CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Background to the Study

Rhetoric is the ancient art of argumentation and discourse from primordial Greece to the twenty-first century. Rhetoric has been central to Western and African education, filling the need to train public speakers, orators and writers to move audiences to action with arguments. In Western perspective, the word 'rhetoric' originated from the Greek word 'rhetor' which means speaker and it is often seen as the art of public speaking. In Africa, from time immemorial, rhetoric originated from orality and this anchors its significance on persuasive verbal expressions. The thrust of rhetoric quite often is the intellectual ability of a speaker to compose and arrange a speech that would be persuasive through its intellectual, emotional and dramatic appeal to an audience.

Western rhetoric in its historic framework had its origin in ancient Greece in the fifth century B.C. The earliest known studies of it come from Greek philosophers of the classical period; the Sophists, Aristotle and then, in the Roman world, Cato, Cicero and Quintilian. For Marcus Cicero, classical rhetoric has five canons: invention, arrangement, style, memory and delivery. "Invention" referred to the content of a speech; whether it is persuasive, and logical or appealing. The second part is "arrangement" of the speech into a given order. The third part is "style". This refers to diction (word choice) and composition that makes use of rhythm and figurative language. The other two canons often made popular by Aristotle are "memory" which meant memorization of the speech for oratory purpose and delivery signified by the control of one's

voice, tone and gesture when speaking. Rafey Habib explains the origin of rhetoric with these words

> The art of rhetoric was formally founded in 476 BC by a native of Syracuse, Corax, whose student Tisias transmitted his master's teachings to the mainland. Rhetoric was an integral part of the political process in ancient Greece, especially in Athens and Syracuse of the fifth century BC… On the ability to speak persuasively could depend the entire future of a State, family or individual. On rhetoric, often hung the balance of life or death, war or peace, prosperity or destruction, freedom or slavery. (24)

In ancient Athens, a group of professional teachers, called Sophists (from 'Sophos', meaning "wise") emerged. They taught art for use in the courts, the legislature, and political forums, as well as for philosophical reflection and debate. Through their influence, rhetoric came to assume a central role in Greek education. The most influential of the Sophists were Protagoras, Gorgias, Antiphon, Lysias, and Isocrates (Habib 24). Chinwe Okechukwu remarks that "rhetoric has been seen as the bedrock of an organized society from the classical times to the present. It embraces the different arms of government in society, including the judicial, the political and the ceremonial" (45). The views captured here clearly define the nature and manifestation of rhetoric by the Greeks, Romans and Britons but against the backdrop of this explanation, other postcolonial communities of the world have rhetoric and have been interested in studying and projecting their rhetoric in diverse forms and perceptions of humanity.

However, Mbanefo Ogene avers that "rhetoric started from the oral tradition before it developed to the written. The early Greece scholars started from the oral tradition before they evolved a system of the written text" (98). Duckworth succinctly stressed that:

> Indeed, the search for the non-Western culture has become a crucial scholarly and political endeavour, as people seek bases for dialogue across tribal and national boundaries. The true rhetoric of any age and of any people is to be found deep within what might be called attitudinizing conventions, precepts that condition one's stance toward experience. (qtd. in Ogene 100)

In Africa, therefore, before one can give a reasonable account of what rhetoric is and where it comes from, one must make the case for what the tradition is made of. First the distinction between the wider conception and narrow conception of rhetoric must be explored. The wider definition encompasses the notion that rhetoric is the effective use of speech because speech can be used properly or badly, effectively or ineffectively. When one uses language effectively and properly it can be called rhetoric. Good speech is integral to oral communication and expression. Africans use this perception of rhetoric in that it is very expressive and culture-based.

The masterful use of speech patterns or verbal art encapsulates this wider notion of rhetoric. There is a common definition of rhetoric that is commonly rendered as the verbal art which humans use to persuade or "trick", a way to set one on the sublime and also cajole the person to accept facts of human existence. While this stands as the definition of rhetoric at its primary level, it is equally necessary to realize that this is not the only viable means in which it signifies value to man. The use of language to trick and persuade is important in its own context, but it is appropriate to look beyond this meaning because in many circumstances a rhetorician does not engage his art to coax his/her listeners to do something imprudent or to fascinate the audience with illogical sublimity and arguments. Rhetoric in Africa embraces this connotation of rhetoric's wider definition. It does not simply mean the use of rhetorical speech (though that will

be part of it), but it also implies the effective use of rhetorical speech that embodies and carries African culture. The rhetoric of the continent also covers a culture that is oral and expressive and as such the rhetoric and the language cannot be separated. When one studies the language that is used in the vernacular tradition, the person is looking at the rhetoric that has been part of that tradition before the modern conception of it had ever come around.

In Africa, rhetoric exists as the oral traditions of Africa in which in its various communities, auditors of an oral performance or readers of a text are persuaded for diverse reasons to pursue a particular cause through rhetoric. Rhetoric in the Western world relies heavily on its forensic and deliberative aspects while in Africa, orality anchors on epideictic rhetoric. In this form, African persuasive oral elements are used on appropriate; usually ceremonial occasions to enlarge upon the praiseworthiness (or sometimes, the blameworthiness) of an African or group of persons, and in so doing, to display the orators's own talents and skill in rising the rhetorical expectations of the occasion.

Again, there is an interface between rhetoric and oratory. This interconnection is so unique that oral features and figures of speech are used as means of persuasion, imparting of moral lessons, communication and cultural identity for purpose of emphasis. Oral genres that exist in Africa are proverbs, myths, songs, tales, fables, odes, legends, riddles, oral narratives, panegyric etc, while rhetorical figures in Africa are metaphor, repetition, apostrophe, rhetorical questions, hyperbole, allusion, parallelism, personification, antithesis etc. within the framework of figurative language, these rhetorical devices are deployed as rhetoric. Despite the efforts of African scholars and researchers to diligently collect, transcribe, translate, interpret, and publish many African stories, songs, poems, proverbs, folktales, etc, numerous genres are still on the brink of extinction and,

sadly, there seems little anyone can do about what is, after all, a natural order of things (Akintunde 2). The good news is that various African governments, academic institutions, and non-governmental organizations are taking steps now to keep alive the traditions of the past through encouragement and even sponsorship of folk troupes, as well as the promotion of periodic festivals where the best folk artists may show their skills. Nonetheless, the passage of things, according to Isidore Okpewho, "can never be arrested; the best thing about tradition may be, indeed, that it moves on, maintaining its essence even changing its outer form" ("Introduction" vii).

It is necessary to continue by looking at the history of rhetoric in Africa. When people assume or assert that civilization began in Egypt of Africa, it is possible to accentuate that all world languages and their cultural inclinations have their roots in the languages of Africa. The later shift of civilization to Greece, Rome, France, United Kingdom, America, Germany, Spain, China etc, cannot in any form deny this fact. After all, Chinua Achebe in his 1975 critical book *Morning Yet on Creation Day* issues a reply to the distortions of Western historians and philosophers when he says

> African people did not hear of culture for the first time from Europeans, their societies were not mindless but frequently had a philosophy of great depth and value and beauty. They had poetry and above all, they had dignity and self-respect. It is this dignity that many African people all but lost in the colonial period and it is this that they must now regain. (45)

Achebe strongly refuses to accept the claims that Africa is the 'nest of uncivilized birds' and a kingdom of social animals without rhetorical skills. He blames the colonialists for the

backwardness that could be presently recorded of Africa, noting that Africa's development has been constrained by slavery and colonialism. Colonialism accounts for the loss of dignity and selfrespect among Africans. In Africa therefore, music, myth/folklore, expressive structures, the inclination of rhetoric, metaphysical systems of order and even the forms of performance were all preserved (Gates Jr. 3-4). Akintunde Akinyemi states that

> The continent of Africa hosts the largest reservoir of varieties of verbal arts, which could be classified into two categories, namely, literary and historical. While the literary category includes poetic genres such as praise poetry, sacred chants, songs, and the verbal formulae like incantations, parables, and proverbs, the historical type, on the other hand, includes such forms as narratives based on myths, legends, folktales, and historical genres like epics. (27)

The conception of music, metaphysics, mythic symbolism and structure as part of the rhetorical tradition, have been used to inform and coax Africans of primordial era and those in the twenty-first century. All of these rhetorical devices had their beginning in classical African culture in various forms, but most importantly they were part of the oral tradition. However, African oral features have some affinities with the intellectual development of other cultures, most influential would be that of the Mediterranean world in the form of classical (Western) rhetoric.

Moreover, some forms of rhetoric in Africa are different from Western forms of rhetoric in certain ways. The forms of rhetoric in Africa are based on persuasive conventions that are not those of the most commonly understood forms of Western culture. African oratory was based on particular metaphysical worldviews, symbols, structures and performance techniques which are rarely seen outside of western Africa. Knowles-Borishade goes so far as to say that it is not

possible to analyze the contemporary African oratory if one does not understand the particular set of beliefs and history from which it comes (Knowles-Broishade, 488). According to Knowles-Broishade, classical African oratory must be seen as historical, or having a rooted, traceable history, it must conform to African cultural expectations which means it must be traditional. It was (and is) an art form that can be analyzed with a set of traditional standards and lastly it must have some sort of cohesion or be codified (488).

When readers take a look at these categories, they can begin to see the importance of the systematic and deliberate nature of rhetoric in Africa. However, one must be cautioned, Knowles-Borishade seems to treat these metaphysical aspects of the oral tradition as something that is separate from rhetoric. What has been stated so far is that one cannot cleanly find that divide, the reader may even go so far as to say that it is impossible to divide it, because of this fact Knowles-Borishade here serves as a guide in the general sense to help make clear distinctions about the categories that are needed to analyze the tradition as a whole. However, when it comes to the actual rhetoric that is embedded within the language, it is proper to depart from Knowles-Borishade's notion of separate entities and once again think of the rhetoric as running throughout these categories unbroken.

Historically, the practice of classical rhetoric on the African continent goes back to the ancient world, practised all over but having a functional center in Egypt (Crawford 111). It was a practice that was reserved for a particular caste of people. Much like the conception of the Western world's rhetoric, not everybody was skilled in the use of persuasion and pun or the mastery of symbolic language. The prominent users of rhetoric were the West African griots like Sundjata Keita, Mande, Djelba. A griot is a West African storyteller, singer, musician and oral

historian. They are trained to excel as rhetoricians, lyricists and musicians. These poets, musicians, singers and magicians were eloquent and could enrapture an audience with their abilities (Campbell 30). They served an important function not just as entertainers, but it is speculated that they would be able to incite enemy combatants on the field of battle (Campbell 27).

Griot as a name was reserved for a set of artists who were (and still are) observers of affairs, commentators (political and social) or councilor onpast or passing scenes (Kaschula 56). It was their mastery of language that allowed them to fulfill many different positions and gave them the power to develop rhetorical tropes that are still with Africans. If one looks at the history of the griot, the person can begin to see the beginnings of rhetorical tropes that have been defined in modern Africa. One can imagine the African orator in the Egyptian courts referring to symbols and making gestures just as grand as their Greek counterpart.

Modern griots serve many of the same functions as their ancient forebears and preserve the traditions and they serve more of an entertainment purpose but are still worthy court entertainers and poets. They comment on contemporary matters in a traditional style (Kaschula 56) and lend this same type of performance to those that have come over from their homeland. The griot's art is one that is pervasive and has continued to exist almost unchanged in Africa for centuries and has been passed on for generations, even to those that have since come across the oceans. It is because of this that the griot is seen as a grandfather to the oral poetry and vernacular tradition that is apparent in many African-American communities today. What was once reserved for a particular people, so informed by the worldview of the ancients, is to a large extent what exists in a similar form for the modern speaker. One can imagine that it is the colourful and

metaphysically relevant speech that would have survived through the ages as something that would keep the culture alive. It is the essence of folklore and folk wisdom, the cultural nexus of language and the most transmissible of text. It is because of this that Africans still have the rhetorical tropes of the oral traditions that was employed by the particular speakers, disseminated throughout the wider modern culture of today.

Cultural expectations are sets of beliefs and traditions that inform the worldview of the speaker. To understand classical rhetoric in Africa, one must first look at concepts and symbols that are pervasive in the tracing of its history. Two of such symbols are the trickster god and Nommo, or the Word. The trickster god exists in almost all cultures in some form or another. This figure is one that Henry Louis Gates calls upon to show the unbroken lineage of the oral tradition from the old world to the new. The trickster god plays such an integral role in the understanding of language in both time periods that he is used as a catalyst for further discussion. Nommo, in much the same way, is a pan African symbol that is part of the fabric of the culture and a good representation of why the ancients were an oral tradition and why so much emphasis is placed on the orality of the modern speaker as well (Gates 39).

Above all, it is imperative to add that away from examining the nature, use and functions of rhetoric in African fiction, Kikuyu, the central locale of this research needs further examination. The Gikuyu (sometimes Kikuyu) are the people who speak Kikuyu language and is Kenya's largest ethnic group numbering approximately six to seven million people. The Gikuyu are Bantus and actually came into central Kenya during the Bantu migration. Gikuyu is thus one of the five languages of the Thagicu subgroup of the Bantu that stretches from Kenya to Tanzania. The Gikuyu usually identify their land by the surrounding Mountain ranges in Central Kenya

which they call *'Kirinyaga'* - The Shining Mountain. Folklore suggests that the Kikuyu tribe was originally founded by a man named Gikuyu. Oral tradition explains that *Ngai* (the divine spirit) took Gikuyu to the top of *Kirinyaga* (present day Mt. Kenya) and commanded him to establish his home there. He was also given a wife Mumbi with whom he had nine daughters. It is from the nine daughters (and occasionally a tenth) that the nine principal clans originated. The nine clansare *Achera, Agachiku, Airimu, Ambui, Angare, Anjiru, Angui, Aithaga, and Aitherandu*. (Mhando 3).

