

# Genres and Trends in Narratives of Conflict in Kenya: Ngugi Wa Thiong'o and Micere Githae Mugo Examined

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**Abstract---** *Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's The Trial of Dedan Kimanthi; (1976) co-authored with Micere Githae Mugo and his novel Petals of Blood (1977) depict the writers' forte in the area of social realism and these works present a basis for the assessment of the socio-political and cultural conflicts in Kenya from the socialist plane. In these works, the writers' pre-occupation is significantly with the lucid portrayal of the Kenyan society, taking into cognizance the relationship between the bourgeoisie and the proletariats, on the one hand, and the conflict between the imperialists and the African people, on the other hand, over the occupation and control of the African territory. Significantly, the heroic resistance of the Kenyan people fighting both foreign and local forces of exploitation and domination is examined in order to analyse how this literary thematic concern is reflected in these works. The paper, therefore, discusses the conflict in both texts, which are essentially a play and a novel, two very important literary genres that have proximity to everyday life. In this regard, the dynamics of the armed resistance and the political struggle against the historical and cultural backgrounds of the Kenyan people will be critically examined. This will be done with a view to exploring how the historical, cultural and political conflicts have come to bear on the new cultural and political cartographies of the society under reference, as a result of class struggle and class interest throughout the history of the society being critically examined.*

**Keywords---** *Ngugi; Blood; writers; sociopolitical*

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## I. Introduction

Many literary authors narrate history of class struggle of a particular people against a threatening force which could be human (e.g. colonialism, racism), cultural, environmental or even supernatural. This engagement with the historical developments get most writers generally involved in the happenings around them, especially in their attempt to articulate human problems, fears, hopes and aspirations using literary art as a means of heightening human consciousness. Modern African writers, in particular, use literature to represent African social reality as seen or felt by most of them. Against this background, African literature, has obviously become part of the individual writers' self-realisation as a result of their coming to grips with the happenings in the society, especially in their growth and development within the historical process. To this end, African Literature can be said to have moulded the people's attitude towards the constant struggles with the society and the individual selves.

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As a result of Africa's contact with the outside world, colonialism and all in its wagon provide the motivation as well as the tools for modern African literary concern. This contact mostly gave birth to most African literary thematic preoccupations such as the impact of colonialism on Africa and, the subsequently, the need for nationalist movements and agitations aimed at self-governance. The aim was to articulate a collective consciousness to the political and socio-economic realities and also to reconstruct the African image. This is what actually made these crops of African writers to be engaged in a realistic portrayal of Africa and the Africans devoid of romantic idealization. Such writers are primarily concerned with a passionate socio-political struggle and the ardent desire to reconstruct a sound and dynamic African society. They do this, mostly through the recognition of the people's potentialities in the attainment of social goals and targets, be they political, economic, social etc.

In this paper, attempt is made to examine the works of two Kenyan writers, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o and Micere Githae Mugo. The works under examination are Ngugi's novel *Petals of Blood* (1977) and the play *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*, (1976), which he co-authored with Mugo. The focus is on the heroic resistance of the Kenyan people against the forces of domination and exploitation both local and foreign and an exploration into how the historical, cultural and political conflicts have come to bear on the new cultural and political cartographies in Kenya. The paper first discusses *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* as a dramatic genre and then followed by a discussion on *Petals of Blood* which is a novel genre as texts both concerned with the narratives of conflicts in Kenya. An attempt, however, is first made at understanding what functions drama serve as a literary genre.

## II. Functions of Drama

In an interview with Jane Wilkinson (1992), Mugo holds that, literature, generally, functions as a means of enlarging the reader's vision of a given background by promoting his understanding of the projected world. It also conveys to the reader some distinct image of the people and surroundings that comprise the setting under portrayal. According to this scholar, drama, in particular, has a utilitarian function. It has both social and moral effects and the revolutionary potential to bring about change in a given society. Like other genres of literature, drama or play can be centered around the issues of corruption, exploitation, tradition, history and legends with a view to articulating socio-political, economic, religious and other issues within the context of a given society. Mugo further submits that, drama is a very dynamic genre for exploiting tensions and conflicts. It is a genre through which one can reach out to the masses immediately and urgently. This scholar, who is one of the authors being examined in this paper, also holds that the political and artistic message of a powerful drama can be communicated in one, two or three hours because of the rapport that exists between the performers on stage and the audience. The response and the involvement of the audience is enough to change or shape the mood of the play because some times, "the audience clap, ululate, or even participate in the singing and dancing" that accompany the dramatic presentations.

