so that they can distance themselves from the wasteland. Once they fail to understand and enjoy their culture, they will move further away from it and, in the end, will desire to identify with that which is decadent and reactionary.

In as much as the masses seem to realise their situation, Ngugi cautions that they should be aware that the fight is far from over, or as Ngugi puts it, “We have scorched the snake of colonialism, but not killed all as colonialism is one of the myriad skins the snake can put on” (Ngugi, 1982a, p. 78). The masses must bear in mind that, as the powerful elite have failed to keep the promises of independence, they will keep on promising them good things which will never materialise. A good example is the promises of Nderi wa Riera to the community of Ilmorog that never happen. It is up to the masses to stand up, strengthen their unity and continue

the fight with as much vigour as before to bring freedom to Kenya. Ngugi inspires the masses to avoid following the voices of the exploiters for they will never change until they are forced to do so by another force. He concludes by giving the exploiters a warning, “You can fool some people some time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time”.

The current research study has analysed neo-colonial elitism and its influence in Kenya based on Ngugi wa Thiong'o's three selected novels. The analysis shows that the effects of neo-colonialism come from the history of colonialism in Kenya and elsewhere in Africa. One of the findings is that the psychological aspects that developed in the communities in Kenya are inferiority and superiority complexes, constructed and reinforced through the process of neo-colonialism. The research focused on the three different pillars of a country which are the economic, political and social aspects and how they hurt the people of the country, in this case, the Kenyans. The masses are left with no hope because their living standard has little hope of changing. Consequently, they are fighting hard for capitalism to end. The capitalist system has caused the alienation of the masses, leaving them unable to live their lives to the fullest.

Ngugi reveals how neo-colonialism can be reversed. He feels that it can only be reversed through the deconstruction and reconstruction of the present structures. The study's applicability approach resides in the fact that there are aspects of Marxism within the masses of Kenya. As a result of the Marxism within them, the masses have decided to rise against the elite in a revolt to replace the capitalist system with the one that will favour both groups. This study suggests that the best way to reverse the present situation is to engage the masses in the country's business, train them to develop themselves and then create an environment of self-sustenance.

According to the fictionalised information gathered, the relationship between those in power and the powerless is not stable in contemporary Kenya. This study has revealed that, according to the novels, conflict areas are on the increase in Kenya. Ngugi shows that the country's economy is favouring only those who hold high status in society and discriminating against the lower class. The political situation is becoming unstable under the leadership of the neo-colonial elite because of the violation of the promises of independence. Ngugi claims that the country still remains docile to neo-colonial interests which are corruption, exploitation and class division brought by capitalism. The shadows of the past still haunt the present, and the dreamed freedom has not yet come. Although Ngugi feels that capitalism has led to the uneven sharing of the national cake that contributes to the exploitation of the masses, this research debates that the structure to maintain this exploitation has been created by the masses.

Petals of Blood, *Devil on the Cross* and *Matigari* have portrayed Kenya's independence as that of class division, class exploitation and class struggle. At the same time, the question of the Kenyan neo-colonial elitism and the role of the Kenyan elite within the independent Kenyan society represent an important feature of its class consideration. In these three novels, Ngugi provides an image of neo-colonial elitism and what its influence entails. He underscores the imperfection of capitalism, suggesting that there may never be an answer to amend it, and that it can only be solved by removing it through the struggle of resistance to exploitation. Thus, a literature of resistance becomes important to sensitise the public about the past so that they can dismantle the deceptions of colonial rule, and disrupt the rhetoric of imperial discourse. For Ngugi (2009), "this is the literature where the loss of the past begins to be filled with the mingled voices of the present when the new may arise from the old" (p. 133). Clearly, one can see that Ngugi has been motivated to write by the forces that are tearing Kenya apart. There is little doubt

that literature of resistance is a strong weapon, and it is for the people to employ it to their advantage. Through it, Ngugi alerts the masses to guard against the weapon, which he refers to as a bomb, wielded and daily unleashed by neo-colonialism. The effect of this bomb is to overwhelm the people's belief in their unity and in themselves, resulting in seeing their past as one wasteland of non-achievement. In the end, the three novels present the independence of Kenya as tragic and problematic. In a nutshell, all the research questions for this current study have been attempted and clarified accordingly.

