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Ridiculing ‘Devils’ as Neocolonial Denunciation in Ngugi’s *Devil on the Cross*

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Abstract:

African independences were aimed at ending up with the European devil. Unfortunately, the hardly-won independence has resulted in a change of dancers with the same dance because Africans leaders have just replaced the European devil to lord neocolonialism on the people. These neocolonialists are considered as impersonated devils in the fictional world of *Devil on the Cross* where Kenya is portrayed as a devil-ridden country. Ngugi turns these devils into ridicule characters in the pay of more powerful devils. This article aims at showing that ridiculing so-called leaders is the strategy Ngugi uses to denounce neocolonialism. To this end, it scrutinizes the most active native Kenyans in the neocolonial process.

Key-words: devil, cross, neocolonialism, proletariat, bourgeoisie.

Résumé:

Les indépendances africaines visaient à sonner la crucifixion du démon européen. Malheureusement, cette indépendance obtenue dans la douleur a abouti à un changement de danseurs avec la même danse car les leaders africains n’ont remplacé le démon blanc que pour imposer le néocolonialisme au peuple. Ces néocolonialistes sont assimilés à des démons dans l’univers fictif de *Devil on the Cross*, œuvre dans laquelle le Kenya est décrit comme un pays infesté de démons. Ngugi ridiculise ces personnages à la solde d’autres démons plus puissants. Le présent article vise à montrer que ridiculiser les soi-disant leaders est la stratégie que Ngugi utilise pour dénoncer le néocolonialisme. À cette fin, il analyse les natifs Kényans les plus actifs dans le processus néocolonial.

Mots-clés : démon, croix, néocolonialisme, prolétariat, bourgeoisie.

Introduction

The ultimate aim of the struggle for independence in *Devil on the Cross* by Ngugi was to oust the Whiteman, referred to as Devil, from Kenya. Some strugglers were so visionary that fearing hollowness of their dream and possible return of that impersonated plague; they have chosen to crucify it. Unfortunately, that vision was not shared by everybody and only three days after the crucifixion, some natives who can but identify themselves with devil endeavored to resuscitate it as a black one. Strengthened by this unprecedented resurrection, the now black devil becomes more bloodsucking than beforehand as it has multiplied and taken uncountable human faces. The personated devil is traceable through characters whose base greed and devilish activities have seriously jeopardized the present, and even endangered the future of the country with the people turned into vulnerable preys. In a handful of words, those characters have tightly rooted neocolonialism where the people have struggled hard to uproot colonialism. Ngugi’s anger therefore targets these neocolonialists whose concern is to better exploit and subjugate their own people. *Devil on the Cross* “reflects Ngugi’s Marxist misanthropist standpoint against the ruling class and its oppressive socio-political and economy machinery

which has been programmed to manacle the masses in Africa's political economy" (Afolayan, 2014: 62). In his effort to denounce neocolonialism, the author simply ridicules devils. What is the core of this denunciation? How can one apprehend these characters as devils? Differently put, how does the author ridicule them?

Answers to these questions can be found in the scrutiny of the four most active and influential devilish characters of this rebounding novel. These devils are Gitutu Wa Gataanguru, Kihaahu Wa Gatheeca, Mwireri Wa Mukirarai, and Nditika Wa Nguungi. An overt class exploitation and struggle underlies *Devil on the Cross*. Our scrutiny will therefore be based on Marxism, a theory that entices people into class struggle in order to empower the weaker ones for the birth of a fairer society.

1-Gitutu Wa Gataanguru, The Shitland

Gītutu Wa Gataangūrū is introduced on the occasion of the annual competition of 'devils' who should campaign to be elected as the most skillful robber. The author turns him into ridicule through his physical description and names that tally with his moral bankruptcy.

From the description of this character, it is easy to feel the stench of evil that surrounds neocolonialism as the reader's nose is assaulted by an unusual odor of putrefaction which can trigger vomits. The strong stench testifies that this character is an impersonated disposal or shitland. Right from the beginning, one realizes that Gītutu is a chunk of shit, a human dumping ground thoroughly crippled with deformity. These are symptomatic of the flaws, base greed and irresponsibility that characterize the new bourgeoisie. It is also a blurred caricature of neocolonial institutions. The derisive nature of this character is captured bellow:

Gitutu had a belly that protruded so far that it would have touched the ground had it not been supported by braces, that held up his trousers. It seemed as if his belly had absorbed all his limbs and all the other organs of his body. Gitutu had no neck, at least his neck was not visible. His arms and legs were short stumps. His head had shrunk to the size of a fist (Ngugi, 1982: 99).