The Gikuyu also had a religious tree – the *Mugumo* tree – where they would pray and offer sacrifices to facing the sacred Mountain Kirinyaga. The Kikuyu basically inhabit the fertile land around the slopes of Mt. Kenyata the north of Nairobi. Today, however, because of their entrepreneurial abilities, the Kikuyu people can be found virtually in all parts of Kenya. Although the Kikuyu tribe has undergone a lot of changes since the British arrived over a century ago, their sense of cultural identity has not remained strong. The Kikuyu have also been the most successful in adapting to Kenya's new economic and social realities.

Jacob Mhando equivocally asserts that some of the antecedents that have led to the re-discovery of rhetoric in African fiction especially in Kenya are akin to the need to decolonize Africans from colonizing their mindsets and attitudes with Eurocentrism and to revamp, use and preserve rhetoric from extinction. Here are his words:

> Since time immemorial the indigenous communities in Kenya lived by knowledge that was passed to them through their oral tradition. Singing, telling stories, and plays are also ways of passing knowledge through the oral tradition…With the arrival of the colonialists in Kenya many people learned to write. However, little

> of the knowledge within their oral traditions was recorded and used to create a written tradition that is meaningful in their own culture. Over time, communities have come to realize the importance of having a written tradition alongside oral one for protection purposes. (1)

Mhando's perspective implies that Eurocentric ideology, a product of Africa's contact with the West, has affected a lot of Africans including the Gikuyu people of Kenya to abandon their culture and traditions to embrace European culture. The need to preserve and restore most of the dead rhetoric and rhetorical figures of Gikuyu people has greatly influenced the novels of Ngugi wa Thiong'o.

Interestingly, studies of African literatures implicitly or explicitly argue a continuity with traditional verbal artistry (rhetoric), which, in the absence of a popular writing tradition, was exclusively oral. One can read that intent, for example, in Jonathan Peters' assertion that "the production of fiction in West Africa is virtually as old as communication through the spoken word" (9). Chinweizu, Onwuchekwa Jemie, and Ihechukwu Madubuike similarly see the traditional narrative forms of African societies as "Africa's oral antecedents to the novel" and argue at some length against critics who suggest differences between the two (25-32). But while there can be little doubt that some connection does exist between the traditional forms and the modern, it would be an error to imagine that modern African literatures wholly evolved from, or had an unbroken relationship with, traditional verbal artistry.

The modern literatures are quite evidently a legacy of imperialism on the African scene, and they differ markedly from the traditional forms. It is also futile to suggest that the differences between traditional forms and modern literatures are immaterial, as the proponents of "orature" suggest,

or that the distinction that one is oral and the other written is of little significance, as Wellek and Warren argue (21-22), andas Andrzejewski, Pilaszewicz, and Tyloch also do in their book *Literatures in AfricanLanguages* (18). Oral performances are by their nature intimately personal and immediate, involving a performer in close physical contact with an audience – performer and audience sharing not only the same spatial and temporal space but also a cultural identity. Literature's audience is characteristically remote, often times separated by vast spatial, temporal, and cultural distances. Fortunately, people need not be concerned with determining the extent of the field covered by the term "literature" (even though aresolution of the question would be desirable, for the manner of its resolution would determine whether or not "orature" was an unnecessary neologism, "written literature, "redundant, or "oral literature" an oxymoron).

Another important difference between traditional African oral art and modern African literature involves the identity and social standing of their respective practitioners. Likethe Mali griot, who according to D. T. Niane "occupie[d] the chair of history" in his village (viii), the traditional oral artist was required to be deeply immersed in the traditional mores and the history of his or her community. This incumbency invested the artist with some formal or informal authority, along with commensurate dignity, even if (as was sometimes the case) he or she eked a living out of mendicancy. The modernwriter does not have the sort of worry Niane expresses on behalf of the griot—that ofbeing regarded as an object of scorn—since in the postcolonial context he or she is a member of the elite class. But although the modern writer would claim the same legitimacy the traditional artist enjoys, as witness Wole Soyinka's lament that the course of affairs on the continent is set by politicians and not artists (18), that claim has little basis or justification, given the circumstances of writers' constitution as a westernized elite class.

Remarkably, rhetoric is an oral art but its persuasive effects differ in the spoken form than in the written form. Rhetoric in a text is not all about the words in the text. The location of persuasive utterances are sometimes hidden in dialogues or narratives in a text that portray the rhetorical essence of the text; poetry, drama or fiction. Often the symbiotic relationship of orality and the written discourse in African literature has remained unique. The relationship of orality and literacy is discussed in all its complex ramifications by Walter Ong, who observes that "writing from the beginning did not reduce orality but enhanced it" (9).

Emmanuel Obiechina explains that the first discovery is that the oral culture does not immediately disappear by the mere fact of its being in contact with writing, nor does the literature of the oral society disappear because of the introduction of written literature. Rather, a synthesis takes place in which characteristics of the oral culture survive and are absorbed, assimilated, extended, and even reorganized within a new cultural experience. Also, vital aspects of the oralliterature are absorbed into an emerging written literature of greatly invigorated forms infused with vernacular energy through metaphors, images and symbols, more complex plots, and diversified structures of meaning. Such a good synthesis is possible insofar as certain conditionsare present at the meeting point of the oral and written traditions, including the extent to which the synthesizing artist, that is the storyteller or poet, is well rooted in the oral rhetorical forms or narrative traditions, the extent of the familiarity the artist assumes the audience to have with the oral rhetorical or narrative conventions, the extent to which the artist expects the audience to be composed of readers or listeners, and the extent of the artist's skill in controlling the literary form, in the sense of being capable of assimilating into it an experience produced in a non-literate tradition or aformal style that originally belonged to the oral traditional society (1).

This means that African writers have been well exposed to the oral and literary traditions and are thus able to synthesize the two in their works.

The situation in modern Africa amply illustrates the point about themerging of the worlds of orality and literacy. The superimposition of alphabetic writing upon the oral cultures of Africa in the nineteenth century did not extinguish the oral traditions upon which African cultures and literatures had long been established. The immediate result was that African indigenous languages were written down and brought into the main stream of the world repertoire of literate languages, and, additionally, a substantial body of Africa's oral literatures—from epics and extendedforms to unicellular tales and verbal art—was written down, recorded, and archived (Obiechina 3).

The oral traditional impulse is therefore strong in the modern African novel, which embodies theseexperiences, especially because the writers themselves are a product of boththe oral tradition and literate education. Solomon Iyasere is right in his observation that "the modern African writer is to his indigenous oral tradition as a snail is to its shell. Even in a foreign habitat, a snail never leaves its shell behind." (107). What has been said here is a process akin to that identified by Ivan Illich as de-schooling, whereby writers return to their oral sources for ideas, subject matter, values, forms of thought, and styles in a move that counteracts the narrow conditioning from formal, school education. It assured a return to the idiom of African Languages and the roots of African oral tradition (34).

Furthermore, a return-to-roots movement in African literature as a means of giving maximum authenticity to the writing made the writers look to their indigenous poetics to create works that

will endure by drawing upon their living oral tradition to enrich forms, techniques, and styles received through literate education. African writers bear the traces of their origination as a class in colonialists' desire to hand control to worthy successors theycould trust to oversee and preserve the socio-political structures colonialism had built. In its present conception, therefore, African literatures inevitably reflect the social andcultural alienation of the writers from their communities, as well as their identity with the Europeans whose languages and cultures they share. In this regard modern African literatures again testify to the great and continuing impact of the colonizing project on the African universe, not least in the persistence of its magisterial role in the definition and self-definition of Africans.

In all genres the countries that emerged from British colonialism have beenthe most fecund literary sources, Nigeria being preeminent among them. As far as fiction is concerned, it is customary to cite the publication in 1952 of Amos Tutuola's novel *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* as the beginning of sustained Anglophone literature, although as Peters points out there had been earlier works, especially from the Gold Coast (Ghana). Tutuola was quickly joined in international popularity by his compatriot Chinua Achebe, and it was, not surprisingly, another Nigerian, Wole Soyinka, who became in 1986 the first African, and the first Black writer, to win the Nobel Prize for literature.

Arlene Elder notes the delay in the entry of Anglophone East Africa into the literary arena, and the embarrassed sense of exclusion that people like James Ngugi (Ngugi wa Thiong'o) and Grace Ogot felt when their part of Africa had no representative among the participants in the 1962 African Writers Conference held in Kampala, Uganda. That event became a powerful catalyst for aspiring writers, among whom Ngugi is now one of the most renowned. In South Africa the

history of literature has largely repeated that ofother parts of Africa, with the difference that it has been more intense and more passionate because of the conditions imposed by apartheid (45).

Given this background, the use and significance of rhetoric in African fiction has remained the backbone of most post-colonial African writers who engage their literary works with the notion of decolonizing Eurocentric ideologies in Africa. This notion necessitates the need to also explore pertinent history of the exploitation of rhetoric in African fiction. Rhetoric in Africa has been with Africans from the cradle of its primordial days to the present age and the importance of the study of rhetoric is necessary in either oral or written literature. Tejumola Olaniyan and Ato Quayson on a critical plane maintained that

> The scholarly study of oral creative expression in Africa predates and is much robust than that of the written literature. This is to be expected, given the late arrival of substantial written literature. In many ways, oral genres such as storytelling, proverbs, epics, incantations, panegyric, occasion-specific poetries (funeral, wedding, investiture, rite of passage, etc), and dramatic performances have served as veritable resource pools for writers to borrow from and transform in their written works. (66)

The idea deduced from Olaniyan and Quayson's perspective on rhetoric in Africa is that Africans have from their primordial days been using rhetoric for persuasive, didactic, and ceremonial purposes but its further use came in form of written literature. Historically, one cannot trace the first African that used rhetoric in speech making or communication or state exactly the first African who used rhetoric in fiction. The re-discovery of rhetoric in written African fiction is sometimes linked to African novels that were published in 1950's. One major African writer who

actually began the use of rhetoric in his fiction is Chinua Achebe in his trilogy, *Things Fall Apart*, *Arrow of God* and *No Longer at Ease*. John Munonye, Rems Umeasiegbu, Gabriel Okara, Elechi Amadi, Zulu Sofola, et cetera are other postcolonial African writers who deeply used persuasive oral traditions in their works. This quest for the indigenization of African literature or addition of local content and background to its literature by some African writers is important. Abiola Irele in agreement to this perspective avers that

> A significant part of this process of the revaluation of literature in Africa is the preoccupation with the nature, possibilities, and formal modes of literary expression itself. To put this in another way, in trying to formulate the state of disjunction between an old order of being and a new mode of existence, literary artists in modern Africa have been forced to a reconsideration of their expressive medium, of their means of address. In the quest for a grounded authenticity of expression and vision, the best among our modern African writers have had to undertake a resourcing of their material and their modes of expression in the traditional culture…. (78-79)

The point that emerges from Irele's submission is that, the oral tradition continues to function as a fundamental reference of African expression, as the matrix of the African imagination.

Isidore Okpewho on his part succinctly explains that

> There has been an increasing tendency on the part of modern African writers to identify with the traditions of their people in terms of both content and technique… The aim was to demonstrate that Africa has had, since time

> immemorial, traditions that should be respected and a culture to be proud of. (293)

The views of Irele, Okpewho, Olaniyan and Quayson on the nature, manifestation and relevance of oral features in Africa clearly demonstrates in practical terms that traditional African culture has not gone into a state of oblivion but is important for the articulation of an emerging African society. In essence, African writers deploy their works to revamp and portray the significance of rhetoric in a bid to decolonize Eurocentric beliefs in Africa.

Nonetheless, the origin of African fiction is controversial till date because from Stone Age to the twenty-first century, it is believed that African fiction began in oral form and greatly imbibed the orality of Africa. Modernity and advancement in technology later became prime factors that made some aspects of African social milieu and existentialism to be documented through the written discourse. Against this backdrop, Anthony Oha explains that "one of the major problems of African fiction is categorization. In the early formation of modern African fiction; in the 1950s and early 1960s, the African novel gained momentum at a time of social upheaval in Africa. There were intense nationalist activities challenging the whole idea and practice of colonialism in Africa" (14).

Yet the African intelligentsia, to borrow Emmanuel Ngara's expression, that is, the new bourgeoisie or elite was a product of missionary education. The colonial powers had acquiesced to granting political, but not economic and cultural independence to its colonies. Anthony Oha explains that this led the new African socialelite to engage in artistic form inherited from the West but inspired by local content and persuasive oral traditions. For example, in 1952 Amos Tutuola wrote *The Palmwine Drinkard* based on Yoruba mythology, using African folktale

tradition as form. He was followed in 1953 by Camara Laye's *L'Enfant noir* (translated into English as *The African Child* and later inthe American edition as *The Dark Child*), an episodic novel, which relied heavily on African oral features to vaunt the merits of the African past, tradition and civilization to a deaf world. In 1958 and from a historical perspective, Chinua Achebe published the novel *Things Fall Apart*, which set out to correct the ugly perception of Africans created by colonialism. Ngugi wa Thiong'o followed in 1964 with *Weep Not Child*. It was the year of Kenyan independence and the novelist was making an urgent call to Africans to embrace education and enterprise as a way of ending Western imperialism and Indian entrepreneurship in East Africa (15).