6.5 CONTRIBUTION TO THE STUDY

This study has:

- Contributed to Ngugi wa Thiong'o's success in using the novel as a genre to describe the cruelty done by the neo-colonial ruling elite to the Kenyan masses
- Shown that through written literature the people can be informed about the political, social and economic situations in their country, as Ngugi has done to the Kenyans in the three novels focused on in this study
- Also enlightened policy makers, the masses, religious leaders and the elite group in understanding the future social vision of Kenya as alluded to by Ngugi wa Thiong'o
- Added views to the on-going debate on the issue on neo-colonial elitism in Africa that may assist debators and writers to continue expounding the story of neo-colonial elitism since this topic is seen as popular in the development of literature on postcolonial Africa as most African countries are affected by it

6.6 CONCLUSION

Ngugi has argued that neo-colonial elitism destroys his society and other societies elsewhere in Africa. The study has shown the force of Ngugi's concept of neo-colonial elitism, presenting it as the backdrop of non-development and reality in an independent Kenya. In attempting to understand the inconsistent nature of identities in neo-colonial Kenya, the study applied the neo-colonial paradigm to the works of Ngugi. As already been revealed in the study, the theme of neo-colonial elitism resonates in his three analysed novels and most of his literary works. The evidence indicates that as a result of Ngugi's ideological stand, his views on the socio-economic and political problems experienced by the Kenyan nation in the post-independence era are negative. The economy of the country is not yet developed significantly to cater for all classes of people, and the political situation is unstable. Ngugi claims that the country still remains subservient to neo-colonial interests which are corruption, exploitation and class division. He does not see any good done by the leaders who took over from the colonial ones. As a socialist writer, Ngugi's responsibility is to advocate the message of anti-neo-colonial rule. This message, which seems to be politically charged, conscientises the Kenyan masses about their desire for a stable social, political and economic situation in their country.

Influenced by the Marxist ideology, Ngugi is committed to the struggle of the masses. Through his understanding of Marxism, he interprets the socio-economic and political situation in Kenya as having been brought by the British colonisers. He uses the literature of denunciation to reveal his social, political and economic concerns to find a solution that can change the situation. Furthermore, the research study shows Ngugi as succeeding in the three selected novels to reflect in his works the major issues that affect his society, because they reveal the exploitation of the masses by the ruling elite in Kenya. In addition, he shows the misuse of office and the injustices

done by the neo-colonial elite that create division among the two opposing groups. Ngugi, therefore, advocates for a government that can bring a total transformation of the systems of inequality and oppression in Kenya (Ngugi, 1982a). Ngugi's visionary work has revealed deeper levels underlying the truth about neo-colonial elitism. His writing about moralistic aspects should serve to remind the reader; especially the government of Kenya, of the epitomes of neo-colonial elitism and their consequences, as well as the need to exercise caution not overstep the boundaries of legality.

There are many challenging issues that have emerged from the analysis of this study which may, in time, help break new grounds for further study of Ngugi wa Thiong'o's literary works. This study has highlighted the impact of literature on the society of focus which, in this study, is Kenya. The study also may evoke scholars in literature to want to examine other African communities that were once colonised and have their interest in the ideology of Marxist views. It is therefore, the hope of the researcher that this current study has inspired further research and contributed to the academic knowledge within the theme of neo-colonialism and its impact on social, political and economic situation in contemporary Kenya.

In conclusion, Ngugi's literary work stands as a beacon of hope for the construction of a better Kenya and provides future generations with a desire to establish better environments with equal opportunities, and not segregation between them. The subject of neo-colonialism can open up many opportunities for literary studies because it is an intricate subject which deserves specific attention in our time when most of the countries are experiencing upheavals.