Through this graphic description of his body, Gitutu looks like a rolling ball that white men can kick according to their will. This metamorphosis turns him into ridicule and lambasts neocolonialists whose physical deformity is the externalization of their intellectual dwarfism and wickedness. All these imperfections are also captured in the numerous names expressing disgust, just like physical deformity. Ngugi underscores physical ugliness as a means of ridicule. The author underlines Gītutu's repulsiveness at the very introduction of the man. In addition to his African names, he claims seven western names. The different borrowed names which suggest that their owner's power is a borrowed one, are all closely linked to decay: Rottenborough Groundflesh Shitland Narrow Isthmus Jointstock Brown. The same is true of his African names that are a real appeal to mockery. According to Ndigiriri, "Gitutu refers to a big jigger while Gataanguru refers to a belly infested with tapeworms" (Ndigiriri, 1991:101). The combination of these two African names leads to the shocking conclusion that like worms, this character grows at the expense of other beings. He has so well learnt his lessons from his ancient masters that he has turned into a parasite that can only live and prosper by feeding on other people, which is typical to colonialists whose interests he defends. As posited by Ndigiriri, names can reveal that their "bearers are naturally predisposed to parasitism, selfishness, greed,

sadistic violence and theft and point to the fact that the characters would be misfits in a social setting (Ndigiriri, 1991: 99).

A fleeting look at this character's European names leads to the same conclusion. Parasitism is the hallmark of exploiters. Rottenborough is made of two words: rotten and borough. A borough is a place whereas rotten refers to something which is thoroughly decayed or putrefied. As a consequence, it contains worms and maggots whose sight can provoke vomits. Groundflesh is the association of ground and flesh. Ground refers to an area of land and flesh may refer to meat. Shitland stands for a place where shit is dumped. Groundflesh shitland may consequently refer to the land where one drops shit. Instead of dropping his shit, Shitland rather keeps it in his long belly. One is comforted in this position with the name Isthmus, a word standing for the narrowed part of an organ. Narrow Isthmus therefore refers to the size of his anus canal which is so tiny that it makes it hard for him to drop his load. Consequently, Shitland has a Belphegor belly, with maggots, worms and tape worms struggling to eat as much as possible. The size of the rotten belly is characteristic of somebody who has so much nurtured on rot that his belly dangerously protrudes like a pregnant woman, with his hands becoming shorter and shorter. A society where men become pregnant following the cultivation of base greed and selfishness is a derisive one. In a male chauvinist society, assimilating a man to a mere woman is tantamount to denying him any power and masculinity. No wonder devils' power is borrowed from their ancient masters. Shitland focuses on his base greed when giving his timetable and his favorite recipe. The recipe shows a matchless voracity characteristic of rapacious and vultures.

The remaining names also refer to greed. A joint-stock is a company wherein people have shares, with the particularity that each sharer endeavors to have the greatest number of shares. The existence of the joint-stock subsequently triggers greed, individualism and even selfishness. Besides, the name Brown may refer to a brown paper, a kind of paper we use to pack things or meal. Shitland has so packed meat that he is now assimilated to shit and rubbish packed together, another expression of Ngugi's disgust. By the medium of metaphor, Ngugi transfers the disgust roused in him by neocolonialism to Gitutu, a character who represents the exploiting class who are so greed that they never let downtrodden feed to their hunger. As can be seen, all the names of this sordid character are linked to rottenness, putrefaction and high decay. He is therefore a real disposal, a place where waste is dumped, a place highly infested by worms, parasites that proliferate in decay. In Ngugi's terms, "the body of this character is a site for defecation" (Ngugi, 1980: 99). Through this somber character, Ngugi depicts neocolonial Kenya and by extension Africa as a land where European waste is daily dropped. The likes of Gitutu are born out of the ogre's womb and they continue to perpetuate its legacy, the legacy of neo-colonial dependency (Ogude, 1998: 10). This character alone proves that the struggle for independence has given birth to a social shitland where European antiquated goods and ideologies are daily offloaded. In this society some people are constantly overfed whereas others are dying from famine resulting from their nameless destituteness. Those who are overfed, instead of letting hungry men eat a little bit, would vomit and make room in their rotten bellies for more meal. Gitutu's gluttony equates the exploiting class' eagerness to possess or collect material goods.