Oha also believes that out of the three genres of literature, the African novel came to dominate the literary scene. This was due in part to its ability to borrow from tradition; but more importantly, it was a means that the new intelligentsia, educated in a colonial context could understand and use to herald African values outside and inside Africa. Oha in broad terms explains that the impact of other genres was progressively overshadowed bythat of novelists such as Wa Thiong'o, Ousmane, Oyono, Armah, Beti, Laye, Achebe, to mention only but a few. Often, novelists made oral tradition and legends their springboard. They began telling stories about self, the immediate community or village, the nation-state or the newly formed proletariat, but by and large they remained inaccessible and foreign to the great majority of the African people. In contrast, African novel seems to belong to the people rather than tothe elite because its formal complexity and intimidating status borrowed from Western hierarchies, have never been naturalized in Africa.

With the voice of ordinary people, the novel claims to be the legitimate heir of the traditional legends through which griots chronicled community history. The African novel writer tells

stories to entertain and educate people in a way they understand. Like the storyteller, the writer holds the audience spell bound by the very beauty of the narrative, giving pleasure and also teaching morals and beliefs of the community, race or nation. The African novel has much in common with African oral tradition, which has been described as 'the African classical tradition. African classical tradition then finds its renewal in the novel because in a familiar way this genre puts in the context of today a number of subjects relevant to traditional and modern African values. It shows how economic, political, religious and social situations relate to pre-colonial Africa, colonialism, neo-colonial independence, apartheid, indigenous and imported religions, and so on. Thus, the themes dealt with by African novelists include art, religion, urban-life, tradition and culture, apartheid, ironies of life, and pre-colonial, colonial, and neo-colonial reality, and so on. Just as the common storyteller of old, the contemporary African fiction writer aims at helping his/her society to change while retaining the best features of authentic African cultures. A large number of literary authors of great talent have not lost sight of the novel's potential to enrich human lives and African societies (17).

Moreover, one remarkable characteristic of African fiction is that it emerged as a reaction and response to the negative portrayal and perception of all that the black race represents to the Europeans. Being a reflection of social realities, African prose fiction and literature in general has largely addressed various issues that have come up since colonialism even till date. Despite the fact that colonialism has gamut of demerits on Africans, it has enriched African literature thematically. However, following the collapse of colonialism in Africa, African literature shifts attention to the more lethal new form of colonialism known as neo-colonialism. In other words, African prose fiction is pre-occupied with issues that revolve around colonialism, neo-

colonialism, post-colonial disillusionment and in most cases uses rhetoric to engage the West ontologically.

Most critics tend to see African literature as a product of two worlds rather than a literature on its own. This is a pointer that the position of the evolutionists/experimentalists is more popular. Many critics see African literature as a literature that borrows its framework from European literary tradition but sources its beauties from African oral tradition. Inspite of having a tradition and languages that are foreign, African literature is creating way for African heritage to manifest in African literary works through injection of oral tradition. According to Irele, African literature in European languages is striving to attain a condition of oral expression even within the boundaries established by Western literary convention (42). Karim Baber also observed the dependency of African literature on oral tradition when he described orature as a veritable source for modern African prose fiction writers. Orature is a source because it gives African prose work a rich heritage of themes, motifs, techniques imagery and particularly language art (15).

African fiction has for long been dependent on using rhetorical features of Africa to enlighten and persuade Africans to decolonize the Eurocentric ideologies eminent in the continent. According to Azeez Sodeek

> Language is a major signpost of African literature as hinted by Baber, though mostly written in European languages, the languages are domesticated with idioms, anecdotes, proverbs and general oratorical structures. Fiction is seen as a foreign genre which has been domesticated. In Postcolonial discourse, fiction is a weapon used to prove to the West that Africa has its way of doing things. It is used for cultural rehabilitation, and most importantly, it is a potent tool to correct the

> stereotypes images created of Africa in European authored literatures like Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Joyce Cary's *Mister Johnson* and many others. (51)

African fiction also emerged as a counter discourse to several negative myths - myth of primitiveness, lack of progress, geography, history, and myth of hopelessness. Okpewho in his book, *Myth in Africa*, studied the various ways the African writers have used oral tradition in their various works. He came out with four ways of re-working indigenous tradition in African literature. They are: tradition preserved, tradition observed, tradition refined and tradition revised. The literary works of Ngugi wa Thiongo and most African writers in East and West Africa fall within the expectations of Okpewho's classification of the re-working and exploitation of African oral genres. When writers make use of the oral tradition in a preserved manner, they collect indigenous materials and use them as they are in their literary works as in Thomas Mofolo's *Chaka*. 'Tradition observed' involves a little amendment on the indigenous materials collected. Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* is a typical example of tradition refined. African writers radically deconstruct the oral materials such that already known materials would be defamiliarised. Ben Okri's *The Famished Road* is a popular example of an African text where tradition is revised (Sodeek 34).

The obvious presence of Eurocentric ideologies in Africa portends an impending doom in Africa's postcolonial states and its effects are enormous and extreme. Chinua Achebe succinctly termed this feeling *No Longer at Ease.* What emerges from the foregoing is that the clarion call and consciousness for Africans to regain and preserve the true identity of Africa, led its literary scholars and artists to embark on the quest for the intellectual rhetoric of indigenization. Adeleke Adeeko contends that

> All leading African Writers and critics have participated in formulating the parameters for devising a meta-language and a hermeneutic predisposition that will place indigenous forms at the centre of the definition, classification, and appreciation protocols of culture, especially literature. (234)

Adeeko's perspective depicts how the rhetoric of traditional elements and African languages in the continent's literature aspire to nativized the literature of Africa. The fusion of African oral traditions into the fabric of African fiction has gone a long way to Africanize the originally European languages and forms. Kwame Anthony Appiah in an influential article summarizes this intellectual rhetoric of indigenization in African fiction as the visceral rhetoric often deployed in the nationalist theses of the side that accepts the position of locating African cultural and intellectual identity on the apt advancement of the oral and pre-colonial traditions. Appiah stated that

> Both the complaints against defilement by alien traditions in alien tongue and defenses of them as a practical necessity … seem often to reduce to a dispute between a sentimental Herderian conception of Africa's languages and traditions as expressive of the collective essence of a pristine traditional community, on the one hand, and, on the other, a positivistic conception of European languages and disciplines as mere tools; tools that can be cleansed of the accompanying imperialist- and more specifically, racist – modes of thought. (56)

Appiah's position in making the literature of this continent, African, does not agree with the attitude of most writers in Africa because of the problem of cultural collision. Emmanuel Obiechina in an essay published before Appiah's article, argued extensively that the unsettled

anti-colonial context in which most literary artists got nurtured in is the cause of the quest of intellectual rhetoric of indigenization. This trend has so far contributed to the immediate struggles of cultural rectification and reconstruction by African writers. Obiechina explains that:

> Cultural nativism, or that aspect of it called literary nationalism, is so fundamentally universal a phenomenon in unequal social situations such as that engendered by colonialism that its inevitability hardly deserves an argument… Whether this nativism or cultural affirmation finds expression in psycho-political terms such as the African personality or in the literary ideology of Negritude its cultural implications are obvious. There is a fundamental assumption that the African has had a civilization which is distinct from all other civilizations and which distinguishes him from all other human beings. ("Cultural Nationalism", 26).

Obiechina's viewpoint is significant for nations who want cultural and political freedom from Western bondage because when postcolonial African writers engage the West ontologically, the realization of intellectual rhetoric of indigenization is often the source of their pursuits. In the African case, therefore, the novel and history are the same- the novel is history; it is record of the history as Africans have seen and lived it. African literature has historically and culturally captured the experiences of the people. That the history of Africa is fraught with an amalgam of imbalances, upheavals and crushes of hopes cannot be gainsaid. African novelists therefore, cannot afford to vividly narrate the experience of his people for whom he serves as the mouthpiece. African prose fiction has variously been labeled as the literature of commitment. Thus, writers are committed to certain sociological germane issues. In the same vein, African prose fiction large serves as a social documentary and commentary. After all, Benita Parry

stipulates that "When we consider the narratives of decolonization, we encounter rhetorics in which nativism in one form or another is evident" (1).

In addition, the real significance of African fiction is that African writers played a key role in boosting the rebel spirit of their people against the colonial powers. The African novel in this sense has become a historical document that shows the struggle of African people. African fiction has a special identity and place in world literature, which is also a historical record of the African society having its own unique identity and ethno-cultural sufficiency. African prose fiction can be categorized on three phases of colonialism: Pre-colonial, Colonial and Post-colonial. Pre-colonial phase focused on the life and travails of Africans before the invasion of the white-man. The colonial phase texts addressed the devastating and inhumane treatment meted on Africans by the Europeans. The post-colonial/neo-colonial texts focused on the disillusionment and abject dissatisfaction of Africans to their leaders who are basically fellow Africans who took over the leadership of their people after independence. Many writers within the African society have argued strongly about their existentialism set against colonialism and Eurocentric ideologies in Africa. The writers use their creative works to condemn colonial injustice against Africa.

Alnold Hauser states that:

> All art aims to evoke; to awaken in the observer, the listener or reader emotions and impulses to action or opposition. But the evocation of man's active will requires more than either mere expression of feelings, striking mimesis of reality, or pleasing construction of word, tone or line: it presupposes forces beyond those of feeling and form which assert themselves simultaneously and in harmony with

> emotional forces, fundamentally different from them. The artist unfolds these forces in the service either of a ruler- whether despot or monarch of a particular community, rank in society or financial class; of a state or church, of an association or party, or as a representative or spokesman of a form of government, a system of conventions and norms: in short, of a more or less rigidly controlled and comprehensive organization. (128).

Consequently, many African writers' imaginative skills reflect reality and also attempt to persuade people to take certain attitudes to that reality. The rhetoric can be direct appeal or indirect appeal through "influencing the imagination, feelings and actions of the recipient" (Hauser 129).

Statement of the Problem

Most critical works on Ngugi's fiction often focus on postcolonial struggles, the Marxist ideology, depiction of women in Africa, the history of Kenya in fiction (faction). These studies apparently fail to capture the undertone of Ngugi's concept of decolonization in terms of using African language and persuasive oral traditions of Gikuyu to explain human suffering in postcolonial Kenya. This limited scholarship has constituted a problem which makes this research to focus on the peculiarity and use of rhetoric in selected Ngugi's novels in English; *A Grain of Wheat* and *Petals of Blood* and his Gikuyu novels; *Devil on the Cross* and *Wizard of the Crow*. These novels have been selected to ascertain the extent to which an indegineous language and rhetoric can go in the pursuit of decolonisation in Africa.

Purpose of the Study

This study interrogates the extent Ngugi uses rhetoric to achieve argumentation, persuasion towards decolonisation, resistance against neocolonialism and reform in postcolonial Kenya. This aim will be actualized by studying and analyzing the use and significance of forms ofrhetoric such as proverbs, folktales, oral speeches, riddles, myths as well as the rhetorical figures like, repetition, rhetorical question, allusion, parallelism, and Africanism in *A Grain of Wheat*, *Petals of Blood*, *Devil on the Cross* and *Wizard of the Crow*.

This study intends to also establish, if and to what extent, there is relationship between rhetoric and literature in the texts. The research's forte is its ability to move the theory of postcolonialism beyond western perception to an African ideological framework for the analysis of African fiction.

Significance of the Study

This research is significant in the area of further investigation of indigenous rhetoric in African literature while the forms and uses of African rhetoric discussed in this research can be used in making verbal expressions in Africa and elsewhere in the world. This is an obvious expectation because Africa in its existential form has cultural and social phenomena that are universal to humanity.

This study is a further contribution to Ngugi's ideological conception of decolonization. It fortifies the philosophy of his fiction; decolonization, with investigation into indigenous rhetoric in the novels selected for study. It is therefore hoped that literary and historical researchers who seek to study the interrelationship between rhetoric and African literature will benefit from the

findings of this research. This study in another way is important because it will help to revamp future scholarship.

This study is also relevant in African literary studies because the locale of the fiction; Gikuyu has a unique traditional culture. This traditional culture provides subject and background for a large body of the fiction produced in the modern period and appears in snatches inNgugi four novels selected for this study. This research is concerned with contemporary decolonization process in Kenya. Many of these depictions ofcustomary blessings, proverbs, stories, rituals, ceremonies, etc are intendedprimarily to convey the sense of the lives of the indigenous people, thus providingcharacterization and background for the protagonists. Many other examples, however, are used contrastively to illuminate the differences between African ways and those of thecolonizers.

In another way, this study is important because it explains how Ngugi's fiction in persuasive mode performs cross-cultural interaction, which echoes the hybrid identity that characterizes the postcolonial reality. The content analytical technique deployed in this study is thoughtful and inspiring and offers persuasive analysis of rhetoric in African fiction.

Scope of the Study

This research is primarily concerned with the postcolonial analysis of rhetoric in Ngugi's English novels; *A Grain of Wheat* and *Petals of Blood* and his Gikuyu novels *Devil on the Cross* and *Wizard of the Crow*. It evaluates how Ngugi uses rhetoric to depict the traumatic sufferings in postcolonial Kenya and the decolonization.