Against this background, Mugo expressed satisfaction with the impact the play *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* had on the audience when it was performed in Nairobi Kenya in the late 1970s with a view to promoting community, street and group theatre as part of collective production. The classes of people (working and ordinary) that had the opportunity to watch the performance were strongly influenced by the "ideological and political message as well as the historical antecedents and heroism in the play". The object was to recreate situations, experiences, history and a people's reality so that they can relieve past moments with a new freshness. This is the historical reality that such literary works attempt to address.

Kenya, like other countries of Africa, has experienced a history of colonialism, exploitation and humiliation resulting in the writers' concern with socio-political and cultural conflicts and their attendant consequences. The encounter between Kenya and the colonial power, as viewed by the writers under examination, was not only painful but also laid the foundation or background of a history of humiliation, physical and mental enslavement and alienation. The Kenyan history being

discussed in this paper, has been principally a history of colonialism, which in turn did provoke constant struggles by the people and militant agitations for justice and equality as well as national independence. This struggle was manifest in the ideological disposition of Mau Mau movements, a formidable and important vanguard for the liberation struggle. *The Trial of Dedan Kimanathi* is discussed against this backdrop, and against the vision of the writers for a formidable society.

### **Analysis of *The Trial of Dedan Kimanathi* (1976)**

Quite a number of African playwrights such as Wole Soyinka, Ola Rotimi, James Henshaw, Ama Ata Aidoo, to mention but a few, have made use of history and culture effectively to present and discuss social problems in Africa. According to Abdu (1986), a meaningful play is one that is cultivated on the history and culture of the people it is concerned about because such a play reflects and identifies with the people historically and culturally. Against this background, it is important to appreciate that *The Trial of Dedan Kimanathi*, co-authored by Ngugi Wa Thiong'o and Micere Mugo is one very important play that has explored the essential factors of history and culture to develop its thematic preoccupation which is a concern with the forces of exploitation and domination.

As pointed out in the 'preface' to the play, Ngugi and Mugo were convinced that imperialism was the enemy of all working class people and that everything possible must be done to appreciate this fact and attempt a re-examination of the appalling condition of the developing worlds. On account of this, these playwrights have been able to structure some important historical phenomena in such a way as to spur the reader to being alert and committed to the realities on the ground.

*The Trial of Dedan Kimanathi* centres primarily around a renowned Kenyan hero, Dedan Kimanathi during the Mau Mau struggle of the 1950s in Kenya. "Kimathi is a hero to the people, who is loved like anything" (P13). So, the play highlights the trials faced by this distinguished son of Africa in the hands of the colonialists. The play, therefore, derives its root from the long drawn struggle and battle against the colonial and imperialist forces of occupation. The playwrights were committed in their approach because of the conviction that efforts must be intensified to get rid of this evil and all it stands for. The need to fight imperialism is a challenge to all Africans, not only the literary writers but also scientists, politicians, academics and the like. However, as writers and as Kenyans, Ngugi and Mugo take up this challenge from the literary perspective to articulate a collective consciousness in order to reexamine and reassess the colonial situation and its implications on Africa. *The Trial of Dedan Kimanathi* is symbolically, the trial of the people's "strength, their faith, hopes and resolve" (P.14) which should not be taken lightly.

The play is essentially an exposition of the real actors and actresses on the Kenyan scene; the liberators, the women, the men, the children who fought in the liberation war. It pre-supposes that heroes and heroines of African history and struggle must be shown in a more positive light and not as traitors or betrayers as mostly contained in European works about Africa and its peoples. The play, according to Abdu (1986) is a call for a new African literature with a new mission and style meant to liberate Africans from the grips of foreign domination and exploitation. Thus, it has new perspectives, reflecting the European version of African history, which is mostly racist and a mystification as well as blatant falsehood against Africa as contained in works such as Joyce Kilmer's *Mister Johnson*, Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and the reaction they received from African scholars like Chinua Achebe (1957). The aim is to demystify all literatures that falsify African heroes, history and culture. So like Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958), *The Trial of Dedan Kimanathi* can be said to be inspired by those issues which touch on African culture, history, myth and religion; issues that focus essentially on the need to bring to light the legends of African heroes, one of which is Dedan Kimanathi, to come close to the reality of their respective societies. The play is written against this background and set essentially, within the construct of the Mau Mau movement in the history of Kenya.