Gitutu's belongings are seeable through women and material goods. In addition to his legal wife, he has two mistresses, and all this emphasizes his lust for greed, even at the sexual

level. As for houses, he possesses an official residence at the Golden Heights and many other houses spread all over the country that he has built with the sweat of others. The geographical situation of Gitutu's bungalow clearly shows that independence has led to a pyramidal society wherein the suffering masses live in lower areas whereas rich people are in higher places to look down at them to further exploit or mock at them. Independence has therefore brought about a vertical society with bourgeoisie at the top. Lois Tyson opines that in a top-down society, "people at the top of the social scale are naturally superior to those below them: those at the top are more intelligent, more responsible, more trustworthy, more ethical, and so on" (Tyson, 2006:59). It naturally follows that people at the bottom of the social scale are considered as "shiftless, lazy, and irresponsible" and consequently deserve no important position in decision-making. Therefore, it is only right and natural that those from the highest social class should hold all the positions of power and leadership because they are naturally suited to such roles and are the only ones who can be trusted to perform them properly (Tyson, 2006:59).

The existence of a vertical society testifies that the ancient African society and its values have been swapped for European ones. Indeed, in ancient Africa, there were no districts reserved to rich people separated from that of poor ones whose blood and sweat constitute the river of suffering flowing top-down. According to Brumley the scene where this somber character brags about his goods "is highly allegorical in nature, equating labor with sweat and blood, oppression with the eating of flesh and drinking of blood, and exploitation of Kenya's resources as toying with their mothers' thighs (Brumley, 2007: 21). What Brumley is underscoring is the fact that Kenya's blood has been shed for the benefit of a few individuals who excel in the exploitation of the people.

Through *Shitland*, the author clearly indicates that independence has led to a class-society in which some are mere producers and others are consumers. Producers do not possess the means of production and consequently, they cannot feed themselves properly and suffer from sicknesses whereas ravenous white men with black skins tighten their grip on them. Borrowing from Ndigiriri, one can consequently posit that "Independence only Africanizes the former colonial institutions which remain subservient to imperialist interests" (Ndigiriri, 1991:99). Ogude states in the same seam that Ngugi shows how dangerous Gitutu is by writing that he is a lanky, mosquito-like man. Mosquitoes are dreadful insects that grow only by feeding on human beings' blood. By the same token they transmit malaria, a terrible disease that kills thousands of people per year. Comparing *Shitland* to a mosquito is a way of revealing his blood-sucking nature. In Ogude's terminology, "these features underscore the parasitical nature of jiggers and by extension the parasitism of the ruling class in the post-colonial state that Gitutu represents or parallels" (Ogude, 1998: 6).

In addition to being a marauder, Gitutu is the prototype of those who are always ready to deprive the people of the least means they have for surviving. He acknowledges this by confessing that "wealth is not the work of one's hand but the cunning of one's mind, cunning in a free market system to rob people of the fruits of freedom" (Ngugi, 1982: 105). To achieve his goals, he uses all sorts of means, including betrayal. He has for example betrayed the Mau-Mau, a movement which was struggling for the independence of the country. This betrayal proves that national interests are not his business, for only his selfish interests matter. This soulless man makes two proposals aimed at making the population experiment the worst sorts of hardship in order to permanently have them under control.

The first proposal consists in depriving peasants of all the lands of the country. The land according to him should be the private property of rich people who will put it at the disposal of peasants according to their whim and the ability of peasants to pay. Rich men will above all organize the shortage of land so they could raise its price like in capitalistic societies. Worse, the soil that peasants cultivate should be sold in pots and tins so that a man will at best be able to plant a seed in them and hang them from the roof of his house. This will no doubt result in an increase of famine as the ability to produce will no longer depend on peasants' strength and will to work but rather on their purchasing power. Such a utopic proposal is the proof that the real will of rich people is to effectively make the proletariat disappear through starvation. As for the second suggestion, it aims at trapping air in the sky, putting it in small tins and selling it to peasants and workers, just as water and charcoal are now sold to them. This will also bring peasants and workers under the control of rich men who are but heartless men devoid of the smallest humanity.