Methodology

Content and context analysis approaches of qualitative methodology will be used in analyzing the forms of rhetoric in Ngugi's novels selected for this study. The postcolonial literary theory is also used as the theoretical framework to distill Ngugi's portrayal of cultural decolonization, human sufferings and the trauma of postcolonial Africa. Ngugi's novels have been selected because the locale of the texts, Gikuyu, has a rich cultural heritage that should be preserved and avoid extinction since the ills of colonialism have continued to affect human syndrome in Africa.

Biographical Note on Ngugi wa Thiong'o

Ngugi wa Thiong'o was born on 5th January 1938 in Limuru, Kenya. He was educated at the Alliance High School, Kikuyu, at Makerere University, Uganda and at the University of Leeds. He is a renowned Kenyan writer and cultural icon. In 1962 his play *The Black Hermit* was produced in Kampala, and he wrote *Weep Not, Child* in 1964, followed by *The River Between* (1965), *A Grain of Wheat* (1967), and *Petals of Blood* (1977). Pushpa and Siga explain that Ngugi's first name was James but upon realisation of Eurocentric influence on him, he changed his name from James Ngugi to Ngugi wa Thiong'o (Ngugi son of Thiong'o).

Ngugi's *Devil on the Cross* (1980) was conceived and written during his one year detention in prison, in Kenya, where he was held without trial after the performance by peasants and workers of his play *Ngaahika Ndeenda* (*I Will Marry When I Want)*. This was his first work to be published in Gikuyu, and then translated into English and many other languages. His novel *Matigari* was published in Gikuyu in Kenya in 1986 and later translated for the African Writers Series in 1989. His recent work *Wizard of the Crow* (2006) was first written in Gikuyu as *Murogi*

wa Kagogo. Ngugi as a postcolonial African writer is a strong defender of African culture and an active campaigner for the use of indigenous African languages in African literature (Pushpa and Siga, 318).

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Relevant Literature

This chapter reviews connected discourses around rhetoric in African fiction. It traces its definition, nature, importance and emergence of rhetoric in Ngugi's texts. Also, it discusses the core terms that make up the research area (rhetoric and African fiction), the theoretical framework of the study, and the critical studies on Ngugi's novels. In its critical plane, this chapter engages essays, books, papers, dissertations around the selected author and his novels selected for this study.

Conceptual Framework

Rhetoric is any verbal art that involves persuasive utterances in communication; it is the study of language that is aimed at analyzing persuasive oral discourse and the effects of language and how these effects are realized on listeners or readers. Aristotle defines rhetoric as the art of "discovering all the available means and devices that an orator uses in order to achieve the intellectual and emotional effects on an audience that will persuade them to accede to the orator's point of view" (qdt in Abrams 311). This lead definition of rhetoric by Aristotle is all about the orality, oral traditions, and figurative elements of a particular culture as well as how the forms of rhetoric are studied. However, Mbanefo Ogene explains that "persuasion used in rhetoric does not only demand charisma but also high ability to induce an evocative feeling into the mind of the listener. This can be described as word power. Evocation itself can be both emotional and sentimental" (97-98).

Rhetoric is generally and often associated with the practice of using language to persuade others, that is, to achieve something predetermined and directional with others (O'Sullivan *et al*, 67). It embodies the use of the artistic proofs (ethos, pathos and logos) by a speaker to persuade recipients. Summarily, the prominent leaders in the speeches try to show certain credibility (ethos), along with an appreciation of the emotions of their subjects (pathos) and also use logic (logos).

Considerably, from the time of Plato to the present, scholars have investigated and debated exactly how rhetoric works within a particular field. Although some have restricted rhetoric to the exact nature of political discourse as given above, many modern scholars project it as what encompasses every facet of human culture and existence. Contemporary studies of rhetoric explore a more diverse range of domains than was the situation in ancient times. John S. *et al* explains that "rhetoricians have studied the discourses of a wide variety of domains, including the natural and social sciences, fine art, religion, journalism, digital media, fiction, history, cartography, and architecture, along with the more traditional domains of politics and the law" (98).

Set against the standpoint of John S. *et al*, many contemporary approaches treat rhetoric as human communication that includes meaningful and essential manipulation of language. In this form, modern occupations which use rhetoric are Public Relations, Law, Law makers (lobbying), Marketing, Professional and Technical writing, and Advertising. The Sophist also disputed the restriction of rhetoric to politics alone. According to Rosamond Sprague, "the sophists, such as Gorgias, a successful rhetorician could speak convincingly on any topic, regardless of his experience in that field" (50). This method suggests that rhetoric could be a means of

communicating any expertise, not just politics. Plato, a key rhetorical theorist, negated Gorgias' deposition as explained above. Rafey Habib on his part stressed that:

> Given the importance of rhetoric in Athenian life, it is hardly surprising that this art was subject to abuse. The Sophists nurtured in their students an ability to argue both or many sides of a case; they were consequently accused of training people in making the worse cause appear the better and thereby sacrificing the truth, morality and justice to self-interest. (25)

Plato, therefore, defined the scope of rhetoric according to his negative opinions of the art. He criticized the Sophists for using rhetoric as a means of deceit instead of discovering truth. In "Gorgias", one of his Socratic Dialogues", Plato defines rhetoric as the "persuasion of ignorant masses within the courts and assemblies" (93). Rhetoric, in Plato's opinion, is merely a form of flattery and functions similarly to cookery, which masks the undesirability food by making it taste good. Thus, he considered any speech of lengthy prose aimed at flattery as within the scope of rhetoric. His criticism of rhetoric in Gorgias (through the personae of Socrates) is bent on an acute negation between philosophy and rhetoric. Habib citing Socrates reveals that there are two kinds of persuasion that rhetoric achieves. There is a particular

> one which confers conviction without understanding and one which confers knowledge. Rhetoric, he insists, leads to communication without educating people as to right and wrong. He argues that the rhetorician is a non-expert persuading other non-experts… Socrates' criticism is undermined by Plato's notion of truth as transcending human opinion. In the law courts, says Socrates, rhetoric relies on producing a large number of eminent witnesses, but such argument or refutation is worthless in the context of truth. (25)

According to Aristotle rhetoric uses three means of persuasion; *logos*, *ethos* and *pathos*. These three modes of persuasion are vital in verifying the degree of persuasion in an oral performance and a text. Ethos appeals to the character of the writer or speaker, stating that his or her background, credentials, or experience should convince you of the accuracy of the argument. Logos appeals to logic or reason often citing facts, figures, and statistics. Pathos appeals to emotion, empathetic response, or shared moral values.

Aristotle also narrowed the focus of rhetoric to three genres-deliberative, forensic or judicial, and epideictic. In the deliberative kind of speech, the speaker either advises the audience to do something or warns against doing something. The audience has to judge things that are going to happen in the future and have to decide whether they will cause advantage or harm. The forensic speech either accuses somebody or defends self or someone. Naturally, this kind of speech treats things that happened in the past. The deliberative and forensic species have their context in a controversial situation in which the listener has to decide in favour of one or two opposing parties, the third species does not aim at such a decision. The epideictic speech praises or blames somebody, as it tries to describe things or deeds of the respective person as honourable or shameful.

Aristotle while aligning his explanation to that of Plato extended the definition of rhetoric, calling it the ability to identify the appropriate means of persuasion in a given situation, thereby making rhetoric applicable to all fields, not just politics. In contrast to Plato, Habib elucidates that “Aristotle uses rhetoric as a useful skill precisely because it can promote the causes of truth and justice” (25).

Isocrates on his part contends that "rhetoric is the foundation of human society, the means through which man expresses his wisdom and without which wisdom is inarticulate and inert…rhetoric is the power by which we direct public affairs, which we influence others in the course of our daily lives, and by which we reach decisions about our moral conduct" (18-19). However, rhetoric has always had the social responsibility of guiding the audience in making the right decisions. In spite of this, rhetoric becomes necessary only if there is a country and people to persuade.

Meanwhile, Marcus Cicero stressed the need for rhetoric to go hand in hand with oratory (50). What is more interesting about his rhetorical text, *De Oratore* is the way it explains two concepts: cultural value of rhetoric, and the connection between rhetoric, philosophy, and other forms of knowledge. He maintains that "the art of rhetoric has flourished especially in states which have enjoyed freedom, peace and tranquility. Moreover, this art above all others distinguishes men from animals; it is this which has humanity" (51). Cicero further takes issue with Plato's criticism of rhetoric. Where Plato sees rhetoric as focused on style and divorced from philosophy, Cicero insists that the good rhetorician must speak on the basis of knowledge and understanding of his subject, and that philosophy and rhetoric share a symbiotic relationship.

In the same vein, Quintilian defines an orator as "a good man skilled in speaking" (31). Like Cicero, Quintilian opposes Plato's separation of rhetoric and philosophy. Quintilian's integration of these activities is based on morality: the orator cannot leave the principles of moral conduct to the philosophers because he is actively involved as a citizen in the various enterprises of the state, civil, legal, judicial, private and public. Like Cicero, Quintilian views wisdom and eloquence as naturally and necessarily accompanying each other.

Furthermore, St. Augustine of Hippo in his book *On Christian Doctrine* defined rhetoric as "art of Christian teaching and persuasion with words" (7). The forms of rhetoric: the homily or sermon – homily (homilia) = popular treatment of scripture

– sermon (sermo) = informal discourse

Augustine argued for the value of incorporating the wisdom of secular writers (especially Cicero) for the purposes of spreading Christian doctrine. The uses of rhetoric according to him are:

(1) to discover the truth in Scripture

(2) (2) to teach the truth to others

(3) to defend scriptural truth when it was attacked

Augustine argued that "Platonic philosophers came closer to the truth of Christianity than other pagan thinkers."

– These philosophers should not be feared.

– This "influenced Western treatment of Plato well into modern times."

For him Wisdom is more important than eloquence. This means that:

– Implies a separation of "things" and "signs of things" (words).

– A "Platonic attack" on the "declamatory rhetoric of the Second Sophistic that he himself once taught."

Despite his Platonic ideas, Augustine's real rhetorical hero is Cicero.

– Augustine claimed that the only thing that kept Cicero from becoming a Christian (besides dying several decades before the birth of Christ) was his lack of conversion.

– In Book IV, a Christian interpretation of Cicero's 5 canons of rhetoric are covered.

– Shares Cicero's (and Isocrates's) "conviction that rhetoric must be employed for people's own good."

Augustine follows Cicero's three purposes of rhetoric:

– to teach

– to delight

– to persuade

Christian Rhetoric is democratic.

– Sermons (both spoken and written) should be disseminated to as broad an audience as possible.

– Preaching could not effect conversion (this was a divine gift).

– Preaching instructs an already converted audience how to worship. Augustine commends dialectical logic (as long as "Sophisms" are avoided).

– God's order is reasonable. Therefore, logic points out divinely created truths.

– Discusses the relationship between Christian truth and eloquence.

In another way, Richard Weaver, taking his cue from Aristotle, asserts that dialectic and rhetoric are distinguishable stages of argumentation, with dialectic defining the subject and rhetoric actualizing the possibilities raised by dialectical reasoning (27). According to him rhetoric is "truth plus its artful presentation" (27). He thus demonstrates in "The Cultural Role of Rhetoric" the fate of a rhetorician who has just dialectical skill but does not have power of speech to

persuade (65). In Weaver's "Language is Sermonic" and *Ideas Have Consequences* as well as in the works of such other eminent commentators on language as Michael Foucault *The order of Discourse*, Kenneth Burke *A Grammar of Motive*s, Ivor A. Richards *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* and Mikhail Bakhtin's *The Problem of speech Genres*, language is never neutral and can therefore, be manipulated to change the auditors view. The rhetoric, as a result, in Weavers view, has the responsibility of discerning matters in their proper perspectives and of conveying the matters thus discerned in order to guide the audience in making the right choice (17-18).

Burke, therefore, explains that humans use rhetoric to resolve conflicts by identifying shared characteristics and interest in symbols. By nature, humans engage in identification, either individually or with a group. This definition of rhetoric as identification broadened the scope, from strategic and avert political persuasion to the more implicit tactics of identification found in an immense range of sources (41). Burke further believes that the study of rhetoric "facilitates understanding the effects of all forms of discourse, including literature (43).

For Beer and De Landstsheer, rhetoric is primarily concerned with persuasion, the ability of a speaker/writer to influence and persuade an audience. The classical traditions of rhetoric went beyond the orator's act of communication to his qualities of character or ethos. It uses simple, direct and emotive language; and selects appeals with the aim of persuading and effecting a change in behaviour of the readers. In addition, the political leaders in their speeches have the intent to convince the readers based on their ideological underpinnings and orientation. They do this through the selection of some rhetorical tools that directly appeal to the emotions of their audience (Kennan, 14).

De Wet avers that rhetoric and persuasion go together. Rhetoric is the art of persuading others; therefore, persuasion is inseparable from rhetoric (88). Persuasion refers both to the speaker's intention and to textual outcomes. The measure of a successful rhetoric is its ability to persuade. Rhetoric may therefore fail if it is not persuasive. A successful orator was necessarily virtuous and could persuade if his behaviour met with social approval. The values and behaviour (ethos) of the speaker are crucial in classical rhetoric. According to Malmkjaer (17), rhetoric originates from the theory of how best a speaker or writer can, by application of linguistic devices, achieve persuasion. Similarly, Kenneth Burke opines that Aristotle sees rhetoric as the faculty of discovering the persuasive means of using language to produce an effect on the audience. In the words of Wale Osisanwo "rhetoric is seen as an umbrella term covering written and spoken texts designed for persuasion" (128). From this point the term may be seen as conviction through all the available persuasive means. Maggers *et al* describe rhetoric in a graphic form this way; "use double meanings, word a snappy retort, say things forcefully, make people laugh, surprise your listener, embellish your point, gain rapport with the audience, arouse emotion, appeal to reason and win an argument" (3). The first two phrases in Maggers' definition of rhetoric are in agreement with the negative denotation that is sometimes given to the term by people who do not really understand the term.