REFERENCES

- Achebe, C. (1985). *Things fall Apart*. Harare, Zimbabwe: Zimbabwe Publishing House.
- Achebe, C. (1987). *Anthills of the Savannah*. London, UK: Heinemann.
- Adhiambo, E.S (1987). Rebutting theory with correct theory. *Kenya Historical Review*, 5(2), 385-388.
- Aidoo, K. (2007). *A love story*. London, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Amuta, C. (1986). *Towards a sociology in African literature*. Oguta, Nigeria: Zim Pan-African Publishers.
- Amuta, C. (1989). *The theory of African literature: Implications for practical criticism*. London, UK: London and Atlantic Highlands Press.
- Amuzu. K. (2004). *Beyond ideology: Literary technique in Ngugi's Petals of blood and Devil on the cross*. London, UK: Minerva Press.
- Balogun, O.F (1995). Ngugi's *Devil on the Cross*: The novel as hagiography of a Marxist. *Ufahamu*, 16, 76-92.
- Bardolphe, J. (1987). Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Grain of Wheat and Petals of Blood*: As readings of Conrad's *Under Western eyes* and *Victory*. *The Canadian*, 12, 32-49.
- Bhabha, H. (2004). *The location of culture*. London: Routledge.
- Bhabha, H. (2005). "Foreword: Framing Fanon." *The wretched of the earth*. New York: Groove Publishing.

- Berman, B. (1990). *Control and crisis in colonial Kenya*. London, UK: James Currey.
- Biko, S. (2000). *I write what I like*. Pretoria, South Africa: Ravan Press.
- Bitterli, U. (1989). *Cultures in conflict: Encounters between European and non-European, 1492-1800*. Polit: Oxford University Press.
- Bresser, E. (2010). *Colonial and postcolonial literature*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.
- Brown, N. (1999). Revolution and recidivism: The problem of Kenyan history in the plays of Ngugi wa Thiong'o. *Research in African Literatures*, 4(30), 56-73.
- Cabral, A. (1980). *Unity and struggle*. London, UK: Heinemann.
- Calder, A. (1984). *Meja Mwangi's novels: The writing of east and central Africa*. G.D. Killam (Ed.). London, UK: Heinemann.
- Cantalupo, C. (Ed.). (1995). *The world of Ngugi wa Thiong'o*. Trenton, New Jersey: African World Press.
- Clough, M. (1990). *Fighting two sides: Kenyan chiefs and politicians, 1918-1940*. Niwot, Colorado: University Press of Colorado.
- Cook, D. & Okenimkpe, D. (1997). *Ngugi wa Thiong'o: An exploration of his writings*. Oxford, UK: James Currey.
- Daabu, M. (2008). Capitalism is a failed system. In Docker, J. (1992). *Dilemmas of identity: the desire for the other in colonial and post-colonial cultural history*. London, UK: Institute of Commonwealth studies.

- Eagleton, T. (1976). *Marxism and literary criticism*. Berkeley, California: University of California Press.
- Eagleton, T. (2013). *Why Marx was right*. London, UK: Yale University Press.
- Easterly, W. (1997). Africa's growth tragedy: Politics and ethnic divisions. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 112, 1203-1250.
- Fanon, F. (1986). *Black skin, white masks*. London, UK: Pluto.
- Fanon, F. (Ed.). (1990). *The wretched of the earth*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Fashina, N. O. (2009). Alienation and revolutionary vision in East African post-colonial dramatic literature. *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies*, 2(35). Retrieved on 12 July 2013, from <http://www.escacholarship.org/uc/item/63k8d46k> on July 8, 2015.
- Gikandi, S. (2000). *Ngugi wa Thiong'o*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Grant, K. (1985). *Marxism and African Literature*. London, UK: George M. Gugelberger Press.
- Gugelberger, G.M. (1985). *Marxism and African Literature*. Trenton: African World Press.
- Gugler, J. (2011). How Ngugi wa Thiong'o shifted from class analysis to a neo-colonialist perspective. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 32(2), 329-339.
- Gutierrez, G. (1988). *A theory of liberation: History, politics and social salvation*. New York, NY: Obbis Books.
- Herbst, J. (2000). *States and power in Africa: Comparative lessons in authority and control*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