These two proposals question the unequal distribution of the wealth of the country. Trapping the air has no other aim than tightening the exploiters' grip on the proletariat so as to better exploit them. Leaders are consequently worse than European colonizers who hide behind civilization to reduce a whole people to mere slaves. In addition to denying a decent life to workers and peasants whose sin is their poor background, leaders now want to deny them the right to life. Rich people thus rouse disgust as it is the case with Kihaahu Wa Gatheeca who is so devilish that even Satan would fear him.

2-Kihaahu Wa Gatheeca, The Kingstock

Kihaahu Wa Gatheeca is a disgusting character that reminds Devil. Like characters of his kind, he shamelessly brags about his ability to bring about the people's drowning through his heartless practices. Only a glance at the different crimes of Kihaahu leads to the inference that he has so many flaws that even hell will close and tightly lock its gates if ever he is in the surroundings. His devilish nature can be snapshotted at three levels: his name, his physical portrayal and his devilish activities.

According to Ndigiriri, Kihaahu stands for "the one who scares" and Gatheeca means "the one who pierces" (Ndigiriri, 1998: 100). Ndigiriri goes so further as saying that Kihaahu might be derived from the Gikuyu name for the kingstock, a connection that Ngugi emphasizes by comparing Kihaahu's mouth to the beak of the kingstock (Ndigiri, 1998.108), a comparison that emphasizes Kihaahu's individualism, since as a Gikuyu proverb states, a bird that has a beak does not pick up grains for another (Ndigiriri, 1998: 100). Individualism always implies selfishness and greed, flaws that are part of the very nature of Gatheeca. When pushed too further, individualism becomes rugged individualism which, in Tyson's opinion, is a cornerstone of capitalism. According to him, "Marxist thinkers consider rugged individualism an oppressive ideology because it puts self-interest above the needs—and even above the survival—of other people" (Tyson 2006, 60). Like Europeanized leaders, Kihaahu Wa Gatheeca has a series of borrowed names: Lord Gabriel Bloodwell-Stuart-Jones. These names are testimonies of his borrowed identity and power. Apart from Jones, there is no single name on the names list which does not have a negative connotation. The enumeration of these names clearly suggests Ngugi's disgust in the face of the general debasement, greed and perversion which are spreading through the country as a byproduct of backfired independence.

A glance at the different names reveals the following: Lord is a kind of honorific title given to some specific European people. Calling an African Lord implies that the name bearer has rejected his African identity. As for Bloodwell, it stands for a well of blood and shows this character's readiness to always shed and suck blood to achieve his goals. Stuart and Jones are English names. Their order of appearance in Kihaahu's full name suggests that they are family names, which is the manifestation of the rejection of Kihaahu's African identity. All these names are unquestionable signs that Kihaahu has espoused the European lifestyle and identity to the detriment of his native ones. No wonder he coalesces with white men to deprive his fellow Africans of the least they possess. In this coalescence, he plays the role of a subaltern who openly refers to white men as his masters. Like a watchdog, he prefers defending his masters' interests and getting crumbs than collaborating with Africans to build a national economy. The refusal to build a national economy that can profit all Africans is the proof that leaders prefer the repetition of the Slave / Master pattern even after African independences. The combination of all this cynical character's names also hints at the gluttony and danger associated with him. It also suggests that he has successfully scaled all the steps of robbery, base greed, gluttony, and heartlessness to be now a lord, somebody far above the ordinary people. Here too, Ngugi brings to the fore and denounces the pyramidal society inherited from colonization.

In addition to ridicule stemming from his names, Kihaahu is portrayed like somebody as ugly as sin. Kihaahu, is a preying animal that sows the seeds of death wherever he goes. The danger that goes with this character can easily be perceived in the following: "His mouth was shaped like the beak of the king stock: thin and sharp. His chin, his face, his head formed a cone. Everything about him indicated leanness and sharp cunning" (Ngugi, 1982:108). All about Kihaahu leads to the same conclusion: he is not a real human being but rather an animal of prey. His predatory nature is emphasized through his long and sharp beak that he uses to prey on weaker animals that symbolize poor and weak people in this moral fable. Kihaahu and his likes are so numerous that Kenya as a whole could be seen as a true jungle wherein strong animals live by preying on weaker ones.