Operational Definition of Rhetoric

Despite many conceptions of rhetoric, within the scope of linguistics and literature, rhetoric in the words of Wilkin is primarily defined as "the art and science of deploying words for the purpose of persuasion" (qtd. in Alo 90). In this case, rhetoric is the study of language that is aimed at analyzing persuasive oral discourse and the effects of language on listeners of an oral performance or readers of a text. The persuasive oral discourse in African novels include oratory,

Africanism, proverbs, myths, legends, folktale, riddle, songs and other elements of figurative language found in selected and isolated excerpts from written texts and oral performance.

A critical rhetoric framework in a postcolonial state seeks to critically examine beyond the text and moment of discourse and reveal through argumentation how rhetoric works to promote or denigrate important social values; cultural hybridity and decolonization. This is the definition of rhetoric that benefits this research most. This view is a critical and important issue, especially for a society such as Africa, which is in a process of social transformation having been long plagued by colonialism, wars and starvation. In essence, persuasion is an interactive communicative process in which a message sender aims to influence the beliefs, attitudes and behaviour of the message receiver though the receiver's role is passive, if persuasion is to be successful; the message needs to comply with their wants and needs, their desires and imagination. In democratic political contexts, the intention of aspirant leaders is to attract the potential followers to themselves through their policies. Persuasion is never devoid of intention; it involves exploiting existing beliefs, attitudes and values rather than introducing completely new ones. As Jowett and O'Donnel put it "people are reluctant to change, thus, in order to convince them to do so, the persuader has to relate change to something in which the persuadee already believes" (qtd. in Alo 90).

By and large, the African conception of rhetoric means a practice of communal deliberation, discourse and action oriented towards what is good for the community and for the world. This trend is mostly seen and used as the oral features of the African cosmos. This essence of community is both expressed in the goal of the rhetoric but also in the practice of the rhetoric. It is designed to help bring good into the world. The Odu Ifa of Yoruba land claims: "Humans are

divinely chosen to bring good into the world," that is their mission and communication is the way that they do that. They are uniquely situated among living creatures to do this.What Africa has to offer to the understanding of human communication in the interest of benefiting all humanity. It has traditionally been concerned with building community, affirming human dignity and enhancing the life of the people.

More recently, it has been a rhetoric that concerns itself with struggles for liberation in the political, economic and cultural senses as well as a rhetoric of resistance. It is a rhetoric of resistance, formed in the crucible of struggle. It is not just about African people, but also about all of humanity. It is the rhetoric of reaffirmation, for African peoples as well as all of those who are not considered fully human. The African culture tends to be a very oral one, and thus rhetoric is paramount in its importance for the human spirit, for the benefit of human conditions and in the achievement of personal and social harmony. Rhetoric in Africa does not compartmentalize rhetoric, poetry, literature, prose and drama. All these forms are interwoven into a discourse designed to achieve important goals and ends. The basic canons of African rhetoric theory are therefore, aimed at judging the form of rhetoric and its listener on these factors: silence (self control), good timing, restraint, fluency, truthfulness and value for African culture while the same theory has ethical concern for the dignity of every human person as a fundamental aspect of rhetorical practice.

In addition, rhetoric whether in Africa or the West when viewed linguistically also involves language as an art and involves what are often called "The Flowers of Rhetoric". These flowers of rhetoric are rhetorical figures that involve artful patterns in sentence structure and tropes or rhetorical devices involving shifts in the meaning or use of words for example, oratory, proverbs, folktales, myths, legends, songs, repetition, rhetorical question, parallelism, metaphor,

personification, hyperbole etc. Over the past century, theorists have tended to enlarge the scope of rhetoric beyond speech texts by relating it to literature. Hence, rhetorical criticism has become one of the avenues of revealing the richness of a literary work. Some twentieth century theorists believe that literature yields more if it is examined in terms of its effect on the reader. Ivor A. Richards remarks that "rhetoric is the study of verbal understanding and misunderstanding" (23). His definition which also forms the thrust of this research implies that rhetorical analysis of a literary work covers all the techniques by which a writer establishes rapport with his readers and by which the writer elicits and guides the readers' responses to work.

Above all, the last explanations of rhetoric; from Wilking, Malmkjaer, Burke and Richards are the platforms where African fiction benefits most. Critics of its rhetoric always interrogate and analyze the nature and effects of some of the verbal expressions or oral genres which novelists use in their written conception of Africa. Liz Gunner in line with this thought defines rhetoric within African context as

> The means by which societies of varying complexity regulated themselves, organized their present and their pasts, made formal spaces for philosophical reflections, pronounced on power, questioned and in some cases contested power, generally paid homage to "the word", language, as the means by which humanity was made and constantly refashioned. (1)

The underlying import of Gunner's brilliant assertion is that since Africa is viewed as a centre of great creativity of oral genres before, during and after colonialism, the organized speech patterns of African communities have in a good way have affected the social life, religious beliefs and the constant transformations in African societies. Gunner states further that what people can learn

from the African model is that rhetoric manifested as types of formal speech communication, in some circumstances coexisting with music in the form of song, or with instrument, and dance, generated an almost unimaginable range of genres such as proverbs, myths, legends, folktales, riddles or even rhetorical figures in form of repetition or anaphora, parallelism, rhetorical question, apostrophe, Africanism, rhetorical bathos or anti-climax, hyperbole, allusions etc as persuasive modes in human speech patterns within the continent of Africa (1).

It is therefore appropriate to explain these terms here because they shall form a strong hold of the literary analysis of the rhetoric of some African novels selected for this study. Rhetorical figures or figures of speech depart from the standard use of language not only in the meaning of the words but in the syntactical pattern of the words to achieve special effects. The special effects that rhetorical figures render to a literary work are sometimes delivered for the purpose of persuasion, embellishment of plot and character development. Common examples of rhetorical figures are repetition or anaphora (parallelism), rhetorical question, Africanism, rhetorical bathos or anti-limax, hyperbole, allusions etc. They are explained below:

i. Anaphora (Greek word for repetition) is the intentional repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of each one of a string of sentences, paragraphs, lines of poetry, or stanzas. The pattern of repetition in most texts is often unique and sets out to achieve a special effect in the work like rhetoric or sublimity.

ii. Rhetorical Question: This is a sentence in the grammatical form of a question which is asked in order to request information or to elicit response, but to attain a persuasive force than a direct assertion. Moreover, this figure is often used in persuasive discourse, and tends to impart an oratorical tone to a verbal expression, whether in prose fiction or poetry.

iii. Africanism: This form of persuasive utterance in Africa according to Igboanusi occurs when the author is using expressions which may be termed 'Africanism' because of its deviation from standard British translation. Africanisms are the usages that reflect the traditional African and cultural habits. He points out that Africanisms are formed by lateral translations dictated by mother tongues. This oral feature is peculiar in *Devil on the Cross* as a method of retaining the oral quality of the narration despite translation. Some of the Africanisms that would be cited are deliberately spared to emphasize subjects of colonialism and capitalism (Qtd in Azeez 99-100).

iv. Parallelism (Antithesis): This rhetoric figure manifest as a contrast or opposition in the meanings of contiguous phrases or clauses that demonstrate parallelism; a repetition of similar word order and structure in their syntactical form.

v. Rhetorical Bathos (Climax) and Anti-climax: Bathos is a Greek word for "depth", and when it is employed in a rhetoric mode, a writer or speaker overstates the point of elevation and drops slowly into trivial or the ridiculous. This means that the verbal expression is set in an ascending order of relevance and in its rhetorical order but to an unintended descent in its reference. On the other hand anticlimax is employed in a text or speech as an equivalent of climax but in a more useful usage, it is non-derogatory, and denotes a writer's intentional drop from the serious and elevated to the trivial and lowly in order to achieve a persuasive, comic or satirical effect.

vi. Allusion: It is a brief reference to an important person, what he/she said, did or stood for; and a place , an event or popular phrase or line, say from the Bible inserted into a piece of writing. The writer almost always assumes that the reader will recognize what is being referred to in the written passage. For instance these days, an allusion to

> Nelson Mandela recalls persuasion towards freedom struggle, apartheid in South Africa or qualitative African leadership as the case may be. To recognize allusions, therefore, calls for a fund of knowledge which is shared between the author and his or her readers. They are sometimes recognizable by ones readers, but in special cases they may be drawn from an author's private reading or experiences. In that case, a reader may have to depend on scholarly explicators to suggest the appropriate sources or meanings (Nwachukwu-Agbada *et al* 2).

Away from rhetoric figures, there are oral genres in Africa that use rhetoric in speech pattern and written discourse but some forms of rhetoric now exist only in written, audio or visual archives. Myth, legend, proverb, riddles, songs are oral genres and they are explained below.

i. Myth: Myths belong to the group of narratives generally referred to as tales in the oral tradition. Ruth Finnegan in *Oral Literature in Africa* observes that: Myths are prose narratives which, in the society in which they are told are considered to be truthful accounts of what happened in the remote past. They are accepted on faith; they are taught to be believed; … sky or underworld. (361-362). Thus the definition of myths in the preceding lines does not only assert their authoritative and archeological nature but also emphasizes their religious colouring. They are taught to be believed and not to be questioned and as such, can be a reliable source of our answers to questions on African cosmology. The characters that usually feature in myths and the serious context in which they are often narrated distinguish them from the less serious type of tales such as animal tales. As could be discerned from the above, the wide acceptance of myths and their dogmatic nature can make them a writer's invaluable device, for he may not need much effort in arguing those issues expressed in them

since these are already distilled in the minds of his audience, especially if they are of the same nationality with him. This confusion arises frequently because many a reader may not realize how one dovetails into the other. It may, therefore, be pertinent here to clearly distinguish between them so as to enhance their identification in Ngugi's writings. According to Wellek and Warren in their book titled, *Theory of Literature*: Myths come to mean any anonymously composed story telling of origins and destinies, the explanation a society offers its young on why we do as we do, its pedagogic images of nature, and destiny (Wellek and Warren, *Theory of Literature* 191).

ii. Legend: A legend is a tale like a myth but differs from it in some aspects. Ruth Finnegan explains the difference between myths and legends in the following words. This general class of narratives cover those which are regarded locally as true, particularly by the narrator himself and his immediate audience, but differ from myths in being set in a much less remote period when the world was much as it is today...dynasties. (368)

iii. Proverb: Proverbs are used in different contexts and a proverb cannot have meaning unless it is used in the right situation. Proverbs can be used to advise, rebuke, or shame another person in complaisance and they are pithy crystallizations of wisdom. Quite apart from these functions of proverbs, they can also be used to give warning, to smooth over a disagreement, to ridicule, to mock at another person and so forth. Whatever the situation in which they are used and the function that they are intended to perform, proverbs in general share two general characteristics. Ruth Finnegan makes the following observation on the general features of proverbs: First, there is the

sense of detachment and generalization inherent in proverbs. The speaker stands back, as it were, from the heat of the actual situation and draws attention, for him or others, to its wider implications (407). This is another oral feature that can be found in the texts.

Fashina Nelson in an essay, "Contemporary Discourse; The Eagle on Iroko and the Palm Oil with Which Words Are Eaten", described proverbs as idioms, imagistic expressions, which sometimes are anecdotal, allusive, illustrative and oratorial. It is an essential ingredient that a torching speech could not afford to lack. It is used to perform different functions ranging from advice to warning and teaching of African values. Aside those functions, proverb is linguistic revolution that portrays the attitude of the author against colonial linguistic prescription. In Africa, proverbs have their origin in oral tradition and have been often used by Africans in its rhetoric mode before the existence of written culture. Proverbs are metaphorical, sententious and inhabit almost all aspects of human existence. In the words of Isaac Ssetuba "In Africa, proverb is regarded as a noble genre of African oral tradition that enjoys the prestige of a custodian of a people's wisdom and philosophy of life" (1). Donatus Nwoga succinctly explains that proverb "is a terse statement which figuratively gives expression to the point of traditional wisdom relevant to a given situation." (16) Achebe on his part postulates that proverbs are "the palm oil with which words are eaten" (*Things Fall Apart* 2). Emmanuel Obiechina perceives of proverb as "the kernel which contains the wisdom of traditional people. They are philosophical and moral expositions shrunk to a few words, and they form a mnemonic device in societies in which everything worth knowing and relevant to day-to-day life has to be

> committed to memory" (156). The nature of African proverb manifests in the form of orature, brevity, implicit form, cosmological and moral clarification. Rems Umeasiegbu believes that proverbs as any expression recognized by a people as embodying the wisdom and philosophy of their ancestors. (19). The Nigerian foremost novelist, Chinua Achebe justified the aesthetic in the use of proverbs in prose fiction in his early works, since then proverb has been an obvious feature in African prose fiction even to the era occupied by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and her contemporaries.

The above forms of rhetoric are some of the examples of rhetoric and rhetorical devices in Africa that are predominantly used by African novelists. These rhetorical figures and oral genres perform special effects in the areas they are used especially as transmitters of persuasion.