- Hobsbawm, E. (2011). *How to change the world. Marx and Marxism 1840- 2011*. London, UK: Little, Brown.
- Ibrahim, H. (1990). The violated universe: Neocolonial sexual and political consciousness. In: Dambudzo Marechera. *Research in African Literatures*, 21(2), 79-90.
- Johanson, L. (1990). *In the shadow of neocolonialism: Meja Mwangi's novels*. Umea, Sweden: Umea University Publications.
- Kenyatta. (1968). *Suffering without bitterness*. Nairobi, Kenya: East Africa Publishing House
- Kessler, K. (1994). Rewriting history in fiction: Elements of postmodernism in Ngugi wa Thiong'o's later novels. *Ariel*, xxv, 75-90.
- Killam, G.D (Ed.). (1984). *Critical perspectives on Ngugi*. London, UK: Heinemann.
- Killam, G.D (Ed.). (1980). *An introduction to the writings of Ngugi*. London, UK: Heinemann.
- Knight, E. (1983). "Mirror of reality: The novels of Mwangi." *African Literature Today*, 13, 150.
- Kriamiti, J. (2004). *My life in prison*. Nairobi, Kenya: Spear Book Publisher.
- Kotun, O. (1998). *Abiku*. California: Nepotis.
- Kubayanda, J. (1990). Dictatorship, oppression and new realism. *Research in African Literatures*, 21(2) 5-12.
- Kurtz, R. (1998). *Urban obsessions urban fears: Postcolonial Kenyan novels*. Oxford, UK: James Currey.
- La Guma, (1986). *The stone country*. London, UK: Heinemann.

- Lilemba, J.M. (2003). *Power is sweet*. Windhoek, Namibia: Macmillan Publishing Press.
- Lindfors, B. (1991). *Popular literatures in Africa*. Trenton,: African World Press.
- Macgoye, M. (1993). *Murder in Majengo*. London, UK: Macmillan.
- Maloba, W.O. (1993). *Mau Mau and Kenya: An analysis of a peasant revolt*. Blooming: Indiana, University Press.
- Mbeki, T. (2002). The time has come. In *Towards the African renaissance*.
- Retrieved on 23 September 2015 from ([http:// www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/mandela/p. 36 1994/](http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/mandela/p.36.1994/)).
- Mlambo, N. (2013). *Exploring the literary representations of urban survival and coping strategies in selected contemporary Zimbabwean fiction in English from 1999-2009*. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Namibia. 2013).
- Retrieved from <http://books.google.com/books>.
- Mukrejee, M. (1989). The centre cannot hold: Two views of the periphery. In Slemon, S. & H. Tiffin (Eds.). *After Europe: Critical theory and postcolonial writing*. Melbourne, Australia: Dangaroo.
- Mushengezi, A. (2003). *Twentieth century literary theory*. Kampala, Uganda: Mukono Bookshop Printing and Publishing Co. Ltd.
- Mwangi, M. (1973). *Kill me quick*. London, UK: Heinemann.
- Mwangi, M. (1976). *Going down river road*. London, UK: Heinemann.

- Mwaura, N. (2005). *Kenya today: Breaking the yoke of colonialism in Africa*. New York, NY: Algoa.
- Namhila, E.N. (1997). *The Price of Freedom*. Windhoek, Namibia: New Namibia Books.
- Nyanze, K. (2014, June 22). An open letter to African Union heads of state. *New Era*, p.14.
- Ogude, J. (1994). *Ngugi's sense of history and post-colonial discourses*. (Paper presented at the History Workshop, University of Witwatersrand. 12-16 July 1994). Retrieved on 23 September 2015 from <http://www.google.com.na/>.
- Ogude, J. (1997). Ngugi's concept of history and post-colonial discourses in Kenya. *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 31(5), 1-4.
- Ogude, J. (1999). *Ngugi's novel and the African history: Narrating the nation*. London, UK: Pluto Press.
- Onimonde, B. (1988). *A political economy of the African crisis*. London, UK: Zed books.
- Orwell, G. (1986). *Animal farm*. London, UK: Heinemann.
- Ousmane, S. (1983). *Last of the empire*. Oxford, UK: Heinemann.
- Patton, M. G. *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. Newbury Park, London, UK: SAGE Publications.
- Pozo, M. "An interview with Ngugi wa Thiong'o." *St. John's University Humanities Review* 2 (2004). Retrieved 29, June, 2015 URL: [http://www runmuki.com/paul/writing/ngugi.html](http://www.runmuki.com/paul/writing/ngugi.html)