In *Devil on the Cross*, morality or immorality is also traceable through one's marital status and family life. A glance at Kihaahu's life shows that he is strongly woman-centered. However, whereas his likes go with young school girls as sugars, he prefers married women. Such a preference is justified by the fact that with school girls, he has to use condoms to prevent pregnancies. That is not the case for married women whose flesh he can "prick and feel and draw a glorious feeling of victory after a victorious raid" (Ngugi: 1982:109). The audacity to cuckold other men is but the manifestation of a strong insatiability and the proof that he draws his pleasure from the suffering inflicted to others. The inclination to conquer women implies that independence has not bettered the situation of women. In lieu of a capacity building process, it is commoditization that is served to women whose poverty turns them into sexual objects in the hands of coldblooded predators. Kihaahu's raids symbolize those of colonizers who conquered many countries through violence. His goods obtained through the sweat of the proletariat comprise numberless luxurious cars that he publicly exposes proudly. The public exposure of his property "while so many of his fellow citizens can barely eke out a living makes him guilty of conspicuous consumption as posited by Tyson (2006: 62). Consequently, this part of the Kenyan culture encouraging "exuberant showmanship" (Ogude, 1998: 8) should be proscribed. Indeed, it is blameful since possessing in the great majority results from corruption and other dishonest practices including robbery, murders and their offshoot such as those shamelessly

enumerated by the different devils in the cave. It won't therefore be misleading to state that Ngugi cudgels against such cultural practices which he considers highly harmful because they are thoroughly perverted for the sake of material goods.

Originally a poor primary school teacher, Kihaahu suddenly realizes that teaching can never properly feed a person. Driven by cheating strategies, he builds a school supposed to be a true European school in Africa. National songs, names and languages are forbidden in his school managed by a crippled European woman whose presence makes parents think the school effectively deals with English programs. Banishing African programs, songs and customs from his school testifies to the fact that school is implicitly infused with a recolonisation project. Neo-imperialism is therefore one of the mainstream reasons that lead Kihaahu to create his school. The European headmistress' physical state foreshadows that students will graduate as crippled persons with no native authenticity but rather shortsightedness infused by school. Peter Bell and Harry Cleaver state that "capital has expanded its control beyond the factory and integrated within its circuits of reproduction social and cultural institutions (into what has been called the "Social factory") (Peter Bell and Harry Cleaver, 2002: 2). The tutelage of school by capital triggers class-struggle as seen when Kihaahu enters politics.

In addition to the crippled headmistress, the poisonous treachery is heightened by the presence of mannequins at play through the windows to add to the number of white people. Many parents are thus cheated as the founder brags to have made a net profit of 200,000 shillings per month without shedding the least sweat. He obviously makes many victims from his social class as poor people cannot afford such a school where students are but plastic Europeans in wigs. Kihaahu enters politics as a member of the upper class and he recruits hooligans to clear his way. Through violence that testifies his strong contempt for democracy, he threatens his opponents who drop their ambition for his sake. When an opponent appears stubborn enough and he wants to go through the whole process of competition, the hooligans simply eliminate him physically and thus leave the way free for their master who is elected with no difficulty. This clearly justifies the name Kingstock. In addition to robbing the masses, Kihaahu takes advantage of his position as the chairman of Iciciri Council's Housing Committee to divert money and institute bribes as a rule. Thus, nobody could buy a low-price house if they do not bribe this deceitful chairman whose main concern is to sow blindness and ignorance in the population to better exploit them. Anyone who dares to stand against ignorance is simply killed and his corpse thrown to predatory animals like hyenas or crocodiles that operate like him. Men like Kihaahu have turned Kenya as a whole into a gang-ridden city with a high rate of insecurity. As a true autocrat, he hates students and university teachers who play spoil-sports by teaching democratic principles to the people. Mindful that the utmost dream of people is to have their own house, he suggests they create a lack of shelter so strong that nets which can be folded would be proposed to house demanders. Kihaahu thus denies his fellow members the least opportunity to live decently and dream for a better future with effective accommodations. In short, Kihaahu's behavior tallies with a thoroughly rotten mind that apprehends everybody as a prey. Such a mind is rooted in wickedness and economic shortsightedness underlying neocolonialism. Its owner deserves living in hell, just like Nditika Wa Ngunngi.

3-Nditika Wa Ngunngi, Mister Greed

Nditika Wa Ngunngi is strongly repulsive as he thrives on the garbage of society. In order to fully spotlight him as such, Ngugi emphasizes his name, his horrible physical

appearance and his rotten activities. Ndigiriri provides us with a highly helpful meaning of this character's name by writing:

The name Nditika refers to one who carries heavy burdens. Ngunngi refers to one who folds. Combined, the two names point to an essentially indelicate and indiscriminate character who carries anything and everything, who selfishly keeps to himself anything he acquires' (Ndigiriri, 1991: 100).