Conceptually, it is also paramount to explain the content, context and contours of African fiction too. Fiction is a work of art that presents events that are not real but rather, imaginary and invented by the author. Although storytelling is a universal human activity, the term "African fiction" refers to a European genre of storytelling—comprised of secular novels and short stories—that Africans have adopted and adapted to represent continental African realities in the wake of nineteenth- and twentieth-century European colonialism and post-colonialism. The genre provides a unifying thread throughout the many oral and written traditions in African as well as European languages.

African writers of fiction use the genre to enter into dialogue with African and European religious traditions alike. Drawing on oral myths, epics and tales, these writers oppose

representations of Africa found in European fiction, as well as in European governmental, missionary, and commercial reports. In this process African writers also rewrite and rework oral traditions. African oral traditions reflect hierarchies of power in ways parallel to European fiction. At the top of the hierarchy are such works as ceremonial ritual religious poems or the great Dogon cosmogonic myth, according to which the universe originates from a single seed. Next are the great chanted epics such as the Malian epic of Sundiata or the Mwindo epic, which feature shamanic heroes, founders of their society. The great oral praise songs for outstanding men and women are formal lyrics that use epic materials. On a more common level are occupational poems, sung to accompany an activity such as farming, fishing, hunting or smithing. Even these lower forms recall religious functions of individuals or callings.

Short narrative tales may use mythic and epic materials more informally to explain the origins of a people, the founding of a dynasty, or the nature of divine beings, as well as phenomena such as the behaviour of certain animals or the origins of geographic details. However, the genre is derivative rather than authoritative, drawing on chanted epics and ceremonial, ritual, religious poems, praise and occupational poetry. The narrative tale has a more realistic bent. A prominent theme is that of the trickster-hero, who succeeds through cleverness rather than through morality. Recalling the Yoruba (Nigeria) god Eshu-Elegba, the hero may be human or an animal such as the hare (source of the African American Br'er Rabbit), the hyena or the spider. In such tales, might or cleverness makes right and the outcome is not always moral. Shorter forms that one finds frequently used in African fiction are proverbs ("the palm oil with which words are eaten"), epigrams and riddles.

Written African fiction draws on this tradition in many ways in terms of characters, themes, motifs, and formal structures. In terms of religion, most significant is a "vitalist" ontology according to which being is a dynamic vital force that pervades everything much like a fluid as opposed to a collection of static, discrete entities. Hence Western distinctions between human, animal and divine, or the living and the dead do not necessarily apply because of vital force human beings have totemic relationships with animals with which they share the force of being. For example, the epic hero Sundiata draws totemically on the power of the buffalo through his mother, Sogolon, and on the power of the lion, which bears a totemic relationship with his male ancestors. In this way, departed ancestors exercise their force through the living. Modern and post-modern African fiction tends to portray fault lines and conflict such as in the Nigerian Fagunwa's Yoruba novel mentioned above or the Kenyan Ngugi wa Thiongo's bitingly satirical Gikuyu, *Devil on the Cross*.

The question of power is particularly pertinent to Africans, for whom colonialism created new and problematic conflicts between the ideal, moral, and practical aspects of religious experience, calling into question the traditional hierarchies and values implied in the oral tradition. For the most part, African fiction in which religion is a significant theme works out issues of colonial and post-colonial (dis)empowerment, and features not only inter-religious tensions but also conflicts between religion and secular forces often imperfectly understood. Novels leading up to African independences in the 1960s underscore such tensions, but retain a faith in a possible future for the continent and for the world.

Postcolonial fiction is marked by a turn toward an African audience to address African problems. The multiple consciousness of several sides to a story is taken to new heights with a dialogical

representation of reality from an even more complex, pluralistic perspective. Other fiction of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s continues this trend toward pluralism, emphasizing intrareligious more than interreligious difference, especially with reference to Islam. In response to Islamic fundamentalism, postmodern fiction from Northern Africa (always a cross-roads of many cultures and religions) reaches back to Islamic traditional means of interpretation in the *ḥadīth* to reveal the suppressed voices of the religion. Novelists such as the Moroccans Driss Chraïbi (*La Mère du Printemps*) and the Egyptian Nawal El Sadaawi (*God Dies by the Nile*) question Islamic patriarchy and oppose such concepts as *jihad* (holy war, but also self-discipline) and *itjihād* (interpretation). The Somalian novelist Nuruddin Farah goes even further than most of the fiction writers here. In *Maps* he criticizes not Islamic practices or traditions but the internal morality of the religion itself and its nefarious effects on Somalian society, although he falls more into the main line in his *Close Sesame*, which emphasizes the gap between ideal Islam and the way it is played out in society.

African literature emerged as a reactionary response to the negative portrayal and perception of all that the black race represents to the Europeans. Being a reflection of social realities, African prose fiction and literature in general has addressed various issues that have come up since colonialism even till date. Despite the fact that colonialism has gamut of demerits on Africans, it has enriched African literature thematically. However, following the collapse of colonialism in Africa, African literature shifts attention to the more lethal new form of colonialism known as neo-colonialism. In other words, African prose fiction is pre-occupied with issues that revolve around colonialism, neo-colonialism and post-independence disillusionment.

Chinua Achebe, through his portrayals, answered the situation of dislocation that colonialism wrought on his society. Observing the situation in historical context he points out the evolution of the novel and its relations to history, he states: "to help my society regain belief in itself and put away the complexes of the years of denigration and self-abasement; but it is also the writer's duty to explore in depth the human condition" (13). In the African case, therefore the novel and history are the same- the novel is history; it is record of the history as Africans have seen and live it. African literature has historically and culturally captured the experiences of the people. That the history of Africa is fraught with amalgam of imbalances, upheaval and crush of hope cannot be gainsaid. African novelist therefore, cannot afford to vividly narrate the experience of his people for whom he serves as the mouthpiece. African prose fiction has variously labelled literature of commitment. Thus, writers are committed to certain sociological germane issues. In the same vein, to a large extent African prose fiction serves as a social documentary and commentary.

History is another recurrent motif in African novel. Many African novelists have understood this phenomenon very well and have sought to overcome it in their work. For example, the Kenyan novelist Ngugi wa Thiong'o sees history as a crucial ground upon which contemporary African writers must challenge the cultural legacy of colonialism. In particular, the recovery of the Kenyan history of anti-colonial resistance becomes a central project of Ngugi's postcolonial fiction. Ngugi has openly proclaimed that Kenyan history provides the principal inspiration for his fiction, especially in the sense that "the Kenyan peoples" struggle against foreign domination" is the "one consistent theme" of this history over the past four hundred years (38). One could make the argument that virtually all of the most important African novels have been

historical novels – at least in the broadest sense of a novel whose events need to be understood as part of a larger historical process.

Moreover, the real significance of African fiction is that African writers played a key role in boosting up the rebel spirit of their people against the colonial powers. African novel in this sense has become a historical document that shows the struggle of African people. African fiction has also a special identity and place in world literature, which is also a historical record of the African society having its own unique identity and ethno-cultural sufficiency.

Historically, African fiction can be categorised based on the three phases of colonialism; pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial. Pre-colonial phase focuses on the life and travails of Africans before the invasion of the white-man. The colonial phase texts address the devastating and inhumane treatment metted on Africans by the Europeans. The post-colonial/neo-colonial texts focus on the disillusionment and abject dissatisfaction of Africans to their leaders who are basically fellow Africans who took over the leadership of their people after independence.

Postcolonialism implies an examination of the impact and continuing legacy of the European conquest of non-European lands and peoples. In the post-colonial literature context it refers to 'indigenous literature after colonisation began'. West African writers produce a text classified as post-colonial. The writers depict the problems of neo-colonialism in their various texts. They show their discontent to the prevalent corrupt democratic or military rule in their nations. They state bitterly that the collective joy of the events of independence in which the entire nations at different times was basking in has been a nightmare and betrayal. The postcolonial African writers always depict their continent as a place where the rulers have failed woefully to protect their nations' pride, wealth and human capital from the ravages of neo-colonialism and

globalization. The term neo-colonialism was coined to describe a situation where a few of the faces in the power structure changed but where unjust colonial structures remained firmly in place.

The critical climate in Africa has contributed to the growth of African prose fiction. Writers can now express their dissatisfaction with the rulers and populace in some instances. Pen is put to paper and writers lament the decay, rot, pain and disillusionment in their nations. To most of these writers, neo-colonial African leaders have done more harm to the continent than colonial masters did. This supports the assertion of Edward Said, "blaming the Europeans sweepingly for the misfortunes of the present is not much of an alternative. What we need to do is to look at the matters as a network of interdependent histories that it would be inaccurate and senseless to repress, useful and interesting to understand" (26). Fiction, which acknowledges and builds on social realism, is a convenient tool for propagating awareness about the state of affairs.

The importance of social realism in African literature is explained thus: "The writer is not only influenced by society; he influences it. Art not merely reproduces life but also shapes it. People may mould their lives upon the patterns of fictional heroes and heroines". Writers such as Chinua Achebe, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Meja Mwangi, Ayi Kwei Armah, etc have all used prose to decry the cruel injustice of African leaders in their respective countries. Examples of such works include Achebe's *A Man of the People*, *Anthills of the Savannah,* Soyinka's *The Interpreters, The Trial of Brother Jero, Kongi's Harvest, Madmen and Specialists,* Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born, Why Are we so Blest,* Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's *Petals of Blood,* Kofi Awoonor's *This Earth my Brother,* Festus Iyayi's *Violence* etc.

Orature also occurs in various ways in African fiction. There are various manifestations of the oral art in most African novels. Unlike the western novels, African novels contain the oral heritage of the African people. In Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, there are various oral heritage of the Igbos in the novel. There is the form of drama which manifested in the form of wrestling and the Egwugwu Masquerade group. There are sessions where folktales are narrated and various songs are rendered according to the required circumstance. These are oral narratives manifesting in the written literature. The same occurred in other novels especially in novels set in rural background in Africa. Other novels like Achebe's *Arrow of God*, Elechi Amadi's *The Concubine*, Ngugi waThiong'o's *Weep not Child* and *The River Between* amongst other African novels contain elements of African orature in them.

Considering the root of the African novelists first as Africans brought up in the African milieu and secondly as the fortunate recipients of western education, they write as Africans in European languages. The resultant effect is that they represent the African personality and culture and try to reveal that in their novels. Some of them who could write in their native languages using English alphabetic forms attempted original works in their first languages especially Ngugi. Although, English served as the only language that could make their message reach wider audience, the writers try as much as possible to incorporate the oral literary form in their works. It is not surprising though that the early novels in Africa are mostly works generated from the oral tradition of the people. The early novels, especially Fagunwa, Tutuola, Achebe, Ngugi, Amadi, Soyinka amongst others relived orature in African fiction.

In the African case, therefore, the novel and history are the same- the novel is history; it is a record of Africans' history. African novelist, therefore, cannot afford to vividly narrate the

experience of his people for whom he serves as the mouthpiece. Thus, writers are committed to certain sociological germane issues.

The critical climate in Africa has contributed to the growth of African prose fiction. Writers can now express their dissatisfaction with the rulers and populace in some instances. Writers put their pens to paper to lament follies, misdemeanours social ills and disillusionment in their nations. To most of these writers, neo-colonial African leaders have done more harm to the continent than colonial masters did.

In sum, African fiction has historically and culturally captured the ideological orientations and experiences of African people. In other words, it has a special classification in world literature and has its own unique identity and ethno-cultural sufficiency. It is pre-occupied with issues that revolve around colonialism, neo-colonialism and post-independence disillusionment. So, African novel has become a historical document that shows experiences, sensibilities and struggles of African people. It serves as a social documentary and commentary. One could make a conclusion that virtually all African novels are historical novels. In the broadest sense of a novel whose events need to be understood must be part of historical process.

Review of Ngugi's Novels

Studies of rhetoric in African fiction have shown that the analysis of the manifestation of rhetoric in Africa is a viable study and it looks at what is 'going on' within the language, what the linguistic associations are that the style of language reveals and the effects verbal expressions have on a reader. In addition, there is a brief review of rhetoric in some novels by African writers which will serve as the basis of the empirical studies of rhetoric in Ngugi's fiction.

Against the backdrop of the critical appraisals of rhetoric, within the literary landscape of Africa, authors as Ngugi wa Thiongo in his novels selected for this study, Okot p'Bitek in *Song of Lawino,* Ayi Kwei Armah in *The Healers,* Kofi Awoonor in *Guardian of the Sacred Word: Ewe*, Chinua Achebe *Things Fall Apart, Arrow of God* and *No Longer at Ease*, Wole Soyinka in *Death of a King's Horseman* and *Idanre* etc, Elechi Amadi in *The Concubine,* Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie in *Purple Hibiscus* and Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo in *The Last of the Strong Ones,* deploy sweeping romantic rhetoric in their literary works. Their works invariably seem to challenge the premises of the anti-colonial nationalism they appear to embrace. They also seem at once to affirm and repudiate pre-colonial oral traditions. Written as the formidable mechanism of engaging the West ontologically, *A Grain of Wheat, Petals of Blood, Devil on the Cross* and *Wizard of the Crow* reenact the intractable dilemmas of postcolonial intellectual formation. Focusing on the rhetorical elements and postcolonial contents of these texts, literary critics have generally depicted the novels as Ngugi's radical reactions against Eurocentric ideologies and experiences in postcolonial Kenya.

