



THEME OF IDENTITY CRISIS IN DEVIL ON THE CROSS

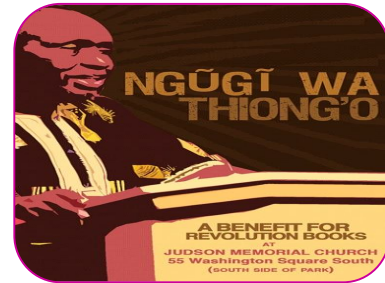
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ABSTRACT

Theme of identity Crisis in the novels of Ngugi Wa Thiong. It draw our attention to the issue on the oppressed highlighting the problems of the black people who have suffer very painful experience. The journey of Wariinga's and her encounter with all the respective members. That described in those days condition very wretched condition of tribal people. Their struggle is very important for their identity.

KEY WORDS : Colonialism, Identity Crisis, Capitalist, Cultural Imperialism, Gikuya Culture .



INTRODUCTION :

Ngugi's wa Thiong's the Kenyan Novelist, Short Story Writer. He has published six novels. All available in African writers series –Wept not Child, The River Between, A Grain of Wheat, Petal of Blood, Devil on the Cross, Matigari etc. He is focused on the oppressed highlighting the problems of the black people who have undergone the painful phases of colonialism, struggle against imperialism & Neo-colonialism. All his writing deal with Social ,political ,economic and cultural aspects of Kenyan people. Ngugi wa Thiong's identify three phases of the encounter with European Imperialism- Slavery, Colonialism and Neo-Colonialism. His novel Devil on the Cross deals with corruption-in the sense physical and moral which has debilitating effect on the fabric of the society. The complex Neo-colonial situation is presented through a montage a fact and fiction, magic and allegory. Wariinga, the female protagonist, emerges as fictional reflection of the resistance heroine in Kenyan history. Devil on the Cross is an indictment of the Neo-colonial aspects of Post-Independence Kenya exposing the evils that have set in the socio-political fabric. It is a sarcastic attack on the path of development on the wholesale exploitation of masses both rural and urban. A revolutionary novel in theme, form and structure. He gives priorities from English language to his native Gikuya. The reason for writing this novel in his native language is that he could reach the peasants and workers of his Country easily. The novel could be considered as satiric critique of contemporary Kenya against a vision of socialistic Kenya purged of neocolonialism. It introduces a unique literary form which captures the nature of revolution by focusing on the psychological, sociological factors involved in the working class people's struggle against the materialistic ambition-land, property, beliefs and rituals similar to exploitative attitude of the colonizers. The novel portrays several characters from all levels of Kenyan society from peasant to businessman.

The character Jacinta Wariinga's journey to Ilmorog and her encounter with the five passengers and with the driver is used as fictional device to articulate the corrupt conditions in Kenya's world of wretched humanity. The Devil feast in the cave is powerful metaphor for cultural imperialism. The capitalists indulge in self-glorification act and self-congratulatory speeches of their cunning. The act is outrageous and funny in

intent and purpose as it intensifies Wariinga's painful experience of the inevitable historical condition to which she was both a witness and participant. In this novel Ngugi uses both traditional Gikuyu culture and Christianity as sources for the rhetoric of his characters. Ngugi attempts to capture the attention of his audience by focusing on the Kenyan middle class elite who are engaged in exploitation on a wider scale and therefore deserve condemnation. Ngugi advocates a better deal for the Kenyan masses that are now at the receiving end of an unjust socio-political system. The elite in the story are made to invite the wrath of the masses in two ways: through their physical appearance and through their pronouncements.

The opening lines of the novel in the tradition of the oral narrative have a conversational style which is characteristic of most of *Devil on the Cross*. Jacinta Wariinga, the protagonist, has just lost her job in the beginning of the novel. Her fault is her refusal to submit herself to the advances of Kihara, the boss of Champion Construction Company. This seems to be the fate of most urban Kenyan women.