From the above quotation, one can state that Nditika is an untruthful robber. He carries the burdens of betrayal inflicted to Africa by African fake saviors. Africa is basically characterized by the fact of sharing and mutual aid. Any individual who lives regardless of these cultural values is considered as marginal. He is also guilty of selfishness, one of the basic characteristics of the capitalistic society. Like somebody bearing a black soul in a dark skin, Nditika is the epitome of capitalism. Capitalism promotes the belief that "you are what you own"—that our value as human beings is only as great as the value of our possessions— (Tyson 2006, 74).

Nditika is strongly rooted in selfishness and base greed, just like his white masters whose interests he fiercely defends. What is more, the quest for fame on the sweat of others has turned him into a dunghill nesting flies. Indeed, the stench stemming from him is so strong that he is either assimilated to latrines or green flies. The author writes that Nditika is wearing on his black suit a jacket that "had tails cut in the shape of the wings of the big green flies that are normally found in pit latrines or among rotting rubbish" (Ngugi: 1982: 175). Furthermore, when he breaths, his breath "smells worse than the farts of a badger or of someone who has gorged himself on rotten beans or over-ripe bananas" (Ngugi: 1982: 182). Pointless to say this man is highly putrefied, his horrible physical appearance being the externalization of a rotten mind that feeds on the refuse of society. This rot, like the green flies on waste, follows him like his shadow and often dictates his behavior. Rot is a metaphor of the base corruption characterizing neocolonialism. Though Nditika claims to be married to only one woman, he belongs to all the women who are ready to be turned into easy sexual preys. As if to compensate for his status of illiterate, he targets students who attend prodigious universities such as Cambridge in England. Actually, this character develops an inferiority complex regarding the western world. Having sex with western-educated girls is a way of bridging his illiteracy and showing his affection for the western world. Showing affection for the western world while denying one's African values is a manifest sign of alienation.

Nditika's greed can also be observed through his material possessions that he has acquired thanks to the sweat of the downtrodden and wretched of the earth. He has several brand-new cars of trademarks such as Mercedes, BMW, Volvo, Range Rover, Peugeot, and Fiat. Except Volvo which is made in Sweden all these cars are produced by ancient white colonizers namely German, British, French and Italian people. This implies that independence has triggered a consumption society in lieu of a producing one. Consuming European goods is synonymous with copying European lifestyle and ideology. Thanks to the corrupt money and the sweat of peasants, Nditika has created several farms in which he employs workers whose salary is so meagre that they cannot afford a decent life. They are constantly maintained in oppression and exploitation which are the hallmarks of capitalism and subsequent class-struggle. This exemplifies Marx's idea that "the modern bourgeois society that has sprouted

from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones. (Marx & Engels, p.14).

Nditika has established a dictatorship towards his workers. These were freedom fighters who are now forced to sell their labor to alienated masters. The very day they dare to ask for higher wages to better their living conditions, he considers their deed as a lese-majesty crime. To show them that nobody could trifle with him with impunity and protect his interests and 'hard-won' properties, he dismisses them all, without any compensation. Nditika typifies African leaders who have taken power to better exploit and make their fellow Africans sink in the abyss of destituteness. Since he is in cahoots with white men to exploit his own people, he symbolizes the continuity of colonialism and can be portrayed as "the hand tool of the former colonial masters" (Shang 2015:145).