Set within the construct of Marxist Ideology, the play is thematically a resistance against imperialism, manifest in forced labour, brutality, dehumanization, oppression in detention camps and the displacement of peasants from their lands. Defiant Africans chant anti-imperialist slogans through songs and thunderous shouts saying “away with exploitation, away with human slaughter” thereby raising the people’s consciousness. This is a demonstration of their resolve and commitment to break the status quo. They are characteristically fearless, determined and full of spirit. By this, they hope to “unite and drive out the enemy, control their own riches and enjoy the fruit of their sweat”, (P18).

It is important to note that, Ngugi in particular, has demonstrated his commitment to extolling the virtues of the Mau Mau and its heroes in the political emancipation of Kenya. For example, in an article in *Journal of African Marxist* (1983) to mark the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the start of the guerilla struggle in Kenya by Mau Mau in 1952, Ngugi has this to say:

The ruling regimes in Kenya have already given their own answer. They have always commemorated the date as “Kenyetta Day”. But the Kenyan peasants and workers know it as the Kimathi or Mau Mau Freedom Fighters Day. By doing so, we are expressing solidarity with Kenyan people, for it is their Day! The day, the month, the year Kimathi with the Kenya Land and Freedom Army started years of armed struggle against imperialist colonial occupation of Kenyans to determine their economic, political and cultural life. For no people are free as long as their economy, politics and culture are controlled by imperialism. (p20)

Historically, it is evident that conquerer nations mostly attempt to distort the history of the conquered nations. Thus, when imperialist nations conquered and colonized Africa, they tried to rewrite the history of these African nations by presenting the continent as dark and barbaric. Any attempt to fight against this distortion and enforcement is regarded as rebellious and therefore, condemned. Heroes who took up arms against imperialism are written off as villain while those who collaborate in putting down the people’s uprising are shown in heroic colour. The central message in *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* is to redress this distorted history with a view to presenting the correct and authentic version of African history and the heroes who struggled for African emancipation.

### **Style of Presentation in the Play**

Technically, one could look at *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* as having four trials over three movements in the text, each expressing a particular destructive mechanism of colonialism and imperialist power. The authors tell the audience, as the first trial indicates, that the imperialists employed the instruments of sentiment to lure and dominate the people. The second and third trials expose the neo-colonialist stooges in Kenya. These elites in the guise of bankers, industrialists, religious leaders, judges, police and the army were tempted by the multinationals to take side with them thereby dividing the united fight against colonialism. The fourth trial exposes the instrument of terror and assault where Kimathi is subjected to series of torture in order to plead guilty to the charges against him. Characteristically of a hero, Kimathi refuses to succumb in all cases, central to which is the portrayal of what a true spirit of a struggle is and must be.

The preliminary notes is essentially meant to serve as stage direction for actors. Importantly, however, it establishes the pervading restlessness of the people serving as a miniature African condition characterized by general instability and lack of unity. Time as a unique historical aspect, is also significantly manipulated in the play. Time, in this play, is distorted, which as a significant technique, links ‘the cause’ with ‘the effect’. This is clearly expressed in the notes referred to earlier on:

The play is in three movements which should be viewed as a single movement. The action on the whole should be seen as breaking the barrier between formal and informal time, so that past and future and present flow into one another. (p.2), just as the scenes (street, cell, courtroom) should also flow into one another.

Having discussed *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* as a dramatic genre and the message contained in the play, attention would now be focused on the analysis of *Petals of Blood*, which is essentially a novel genre concerned with a similar thematic

preoccupation. However, before this is done, it is equally imperative to discuss the novel as another important form of literary expression.

### III. The Novel as a Form of Literary Expression

Omotoso (1979:1) argues that in the African and other countries of the third world, the basic elements of the novel form are still used to “tell story, present different characters and develop themes, particularly relevant to the community”. The novel, according to Gakwandi, (1982) is the predominant creative form overtaking the essay, poetry or drama. Significantly, the novel has generated a lot of critical attention, due, possibly to what Griswold (2000:13) sees as its preoccupation with issues that are ‘more or less realistic in terms of every day experience about recognizable characters with recognizable problems.’ Such creations are usually decipherable covers for a critique of the existing state of affairs in particular social set up which the writers wish to put for questioning.