Collaborating with the perspective above, Confidence Sanka *et al* remarked that "Ngugi and a host of others have, in different instances, used forms of the oral arts in their literary compositions" (7). Also writing on the influence of oral arts in African writing, Charles Bodunde makes the following observation:

> The influence which the various elements of oral traditions exert on modern African writing … is indeed tremendous. In fact… traditions can be attributed to the writers' recognition of the functions which verbal art or forms perform in the society. (2)

In another way, Sanka *et al* Ngugi "believes strongly in the preservation and promotion of African cultural values. The novelist does not, however believe that culture is static and must be maintained at all cost even when it is evident that certain aspects of it are outmoded" (8).

Consequently, Edward Said remarked that Ngugi has been most poignant in his engagement with other disciplines and the discursive practices emanating from the West. Narrative, particularly the novel, has tended to provide Ngugi with the space 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. Ngugi's writing is not just laying a claim to the terrain of culture, but also to radically 'revised visions of the past tending towards a postcolonial future, as urgently reinterpretable and redeploy able experiences, in which the formerly silent native speaks and acts on territory reclaimed as part of a general movement of resistance, from the colonist' (256). James Ogude buttresses Said's perspective on Ngugi's fiction with these words

> More recently, Ngugi wa Thiong'o has argued for a 'radical'reinterpretation of Kenya's history. The thrust of his argument is that Kenya's history has been distorted by the colonial writers and Kenya's professional or guild historians, trained and schooled in Western critical modes of thought. At the heart of Ngugi's thesis is his contention that Kenya's working people, the workers and peasants, are marginalized, if not totally ignored, in the country's narrative history. Ngugi, therefore, seeks to intervene and to salvage the history of the subaltern from the ruins of colonial plunder. (8)

Emanating from many critical appraisals of Ngugi are glaring facts that he has been one of the major figures in the formation of modern African literature. Appollo Amoko justifies this notion with these words "literary critics of his fiction regard him as a preeminent postcolonial literary nationalist" (1). The reading of Ngugi's fiction often indicates sharply the intractable dilemmas of postcolonial intellectual establishment in Africa. Ngugi like other African postcolonial writers, Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka and Cheikh Kane (writers who use rhetoric as revolutionary aesthetics) has used his native Kenya to raise a set of rhetorical and irresolvable questions pertaining to the legacy of colonialism, the possibility of postcolonial revolution in Africa and the place of culture and the role of the intellectual in the postcolonial cosmos.

The understanding of his fictional works is most of the time anchored on socio-political context of Kenya. This trend makes Amoko to debunk that:

> Context is critical to understanding Ngugi's corpus. Like many contemporary writers who emerged in the 1950s and 1960s, Ngugi has a fundamentally ambivalent conception of postcolonial Africa. While much of his writing explores the romantic possibility of African restoration and/or postcolonial revolution, a discourse of tragedy and despair seems to pervade his work. He appears to depict postcolonial Africa as a place ripe for restoration and renewal. But he also seems to recognize, often with bitter irony, the sheer impossibility of realizing such intellectual longings. (2)

Literary critics as diverse as Kwame Anthony Appiah, Simon Gikandi, and V. Y. Mudimbe argued that modern African literature emerged in the late 1950s and early 1960s as a discourse designed to liberate African subjects from colonial tutelage. Amoko maintains that "in order to

transcend racist colonial stereotypes, writers such as Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, and Cheikh Hamidou Kane emphasized the fundamental rationality of precolonial African societies by subjecting the rhetorical devices in their oral culture to further examination and use. The works of these postcolonial rhetoricians persuades their immediate communities in Africa and other postcolonial entities to emphatically belief in their oral traditions and also stand galvanized to dethrone acts of neo-colonialism perpetrated by Africans or Europeans.

In an important essay outlining his linguistic shift, Ngugi frames his decision to confront the problem of Englishness in the following informative terms: "I knew what I was writing about but who was I writing for?" (*Decolonizing the Mind* 86). The turn to the Gikuyu language and Gikuyu aesthetic forms allowed him to imagine a different audience, outside the universities and elite high schools of Kenya.

As Eileen Julien and Odun Balogun argue, *Devil on the Cross* marked an important departure in the appropriation of rhetoric and its devices in modern African literature. Balogun explains:

> The essence of *Devil on the Cross* . . . is not that it is composed in an African language, but that its composition is governed by an aesthetic philosophy that is radically different from earlier practices in African language novels. It also has been explained that while Ngugi's predecessors, such as D. Fagunwa, tailored their African-language works to the text-bound aesthetic principles of Western prose fiction, and thus primarily "preyed" on their African oral narrative traditions, Ngugi completely reverses the procedure by restructuring the Western novel according to the aesthetic preferences of oral-narrative tradition,

> specifically relying on his native Gikuyu version of this tradition. What emerges in the process [. . .] is a unique form of the novel—the novel as multigenre. (59)

In an argument broadly similar to Balogun's, Julien also suggests that *Devil on the Cross* marked a radical departure in the use of the oral narrative in modern African literature. She criticizes the fossilization of the oral tradition as something belonging to the distant past. She notes an important transition in *Devil on the Cross* pertaining to the status of orality in Ngugi's writing:

> . . . it becomes clear that his first works are not derived instinctively from an oral tradition but that his reference to that tradition is more recent and quite conscious. Aspects of the oral tradition, as of the prose tradition, are not simply given, they are chosen. They are present in Ngugi's work not because they are essentially African but because they offer possibilities to achieve specific ends—in this instance, to appeal to a specific audience. (142)

One need not agree entirely with Julien's claim regarding the absence of the influence of an oral tradition in Ngugi's early writing in order to accept her perception that something importantly different takes place in *Devil on the Cross*.

Rather than drawing on the oral tradition to illustrate a particular argument, Ngugi structures the entire narrative of *Devil on the Cross* as a modern oral narrative. As both Julien and Balogun point out, the structure of the opening makes the text amenable to being read out as an oral performance. However, Balogun criticizes the fact that, while the text self-consciously begins as an oral narrative with built-in structures for active audience participation, this element is lost after the first two chapters. The rest of the novel unfolds in increasingly conventional realist

terms. He suggests that, in this sense, *Devil on the Cross* represents an important first step in a new tradition of oral narration that Ngugi would perfect in his next novel, *Matigari*. Julien emphasizes two crucial aspects of Ngugi's use of the oral narrative in *Devil on the Cross*: its contemporary setting and its democratizing impulse. She suggests that most African fiction configures the oral tradition as the embodiment of authentic precolonial African culture.

One can see that Ngugi's works up to *Petals of Blood,* his evocation of the African oral tradition turns on precisely thisform. Julien argues that this configuration of the oral tradition consignsit to the past. She is interested in a notion of the oral narrativeas a cultural practice in the present tense. She draws an instructivecontrast between Ngugi's use of this form and that of the Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe:

> With *Devil on the Cross* . . . oral language is a quality of Kenyan culture now. The temporal and spatial setting of each story means that with regard to Achebe's first novels, orality becomes identified with what Achebe shows to be a complex time before colonialism (read often as the millennium "before the fall"), while Ngugi's situation of orality in the present challenges such interpretations. The contemporaneity of *Devil on the Cross* seems to me singularly important, for it demonstrates that orality is neither of the past nor the elementary stage of an evolutionary process. (143-4)

Thus, Julien suggests that while for Achebe oral language tends to be identified as a fundamental, undifferentiated facet of African culture, Ngugi's narrative is situational, presentist and contingent:

> *Petals of Blood* and *Devil on the Cross* are two deeply conflicted novels. The many voices of Ngugi echo through them, battling each other and preventing harmony and resolution. What the novels present most clearly of all are the intractable dilemmas nationalist postcolonial intellectuals face when struggling to come to grips with the promises and failures of postcoloniality. (212)

Ngugi recognizes the link between history and fiction. Indeed, for Ngugi, the narrative is a tool for shaping, ordering and re-interpreting history. As Carol Sichermann puts it "in Ngugi's hand, the pen has written not only story but history, sometimes with a deliberate intermixture of the two" (356). Sichermann's point is that Ngugi's narrative is steeped into Kenya's historical landscape and indeed at times borders close to direct allusion to factual historical personages and events. However, Ngugi does not just give his readers a factual reproduction of historical facts; he is both selective and creative in the process. He seeks to foreground certain aspects of Kenyan history and also invests them with new images. He is not just giving his audience bare historical facts and events, but he reinterprets them. Sichermann has argued that Ngugi places great accent on three major aspects of Kenyan history: the history of common people, the history of mass movements and history of underdevelopment and dependency perspectives in Kenya's development processes (357). Kitching (17), Langdon (81) have reasserted some of the basic tenets of the dependency and underdevelopment frameworks in Kenya which seek to argue that Kenya is an integral part of international capital in which the development of indigenous bourgeoisie was impossible.

Consequently, prose is praised because ‘‘at its best [it] is never far removed from poetry’’ (Larson, 122). Others attribute this to the influence of biblical rhythms, beyond the many direct quotations. But some have spoken of his ‘‘apparent stylistic ineptitude,’’ suggesting that ‘‘quite a

number of his sentences seem not only clumsy, but grammatically wrong'' (Palmer, 9). Such critics complain that ''the real problem with Ngugi's language is that one is constantly irritated by its naıvety and extreme simplicity'' (Palmer, 10). Others counter that as the neocolonial reality has deepened, ''Ngugi's style has evolved away from Biblical simplicity'' (Nazareth, 252). Ngugi's characteristic themes have met with various responses, most of them positive. Regarding *A Grain of Wheat,* Nadine Gordimer remarks that it is extremely interesting because it brings a ''new'' theme to African literature: ''the effects on a people of the changes brought about in themselves by the demands of a bloody and bitter struggle for independence'' (Gordimer, 226). His religious concerns prompt some to describe Ngugi's work as ''the best account yet of how Christianity not only gnawed away at tribal values (the standard charge against it), but how it actually resonated with deep elements in the hearts of the people'' (Roscoe, 171).

His powers of characterization are praised as ''second to none in Africa'' (Roscoe, 190). Larson speaks of his use of the ''lyrical collective consciousness'' (138) and impressionism, which he describes as ''the internal rendering of his character's emotional reactions to the external world'' (155). But he comes under attack when didacticism prompts him to present stereotypical mouthpieces for philosophical positions (Nkosi, 334–45). As others have recognized, however, Ngugi is fully aware that his plays and novels at times become openly rhetorical. He insists, in fact, that they must be; as his own political thinking has clarified and he has increasingly put his talents in the service of change for the common man and woman, his narrative voice has become more urgent. Thus in *Devil on the Cross* ''the artistry lies first in laying bare social evils which normally lie snugly concealed by rationalizations and apologia . . . and secondly, in lending to revolutionary idealism a new plausibility and human warmth" (Cook and Okenimkpe, 242).

Turning to Ngugi's most contemporary work, *Wizard of the Crow*, Osaaji brilliantly explains that "by spicing the text with proverbs, Ngugi, like Chinua Achebe, blends local African flavor with the borrowed English language, thus, succeeding in embellishing a foreign language with local idiom. This, as it were, sits well with Ngugi's commitment to the postcolonial struggle over the appropriateness of European languages in defining and voicing non-European identities" (6).

According to Ugwuanyi, *Wizard of the Crow:*

> Ngugi is at his best in the use of metaphysics which he has to a very great extent, succeeded in introducing into the resistance theme of African literature. Coupled with this is the incisiveness and the exposure of the leadership personalities in postcolonial Africa. It (the novel) represents a rather worrisome internal bickering and visionless leadership that have characterized various governments across the continent of Africa. Though the novel cast serious aspersions in satirical mode on the internal build-up and the effect of external collaboration of the West in the impoverishment of the African masses, it aptly reflects with great efforts the roles of sycophants in the destruction of African States. (226)

Away from the evaluation of *Wizard of the Crow* by African literary critics, the novel has received global reception in the West. Most of the criticisms depict Ngugi's recognition as a famous African novelist and cultural nationalist. The Western Press viewed Ngugi as complex contemporary writer, as reflected in the *New Yorker magazine* review by author John Updike, who saw Ngugi as "caught in sometimes implacable political, social, racial and linguistic currents (net). It was also evident to the *New York Times* reviewer that Ngugi had written a major work emanating from oral techniques: "It's hard to think of another recent novel so heavily

steeped in oral traditions; at the level of language and cadence it recalls a long yarn told by firelight" (Turrentine 22).

Moreover, the *Times Literary Supplement* grouped Ngugi's Ruler among "a composite of Third World dictators, from Pinochet, Marcos and Baby Doc Duvalier, to specifically African tyrants such as Kenya's own Kenyatta and Moi, Malawi's Banda, the Central African Republic's Bokassa, Uganda's Amin and Zaire's Mobutu (Van Der Vlies 21). Okorafor-Mbachu, writing for *Black Issues Book Review* (2006), expressed the mythical connections to the character Matigari from Ngugi's 1980s novel, for whom an arrest warrant was issued by the Moi regime, not realizing his fictional status. Ngugi's Wizard 'has all the potential of becoming yet another one in the country' (38). The *San Francisco Chronicle* noted that '*Wizard of the Crow* may prove his [Ngugi's] status, but only for those willing to wrestle with its incredibly demanding text. Nevertheless, the novel has many rewards for those willing to face its challenges' (Hellman 13). Joseph McLaren states that:

> *Wizard of the Crow* demonstrates Ngugi's ongoing interests in a number of ways. Most important, Ngugi's espousal of writng in indigenous languages is clearly supported by the publication, which was first brought out in Kenya in the Gikuyu language as *Murogi wa Kagogo*. (57)

Finally, the important fact about critics views on Ngugi's novels selected for this study is that the novels depict African existentialism in a postcolonial background. The critical illustration of the novels selected for this study in the following chapters will be based on some of these critical views on the texts while maintaining an apt focus on how Ngugi use rhetoric to depict Kenya's postcolonial experiences and liberation struggles.