Nditika strongly believes in what he calls the Holy Trinity of theft: grabbing, extortion and confiscation. As can be seen, this sordid character is concerned with leaving nothing to the masses for their daily survival whereas thanks to his sinful holy trinity, he would possess everything he needs to live and experiment happiness. This point of view is strengthened by his ridiculous proposal aimed at making him and his likes reach the status of immortals. Religiously speaking, he is an adept of imported religions that he subtly mentions through "Holy trinity". His ridiculously proposes to build a factory specialized in the manufacturing of human spares like bellies, hearts, mouths, sexes. Given the advanced destituteness of the masses, these uncommon goods would only be bought by rich men who would have at least two bellies, two hearts, two sexes, two mouths and whatever spares they could use to never stop eating and making love. Each time they are sick, they will just replace the failing part by a spare and order a new one that they will keep and use in case of a new sickness. Ironically, such a process will result in the transformation of rich men into mere machines with an exchange value. As commodities, they are "like every other article of commerce, and are consequently exposed to all the vicissitudes of competition, to all the fluctuations of the market" (Marx, p.18). Their market value depends on the whims of their ancient white masters who regulate the market economy. Thanks to their immortality, they will challenge God and leave death to the downtrodden whose lives are but daily incursions in hell. One of the concerns of these devils is to perpetuate colonial devilish practices as their legacy. Through such a behavior, Ngugi 'further suggests that the desire of the comprador class which rescues the devil, thereby introducing a new form of colonialism, is to inherit the devil's worst qualities' (Ogude, 1998: 9). All in all, Nditika is highly ridiculous and putrefied. The greed and selfishness that he displays are the main characteristics of his social class that daily inflicts woes to the poor whose tasteless life equates incursions in earthly hell with the devil as a master. Such devil is [...] commonly associated with men who sell their souls to capitalist doctrine for personal gain at the expense of others (Brumley, 2007: 17). Another cultivator of such personal gains is Mwireri Wa Mukirarai.

4-Mwireri Wa Mukirarai, The Fake Savior

Mwireri Wa Mukirarai is a character who is difficult to apprehend. He has a contrastive worldview as he is a man who wants something and at the same time its contrary. This paradoxical view of the world dictates his behavior. Compared with the other devils, he seems to be less guilty as he pleads for a national economy. Ngugi neither proceeds to his physical description nor gives him European borrowed names. He can consequently be apprehended

only through his African names and his speech which externalizes his worldview and reveals him as a fake savior.

According to Ndigiriri, Mwireri means “the one who brings himself up” (Ndigiriri, 1991: 103). Mwireri is therefore a kind of self-made man, a man who has paved his own way in the Kenyan labyrinth. One of the basic characteristics of such a man is loneliness. Loneliness is never an isolated flaw in Ngugi’s fictive world. It is coupled with selfishness and base greed. Greed can be captured in Mwireri’s fears regarding children. Indeed, fearing an increase in the number of children would threaten his selfish interests, he registers at the International Planned Parenthood Association that maneuvers to impose family planning. The ultimate goal of such an association is to trigger a considerable decrease in the number of children, a way of preventing an increase of downtrodden who will have no alternative but “take clubs and swords and guns to split open their well-fed bellies” (Ngugi, 1982:161). To remain in line with the Parenthood association policy, Mwireri has a few children not for the sake of family planning as he claims but rather because children are a real burden and threat to the class of eaters who would be obliged to share their wealth, food and whatever they have with their offspring. In Mwireri’s conception of life, elementary facts such as getting married and procreating should depend on the ability to rob and have means. A man devoid of means should not touch and taste the flesh of women. This is a luxury only rich men who feed on the sweat of workers and peasants can afford. Depriving downtrodden of the pleasure of having and breeding children will result in the strengthening of the upper class and the strong decrease of the lower one. The upper class will consequently take control of society and promote the interests of big corporations at the expense of smaller ones.

Ngugi infuses his novel with a strong Marxist impetus and openly appeals his readers to condemn the capitalist exploitation the proletariat suffers in the hands of neocolonialists.

Mwireri functions as a spoilsport regarding the conglomerate of thieves who pullulate in Ngugi’s social satire. While being part of the association of thieves, he is strongly opposed to the way business is organized. He loudly criticizes his fellow citizens who have turned into slaves at the mercy of their ancient masters despite the official end of colonization. By so doing, he questions the foundations of the existing society and implicitly calls for its dismemberment. Mwireri temporarily becomes the embodiment of the struggle for the Kenyan economic independence. Such an attitude testifies to the fact that “the writer does not take the world for granted but re-creates it, revealing its true nature as a constructed product. Ngugi instills “this sense of productive energy to his readers, [and] awakens in them similar energies, rather than merely satisfying their consumer appetites. (Eagleton, 2006:26). However, the reader ends deceived because what seems to be the manifestation of patriotism or nationalism that ultimately aims at saving the people from the yoke of colonialism is rooted in individual interests. Mwireri seems to have no belief in foreign ideology even though he believes in the philosophy of modern theft and robbery. And yet, in a recent past, he was an active agent of devil in cahoots with the western exploiters. As a matter of fact, “the local thieves, the Kenyan natives, collaborate with their foreign allies to loot and rob the country.” (Nag, 2013:147).