As a form of writing which transforms lived experience into fictive action, the novel makes a serious demand on imagination. In the words of Ngwaba (1998), the novel has to have a peculiar way of presenting both the familiar and the strange in one package. Therefore, as this scholar further submits, the important defining characteristics of the novel as a form of literary expression is its realism and the yardstick for measuring realism in the novel is the extent to which a work convinces us that the experience presented reflects real life. As Palmer (1986) argues, the important thing is that the world presented in the novel should seem a reflection of normal human activity, that the people should look like realistic men and women and the issues and modes of conduct presented should be applicable to human race. This is what Gakwandi (1982) describes as “scientific truth”. Against this background, Achebe (1960) as quoted by Nwagba (1998) argues that an African creative writer who tries to avoid the big social and political issues of contemporary African reality will end up being completely irrelevant. This brings us to a discussion and analysis of the novel *Petals of Blood* by Ngugi Wa Thiong’o

#### **Analysis of *Petals of Blood* (1977)**

*Petals of Blood*, unlike the *Trial of Dedan Kimathi* is essentially a novel, another form of literary expression which is also significant in addressing contemporary issues in Africa. Interestingly, however, the major issues raised in *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* are further developed and articulated in *Petals of Blood*. Significantly, both texts are concerned with Kenya as their primary society of reference. But, while *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* discusses Kenya from an early historical developmental stage, manifest in the encounter between imperialists and the Africans, *Petals of Blood* gives a most comprehensive picture of what Ngugi views as the evils pervasive in Kenya under black rule. The novel portrays a later period in both the history of Kenya and the development of Ngugi’s social vision. Here, the working class is more self-assertive, intellectually inspired, and more consciously united. But essentially, the theoretical framework involved in the analysis of the novel is the same as that employed in discussing the play. Ngugi’s consciousness is decidedly anti-imperialist and his ideological posture is unambiguously socialist in the Marxist tradition. It should be understood that social realism has developed ties with socialism, producing ideas of considerable intrinsic worth. From the view point of the subsequent development of socialism, these ideas have been the tributaries feeding the mighty stream of the Marxist movement that came to dominate the works of socialist writers. Ngugi Wa Thiong’o’s *Petals of Blood* depicts his forte in the area of social realism, and the novel presents a slaughter slab where Ngugi dissects the socio-political and cultural issues on a Marxist vis-à-vis socialist plane. His preoccupation is with the lucid portrayal of Kenyan society, the relationship between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, not withstanding the simulacrum of disparity characterized by the apotheosis of the potentates and the tainted and deprived hoi-polloi in the class struggle of which Ngugi obviously takes place.

According to Yana (2014) *Petals of Blood*, perhaps marks the beginning of Ngugi’s second fictive writing phase, the first being *Weep Not, Child*. *Petals of Blood* in the view of this scholar interrogates the role that education plays in Kenya’s

struggle for social justice and “the end suggests that the true struggle for social justice does not lie outside educational institutions but in how Kenya’s oppressed populace organize themselves”

According to Vamboi (2000), *Petals of Blood* proceeds from where *A Grain of Wheat* ends. In *A Grain of Wheat*, as suggested by this critic, the struggle between the bourgeoisie and the peasants is still in its early stages and is not expressed in explicit ideological terms; and where there is no mention of the role of the proletariat in the former novel, *Petals of Blood* transmits us to a later Kenyan historical period and the development of Ngugi’s social vision in which the working class asserts itself. The novel is fairly and squarely about the independent Kenya as Achebe’s *A Man of the People* is about the independent Nigeria. It is an expose of the nature of Capitalism, the insecurity, callousness and the insatiable ambition of those in control of vested interests to gain power and wealth by impoverishing the under-privileged and making the majority suffer. In order to expose this monster, Capitalism, Ngugi demonstrates the destructive and demoralizing effects of the whole social system which it both creates and represents.

Saje (2016) submits that the setting of the novel is not incidental background but of every essence its subject matter. The arena juxtaposes the conflicting interests within contemporary Africa: the city and the village. These backgrounds are presented as opposite extremes at the beginning of the novel’s time scheme. Cook and Okwenikpe (1983:9) assert that “we are to watch the tentacle of the city reach out and lay hold of its rural neighbour as the novel progresses”. Ngugi particularizes the characteristic features of each community as they pass their respective roles of victim and destroyer. The city is the seat of opulence catering for every locations populated by the down- trodden. The picturesque estates of the elite are occupied by the likes of Chui, Mzigo, Kimaeri and the condition is elevated as represented by the outpost village of Illmorog which has its days of glory.