Ngugi intentionally avoids a simple solution showing that the attack of the peasants and workers on the middle class elite and the foreign Robbers and Wariinga's elimination of the Rich Old Man mark the beginning of an arduous struggle that lays ahead. The masses have not overthrown the political system. Five of them have been killed in confrontation. Wariinga in all probability, has lost her fiancé and her future is also fraught with danger as the forces of bourgeois law are certain to catch up with charge her with murder.

Devil on the Cross is a practical conclusion of an important debate in African literature and in this respect it is an experimental novel. It is a bitter satire on neo-colonial capitalism. Its central allegory is the gathering of disparate characters representing the different classes and cultural interests in Kenyan society. Their meeting takes place at Devil Feast where a series of competitions reveal capitalism's depraved face. The character names and character types in Ngugi's fiction are devices through which the social reality is encapsulated and analyzed.

The characters in the novel are grouped into the creators and destroyers of life. Jacinta Wariinga, the most powerful character of Ngugi embodies the contradictions of her own age. She becomes a complex character in terms of theme and style. Her education suffers because of her class background and she has to strive for survival. Deserted by her boyfriend and driven out of her house by the hired thugs of the landlord. She attempts committing suicide but is rescued by Muturi. Wariinga falls in love with Gaturia, the son of the Rich Old Man of Ngorika, she becomes pregnant and gives birth to a daughter, Wambui. When we meet her in the Matatu the gloomy phase in her life is over and she becomes more assertive and critical of the system. Her revolutionary optimism is strengthened by her rescuer, Muturi, to be Wariinga's role in the novel to emphasize that women play a constructive role on equal footing with men and they are not merely sex-gratifying and child-bearing machines. As such, Wariinga emphasizes that woman is not man's commodity, an edible thing to be devoured, an inanimate object or ornament to be worn by man. According to Ngugi, Wariinga is a fictional reflection of the resistance heroine in Kenyan history, conceived along the lines of Mau Mau women cadres. Wariinga at one level kills the destroyer of women. She points out to the need to see humanness behind the beauty. Through the character of Wariinga, Ngugi wants in the society the liberation for women. Ngugi also deplores women's attempts to lighten their skin, straighten their hair and follow the current fashions and celebrates the beauty of African women who are strong and independent. Wariinga's Murder of the old man is a decisive gesture of self-assertion. This is corroborated by the fact that she chooses to dress herself in traditional Gikuyu costume at this fateful moment.

He expresses the view that the goal of total liberation can be achieved through the united efforts of the peasant, the worker, the student whom he calls the holy trinity since they are the backbone of any country. With a greater knowledge of the social indignities that the peasants and workers of modern Kenya are subjected to. This novel is a continuation of his earlier works. The novel bears an unmistakable Marxist stamp and belongs to the category of the socialist art and in this novel. The aim of the working class and emergent socialist world. Ngugi has also transformed the style and form of his novel to create an Afrocentric narrative. He is also focusing on the theme of Modern Theft and robbery, Ngugi also deals with the problems of women- twice colonized community. Jacinta Wariinga is the Principal Character of the novel and it is primarily her story that Ngugi sets out to tell. Some of the characters like- The Rich Old Men, Waigokos,

Kamoongonyes who together represent a fair sample of Kenyan males are all out to convert them into their sugar girls.

On the other point of view Devil on the Cross is signifier of every event in the novel: the bus journey, the feast in the cave, Wariinga's transformation, her love affair with Gatuiria, the driver killings of Celebrated man in the cave, Wariinga's killing of "The Rich Old Man" and two other capitalists in the wedding crowd. He tries to show these activities as natural outcome of incidents indicated as comprehensive vision of the historical condition of Kenya.

I feel that the Devil on the Cross is novel one of this historic staging post of African fiction. The novel is one of the most powerful critiques of modern Kenya ever written. This novel touches to human heart. The novelist shows the true picture of the Kenyan culture. It is also important that the novel is remarkable end it twist the reader regarding the protagonist of the novel. The language is very lucid, impressive used by the writer. The style form and content is very good Manner. It is allegorical form of the novel. It is studied in the socio-perspective way. It is remarkable effect on the readers mind.

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