While agreeing on the principles of robbery, Mwireri overtly displays his hatred and disgust regarding foreigners whom he considers as foreign wolves eating indigenous lambs at their expense. He consequently suggests that nonnatives be ousted so they could easily grab the economy of the country and set up an indigenous bourgeoisie that would freely exploit the people. For him, “God has ordained that rich people should devoid poor ones of the least they have to get richer and strengthen their position” (Ngugi, 1982: 121). Mwireri is somehow the

fake bridge to the construction of a national economy handled by natives who care about the future of the country. He somehow wants to decolonize the Kenyan economy. He openly declares his cherished goal to “Africanize and socialize our political and economic life” (Dhar 2007: 175). Yet, his ambition is not for the sake of the people but his selfish interests that are now antagonistic to the current way business is handled. His so-called patriotism is therefore frozen and ill-oriented. Actually, it is no patriotism since it derives from frustration. Indeed, despite a rich and unquestionable professional experience in foreign companies, Mwireri could have no promotion and rise to the position of decision-makers or executives whereas less experienced foreign workers were regularly promoted. Some less competent workers were among the chief executive officers. Fed-up with his subaltern position and nameless discrimination, Mwireri resigned.

The upmost motivation of this resignation is to set up his own business and compete with foreign companies who have taken control of the national economy. Notwithstanding, all the companies he created went bankrupt because of foreign competition. This is the real source of his disgust and repugnance regarding foreign capitalism. By the process of decolonizing the economy, Mwireri could rise as a real national bourgeois thriving on the sweat of the people. No wonder, he has deliberately chosen to be part of the hangmen of the people that he now wishes to oust. Thus, the denunciation he makes is but the going-astray of a selfish and greedy man who now rejects neocolonial tutelage because he has difficulties in agreeing with his likes and ancient masters on the basic robbing rules. He would have never denounced foreign grips on the economy if he had succeeded in his attempts. He is consequently “no more than a discredited hero” (Dhar 2007: 176) who has never pondered over the misfortune of his fellow native Africans. To show he is not the kind of heroes needed by Africa, Ngugi refuses him success. His denunciation leads him nowhere but to death. Indeed, sequel to the denunciation of alien thieves, he is trapped and killed by Mwaura, the seemingly inoffensive *matatau* driver.

Mwaura is actually one of the most active watchdogs of the ancient colonizers. Mwireri’s death foretells the impossibility of building a national economy rid of the claws of foreign capitalism. It also suggests that neocolonialism as devil or evil should disappear. Cleansing neocolonialism starts with ousting Africans who have turned vultures and rapacious animals to prey on other Africans. Mwireri Wa Mukirarai is the fake advocate of the people for he is the typical intellectual who knows how to build a national economy for the sake of the people but who chooses to coalesce with imperialists to enlarge the series of woes that befall Africa. Through Mwireri as a character; Ngugi seems to indicate that the liberation of Africa does not depend on individual or isolated deeds. It rather depends on collective actions as it is preconized by Marxism.

Conclusion

From the study of the different personated devils it can be inferred that devils are recognizable through their names which are typical names or nicknames of mockery or through their physical deformity and their strongly flawed morality which typify the exploiting class. The trademark of ‘devils’ is their ugliness and overt predatory nature which is symbolic of base greed, exploitation and economic avidity. Their ugliness tallies with their wickedness. Overtly mocking at them is the author’s strategy to expose the borrowed and crippled power that characterizes neocolonialism. Neocolonialists are described as powerless toys and dwarfs in the hands of the European devil. The existence of these devils proves that there is an indigenous bourgeoisie which is much greedier and heartless than the European evil. One can consequently

opine that “there is an underlying sense of doom” (Hevešiová 2014: 1) in Ngugi’s novel. Beyond the mere will to ridicule leaders through social satire, lies the author’s goodwill to denounce and attack the foundations of Neocolonialism, the pandemic emerging as an offshoot of backfired independence. Through his literary acumen, Ngugi “has catapulted caustic criticism against the middle class of Africa who derived power from the common people during the anti-colonial struggles and after independence” (Nag, 2013: 149). In the same seam, he takes advantage of these devils to “erect the monstrous image of capitalism as a fetish” (Ogude, 1998: 5). *Devil on the Cross* has a marxist agenda and stands as a scathing critique of neocolonialism and appeals for action instead of leaving room for reflection.

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