The struggle takes place between the two extremes-the urban elites and the village stalwarts-Nyakinyua, Muturi, Njuguna and Ruoro. Intermediate between these extremes are the four major protagonists. Ngugi explores the inter-connections among the lives of Munira, Wanjia, Abdulla and Karega to underscore his political point. These characters are, as it were, the centres of the revolutionary consciousness. They relate the experiences of individual Kenyans or largely Africans to the reality of life in the pre and post- independent situations. The conflicting interests within contemporary African society-the city and the village- are brought to the fore. One, therefore, notes the characteristic figures from among those who link these two worlds, interacting and clashing. This brings to life Ngugi’s picture of capitalist society in Africa. It also exposes the possibility of transforming it by a determined, joint and collaborative action represented by the united vanguard of the likes of the Mau Mau Movement.

Like Chief Nanga in Achebe’s *A Man of the People*, Nderi Wa Riera, the MP for Illmorog is a prototype of a common phenomenon in Africa, that is, the use of politics as stepping stone to material acquisition. For him, the people’s mandate is a license to amass wealth, albeit, illegally. Even the hunger and misery unleashed on his people by the terrible drought is converted into a commodity. He barter his society’s culture and prostitutes its womanhood for profit in joint business ventures with the imperialists. Characteristically, his brand of politics thrives on hollow rhetorics. He is known for empty promises and deceit coated in the idiocy of liberal equivocation. He evokes primordial ethnic sentiments through rituals (tea parties, oath taking ceremonies etc) only to keep people perpetually divided. Ngugi portrays such men as social plagues. As a boomerang, however, the people were able to see through his antics and in a dramatic turn of events, almost stone him to death. He had to take to his heel wondering what had actually gone wrong. Ngugi exposes a lot of inefficiencies such as the ills of the law and the education system which all promote capitalist investment.

In essence, Ngugi does not only highlight the corruption in Kenya but also dramatizes the inevitability of a revolution by workers and peasants in order to overthrow the dispensation of Capitalism. Ngugi exerts his literary skills to draw attention to the effects of corruption and the inhumanity of the capitalist elites in the society. In doing this, he also raises the consciousness of the peasantry which indicates a great hope for Africa. He has demonstrated the existence of two strongly opposing traditions in Africa, that of the imperialists maintained by the international bourgeoisie using multinational and of course flag-wavering native ruling class and the resistance tradition seen constantly in the actions of the working people in their defense of the national cultures of the African people and the democratic and social values.

In so many ways, the Kenyan peasants are the real actors in the struggle against the forces of domination in both texts under examination because they go through similar experiences. As Chidi Amuta (1989) suggests, the turning of the peasants into proletarians by alienating them from their land, “is one of the most crucial upheavals of the twentieth century”. Significantly, however, the resolve by these people to fight and dislodge the enemy and the sacrifices they had to make in the struggle are outstandingly remarkable. Thus, according to Amuta and with particular reference to *Petals of Blood*:

The peasants and workers of Ilmorog walk towards the capital city and in the process are reborn in a new consciousness about the real mechanism of neo-colonialism and capitalist exploitation. And thus equipped, they are ready for the struggle to overthrow their exploiters in a struggle which is continuous and self-renewing (P.75)

The efforts of these people generally represent and give testimony to the legacy of national heroes like Dedan Kimanthi, Ole Nasai and Mikitelili in order to challenge the distortion of Kenyan history by colonialist historiography. Essentially, all the major characters in both texts are typical Ngugi characters, determined, active, fearless and resolute with adaptive skills, passion and the dynamism to demonstrate the importance of collective and united action in the fight against the imperialist forces of exploitation and domination. The novel, is therefore, a denunciation of foreign oppressors, capitalist exploiters and their allies who control power and means of production. Equally important is the call for collective bargaining to ward off the monster-imperialism and capitalist exploitation.