- Rodney, W. (1981). *How Europe underdeveloped Africa*. Harare, Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe Publishing House.
- Ryan, M. (2007). *Literary theory: A practical introduction*. Malden: Blackwell Print.
- Said, E. (1993). *Culture and imperialism*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- Sichemann, C. (1989). Ngugi wa Thiong'o and the writing of Kenyan history. *Research in African literature*, 20(3), 11-27.
- Soyinka, W. (1999). From ghetto to Garrison: A chronic case of Orisunitis. *Research in African Literatures*, 30(4), 19-23.
- Sonyika, W. (1994). *The open score of a continent*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Therbon, G. (2008). *From Marxist to post-marxism?* London, UK: Verso.
- Uwasomba, C. (2006). The politics of resistance and liberation in Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Petals of blood and Devil on the cross*. *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, 6(1), 94-105.
- Vajrushev, V. (1974). *Neo-colonialism and Africa in 1970*. Moscow: Pogresso Publishing.
- Wa Thiong'o, N. (1964). *Weep Not, Child*. London, UK: Heinemann African Writers Series.
- Wa Thiong'o, N. (1965). *The River Between*. London, UK: Heinemann African Writers series.
- Wa Thiong'o, N. (1967). *A Grain of Wheat*. London, UK: Heinemann African Writers Series.
- Wa Thiong'o, N. (1972). *Homecoming: Essays on African and Caribbean literature*. London, UK: Heinemann.
- Wa Thiong'o, N. & Mugo, G. M. (1976). *The Trials of Dedan Kimathi*. London, UK: Heinemann.

- Wa Thiong'o, N. (1977). *Petals of Blood*. New York, NY: E.P Dutton.
- Wa Thiong'o, N. (1981a). *Detained: A writer's prison diary*. London, UK: HEB.
- Wa Thiong'o, N. (1981b). *Writers in politics*. London, UK: Heinemann.
- Wa Thiong'o, N. (1982a). *Devil on the Cross*. London, UK: Heinemann.
- Wa Thiong'o, N. & Wa Mirri, N. (1982b). *I will Marry When I Want*. London, UK: Heinemann African Writers.
- Wa Thiong'o, N. (1983). *Barrel of a pen: Resistance to repression in neo-colonial Kenya*. New Jersey: African World Press.
- Wa Thiong'o, N. (1986a). *Deconising the mind: The politics of language in African literature*. London, UK: James Curry Print.
- Wa Thiong'o, N. (1986b). *Writing against neo-colonialism*. Wembley, UK: Vita Books.
- Wa Thiong'o, N. (1989). *Matigari*. Oxford, UK: Heinemann International books.
- Wa Thiong'o, N. (1993). *Moving the centre*. London, UK: James Currey.
- Wa Thiong'o, N. (1997). Enactment of power. *The Drama Review* (40).
- Wa Thiong'o, N. (1998). *Penpoints, gunpoints and dreams: Towards a critical theory of the arts and the state in Africa*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Wa Thiong'o, N. (2006). *Wizard of the crow*. New York, NY: Basic Civitas Books.
- Wa Thiong'o, N. (2009). *Something torn and new: An African renaissance*. New York, NY: Basic Civitas Books.

Wa Thiong'o, N. (2011). *Globalectics: Theory and the politics of knowing*. New York, NY: Basic Civitas Books.

Wamalwa, S.D. (1986). The engaged artist: the social vision of Ngugi wa Thiong'o. *Africa Today*, 33, 9-18.

White, E.G. (Ed.). (2007). *Testimonies to the church*. Loma Linda, USA: Adventist Centre.

Wood, C. (1986). Banned in Africa. *Christian Science Monitor*: New York, NY: Algoa Publishing.

Zizek, S. (2010). *Living in the end times*. London, UK: Verso Publishing.