From the foregoing analysis, it is evident that in colonial Africa, the natives witnessed oppression by the colonialists in connivance with the feudal African leadership. Colonized Africans were subjected to varying forms of oppression by the different colonial powers. In the East Anglophone Africa, the issue of confiscating land was the order of the day, whereby the natives were reduced to mere squatters and labourers on their lands. Ngugi, who was young during that time, witnessed these dramatic changes in the lives of Kenyans thereby writing most of his works on this issue which equally made him to be regarded as East Africa’s most important novelists. Most of Ngugi’s works, either written alone or co-authored, draw a lot from the Mau Mau Rebellion in which his ethnic community, the Kikuyu, contested the British colonial Regime, especially for appropriating the fertile Kenyan Highlands to the British settler farmers at the expense of the real owners who became squatters and labourers in their own community. According to Yana (2014) as a literary icon, Ngugi’s popularity was strongly manifested in his drama performances of *The Trial of Dedan Kimanthi*, *I will Marry When I Want*, *The River Between* (adaptation) and readings of *Detained*, his prison diary.

It should be noted that the demand for freedom, social justice and equality runs through African literature before and after independence. African literature can significantly be seen as a creative interpretation of history from the time of colonial occupation of the African continent to its concern with the evil pervasive under the indigenous African leadership. Thus, African writers of the early generation were more influenced by nationalism in their attempt to ensure an Africa that was politically free and independent, culturally rich, religiously orderly so that it could meet up with the socio-political and

economic challenges of the present. It is against this background that Ngugi and Mugo attempt to discuss Africa in their works. The stories in both texts revolve around the anticolonial struggle and the resistance to African dictatorships. The texts can be regarded as protest literature against the misrepresentation of Africa and Africans by British colonizers, on the other hand, and the need to check the excesses of their local stoogies in control of vested interest, on the other.

For instance, Zaynab Alkali (2012) is of the view that art “is an emotive expression” triggered by the need to correct certain injustices in the society. This kind of literature, according to this scholar “attacks in order to defend dignity and integrity”. The texts under examination could be viewed from this perspective because of their concerns about attacking the social injustices in order to defend the dignity and integrity of the African people. The texts can be said to have greatly contributed to the success of revolutions in Africa because they are literarily powerful, politically active and morally engaging.

#### IV. Conclusion

Literature of social realism deals with the issue of class interest and class struggle, which have persisted throughout the history of society. The class struggle is evoked by the diametrically opposed social positions and contradictory interests of the different classes. Class interest is determined not by the consciousness of the people but by its position and role in the system of social production. According to this understanding, the real driving force of history is the revolutionary class struggle. When man becomes aware of his loss, of his alienation, as universal non-human situation, it will be possible for him to proceed to a radical transformation of his situation by a revolution. This revolution will be the preamble to the establishment of communism and the reign of liberty conquered.

Social realism, according to Gakwandi (1977), takes the whole breath of society as its subject matter and examines how customs, conventions, social institutions and individuals inter-relate. It is a weapon that can be used to raise ethical, moral and social issues. The texts discussed in this paper are two important literary genres and narratives of conflict in Kenya based on the social realist tradition. The texts are significantly concerned with awareness and social change and have immensely contributed to moral, ethical and social discourse. They indicate the societal influence on the authors and the circumstances in history which helped to make the environment what it is. Ngugi's and Mugo's deployment of drama on the other hand, and Ngugi's use of the novel on the other, demonstrate the use of two very important literary genres and narratives in national discourse. They are both means of enlightenment, awareness, assessment, education and entertainment in addressing socio-political, moral and ethical issues.

Primarily, the texts discuss the heroism of Kenyans in the fight against Imperialism, Capitalism and other forces of exploitation both local and foreign which constitute series of conflicts in the society under reference, and which invariably contributed to the dehumanizing condition of the African people. Writing the “Foreword” to Ngugi's *Homecoming* (1972), Ikiddeh submits that:

Ngugi's conception of society is of a complex in which politics, economics and culture are inextricably tied up, and nowhere on that spectrum can he see Capitalism offering any hope of progress and social justice that can be said to be accessible to all. (P.XIV)

This is not unconnected with the fact that as a novelist, dramatist, theorist and academic, Ngugi's works have attracted a lot of criticisms which according to Apolo (2010) make both his critics and admirers to regard him as “preeminently literary nationalists”, strongly concerned with the capitalist social relations, an ideology that places formidable barriers in the way of any concrete representation of the reality of life. Ngugi believes in raising the consciousness of the people poised with revolutionary acumen to fight the social forces of operation. This vivid presentation of this feat and the enthusiasm it generates has made these texts, under review, stand out among outstanding creative literary works.



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