Theoretical Framework

There are many literary theories that explain African's contact with the West and out of the many literary theories the African postcolonial theory has been so significant in engaging the West ontologically with literary texts that decolonise Eurocentric ideologies in postcolonial nations. According to Oyegoke, "literary theories do not grow in a vacuum'' (286). Postcolonial theory, therefore, developed out of the experience of colonialism and neo-colonialism in the worlds that have witnessed oppression in its old state and are still going through its hurdles in its new form. That is why Raman Seldan Raman and Peter Widdowson (188) simply describe postcolonialism as "the study of colonial discourse" (188) while Mary Klages states that the field of post-colonialism "examines the effect that colonialism has had on the development of literature and literary studies - on the novels, poems, and 'English' Departments within the context of the history and politics of regions under the influence, but outside the geographical boundaries of England and Britain" (147). These views support the rhetoric that Postcolonial theory is a response to Western hegemony and an attempt to subvert the notion of Western superiority over the so-called 'third world' inferiority.

Historically, the development of postcolonial studies started with the development of colonialism. Postcolonialism has been a 'reactionary attitude' against imperialism before its conscious formulation as a theoretical field of study. Race and ethnicity become important factors in literary studies with the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s and the introduction of the *Negritude* concept in the 1930s (Bertens 193). The early founding text of postcolonialism is Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963), which in its anti-colonial quest advocates for decolonisation through violence. To him, "decolonization is always a violent phenomenon… Decolonisation which sets out to change the order of the world, is, obviously a programme of

complete disorder'' (Fanon 127). Postcolonial studies, Bertens (203) opines, in its current theoretical orientation, started with the publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978). This field of study has become popular with the publication of Gayatri Spivaks's *In Other Worlds* (1987), Bill Ashcroft et al's *The Empire Writes Back* (1989), Homi Bhabha's *Nation and Narration* (1990), Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism* (1993).

Furthermore, to establish the tenets of postcolonial theory, it is important to state that post-colonial theory in the words of Omotayo is a "counter discourse seeking to re-write history from the point of view of the marginalized or the oppressed'' (216-217). It is an ontological and epistemological body of principles set to question the notion of Western domination and the 'being' of the 'centre' (the dominating) and the 'margin' (the dominated). Hence Raji remarks that post-colonial theory is a "counter-hegemonic discourse'' (231) in which "the empire writes back to the centre'', in the words of Salman, quoted in Ashcroft et.al (ix), to dismantle the Western notion of superiority and assert their identity.

Evidence from the plethora of literary discourse emanating from postcolonial states is the hard truth that postcolonial theory questions Western dominance of knowledge and power. It seeks to reread and rewrite the European historical and fictional record for the purpose of decolonizing the Empire. According to Tiffin, this decolonisation is a process that:

> invokes an ongoing dialectic between hegemonic centrist system and peripheral subversion of them; between European or British discourses and their post colonial dismantling…. Postcolonial literature/cultures are thus constituted in counter–discursive rather than homologous practices, and the other 'fields'…of counter-discursive strategies of the dominant discourse. (95-96)

Again, postcolonial theory interrogates the assumption of universalism, which Ashcroft et al. (55) see as a fundamental feature through which the colonial power is constructed. In the words of Barry (199), post-colonial critics "reject the claims to universalism made on behalf of canonical Western literature and seek to show its limitations of outlook, its general inability to empathize across boundaries of cultural and ethnic difference" (18). The notion of universalism engenders the imperial politics of the exclusion of others and the glorification of 'self' since it thrives on the "assumption that 'European' equals 'universal" (Ashcroft et al 55). This Eurocentric syndrome has promoted ethnocentrism and racism, which depict the centre as the superior and the other world as the inferior.

The notion of the difference from this perspective makes Said writes back in his influential post-colonial text, *Orientalism* (1977). Orientalism in the words of Said "tries to show that European culture gained in strength and identity by 'setting off' against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self" (Said 4). It is through this 'setting off" that the 'self' which refers to the occident in Said's term, separates or distinguishes itself from the 'other' which refers to the 'Orient'. This enables the Occident to "hegemonize" the world. Said (3) further notes that Orientalism "is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between "the Orient" and (most of the time) "the Occident". This distinction, which is nothing but imagination, influences the Occident's production of non Western cultures and people as inferior. This imaginative distinction propels their quest to civilize the uncivilized.

In addition, there is the concern for language, place and theory in postcolonial discourse. Different strategies have been utilized to cater for these issues. Notable is the post-colonial critics' engagement of 'abrogation' and 'appropriation' (Ashcroft et al 38-39), as an attempt

to‘re-place’ language and theories. This leads to the distinction between ‘English’ (of the centre) and ‘english’ (of the margin) (Ashcroft *et al* 39) and theories of ‘African literature’ and ‘african literature’ (Oyegoke 287).

Worthy of note is the post-colonial critics’ concern for neo-colonialism, which has created what Oyegoke (289) calls a ‘new hegemony’. According to Ngugi (4), imperialism has continued to “control the economy, politics, and cultures’ of the margin even after colonialism. After the decentring of the ‘old centre’, a new centre originates within the ‘old margin’ and furthers the exploitation and imperialism of the ‘old centre’. It should be noted that this new centre is in communion with the old centre, and this makes the oppressive burden heavier on the ‘new margin’. Post-colonial critics deconstruct and subvert this new order of imperialism in their writing.

In further terms, post-colonial literature often involves writings that explore issues of decolonization or the political and cultural independence of a people formerly subjected to colonial rule, on the one hand, and the socio-political realities/experiences of these people under the rulership of their own people (self-rule) after the colonial era, on the other hand. In other words, one can say that post-colonial literature is bi-dimensional; the first dimension being an intellectual movement to correct the stereotypical assumptions foisted on the colonized people by their colonial masters during the era of colonization, and the second dimension being a reflection of the realities that independence brought about.

This position is corroborated by Kehinde in his review of *Postcolonial Lamp*, a collection of essays in honour of Professor Dan Izevbaye, edited by Aderemi Raji-Oyelade and Oyeniyi Okunoye, where he observes that:

> The term 'postcolonial' has at least two meanings inherent in it as reflected in the essays *(*in *Postcolonial Lamp)*. In the first instance, it connotes the time or literature after colonialism. Secondly, it connotes the tug-of-war between the memories of the colonial past and the utopian dream of the postcolonial future that is held in the uneasy present of postcolonialism. (6)

Similarly, Kehinde stressed that:

> The ugly incident of colonialism in Africa has effects on language, education, religion, artistic sensibilities, popular culture and the like. Post-colonial novels in the continent have therefore become veritable weapons used to dismantle the hegemonic boundaries and the determinants that create unequal relations of power, based on binary oppositions such as "Us" and "them"; "First–world" and "third–world"; "white" and "black", "colonizer" and "colonized", etc. The average African novelist responds to the urgency and inevitability of this historic mission. What is primary on his mind and central to his work is the urge to put the record straight and illuminate the threshold between past and present, thought and action, self and other, and Africa and the world. (1)

From Kehinde's viewpoint, one can understand that Africa has always been in contact with the outside world from time immemorial especially in the aspect of trade, but by the middle of the

15th century, the interaction with the outside world began to have some impacts which eventually culminated in the colonization (or perhaps usurpation) of the continent by European forces.

Furthermore, Parekh Pushpa and Jagne Siga in their submission contend that:

> Postcolonial African writers have been, and currently are, engaging a major intervention in counter discursive and revisionist projects impacting the academic world since the fifties. Grasping the multiple coordinates of their intense investigations, deliberations, and debates underlying their literary productions involves an equally challenging, often overwhelming, but increasingly gratifying task. (9)

Achebe reechoes this claim when he laments that:

> Africa's postcolonial disposition is the result of a people who have lost the habit of ruling themselves… Because the West has had a long but uneven engagement with the continent, it is imperative that it understand what happened to Africa. It must also play a part in the solution. A meaningful solution will require the goodwill and concerted efforts of Africa's historical burden. (2)

From Achebe's rueful comment, it is obvious that colonialism has done Africa more harm than good. It has rendered ancient African societies tension-prone modern states in the comity of nations of the world. As postcolonial disillusionment affected African states, literature being a reflection of contemporary events in the society served the purpose of expressing the dominant and salient events of the time, manifesting in two phases - as an intellectual movement of rhetoric to challenge and repudiate stereotypical assumptions of the European imperialists; and to

express the disillusionment that occasioned self-rule after independence was attained in many African states.

Post-colonialism also implies an examination of the impact and continuing legacy of the European conquest of non-European lands and peoples. In the post-colonial literature context it refers to 'indigenous literature after colonization began'. When African writers produce texts classified as post-colonial, it means the writers depict the problems of neo-colonialism in their various texts. They show their discontent to the prevalent corrupt democratic or military rule in their nations. They state bitterly that the collective joy of the events of independence in which the entire nations at different times was basking in has been a nightmare and betrayal. The postcolonial African writers always depict their continent as a place where the rulers have failed woefully to protect their nations' pride, culture, wealth and human capital from the ravages of neo-colonialism and globalization. The term neo-colonialism was coined to describe a situation where a few of the faces in the power structure changed but where unjust colonial structures remained firmly in place.

Nonetheless, the critical climate in Africa has contributed to the growth of African prose fiction. Writers can now express their dissatisfaction with the rulers and populace in some instances. Pen is put to paper and writers lament the decay, rot, pain and disillusionment in their nations. To most of these writers, neo-colonial African leaders have done more harm to the continent than colonial masters did. This supports the assertion of Edward Said, "Blaming the Europeans sweepingly for the misfortunes of the present is not much of an alternative. What we need to do is to look at the matters as a network of interdependent histories that it would be inaccurate and

senseless to repress, useful and interesting to understand" (28). Fiction, which acknowledges and builds on social realism, is a convenient tool for propagating awareness about the state of affairs.

Above all, like many schools of criticism, postcolonialism engages a variety of approaches to textual analysis. Postcolonial approach, deconstruction, feminism, Marxism, rhetorical criticism, reader-oriented criticism, African-American criticism, and cultural studies sometimes employ the tenets of postcolonial theory in their critical methodologies towards the analysis of texts. In recent years, postcolonial writings and analysis have become popular, and as a result, a number of works have been published, dealing with the post colonial people. This fact leads to the need of examining and analyzing rhetoric in African fiction through the postcolonial theory. Most African novels when examined and analyzed achieve the following tenets of postcolonialism decolonization, cultural hybridity, binary opposites, creation of binary opposite as understood in Edward Said's *Orientalism,* use of language to deconstruct the dominance of the West ando challenge Spivak's position which states that the colonized can only write meaningfully in colonizers' language among others.

Therefore this research hangs its framework of the analysis of rhetoric on Ngugi's novels on postcolonial analysis because this critical approach that deals with literature produced in countries that were once, or are now, colonies of other countries. It may also deal with literature written in or by citizens of colonizing countries that takes colonies or their peoples as its subject matter. The theory is based around concepts of otherness and resistance. Postcolonial theory became part of the critical toolbox in the 1970s, and many practitioners credit Edward Said's book *Orientalism* as being the founding work.

Typically, the proponents of postcolonial analysis examine the ways in which writers from colonized countries attempt to articulate and even celebrate their cultural identities and reclaim them from the colonizers. They also examine ways in which the literature of the colonial powers is used to justify colonialism through the perpetuation of images of the colonized as inferior. However, attempts at coming up with a single definition of postcolonial theory have proved controversial, and some writers have strongly critiqued the whole concept. It can also deal with the way in which literature in colonizing countries appropriates the language, images, scenes, traditions and so forth of colonized countries.

There are other times when the violation of the aesthetic norms of western literature is inevitable, as colonized writers search to encounter their culture's ancient yet transformed heritage, and as they attempt to deal with problems of social order and meaning so pressing that the normal aesthetic transformations of western high literature are not relevant, make no sense. The idea that good or high literature may be irrelevant and misplaced at a point in a culture's history, and therefore for a particular cultural usage not be good literature at all, is difficult for us who are raised in the culture which strong aesthetic ideals to accept.

The development (development itself may be an entirely western concept) of hybrid and reclaimed cultures in colonized countries is uneven, disparate, and might defy those notions of order and common sense which may be central not only to western thinking but to literary forms and traditions produced through western thought. The term 'hybrid' used above refers to the concept of hybridity, an important concept in post-colonial theory, referring to the integration (or, mingling) of cultural signs and practices from the colonizing and the colonized cultures ("integration" may be too orderly a word to represent the variety of stratagems, desperate or

cunning or good-willed, by which people adapt themselves to the necessities and the opportunities of more or less oppressive or invasive cultural impositions, live into alien cultural patterns through their own structures of understanding, thus producing something familiar but new). The assimilation and adaptation of cultural practices, the cross-fertilization of cultures, can be seen as positive, enriching, and dynamic, as well as oppressive. "Hybridity" is also a useful concept for helping to break down the false sense that colonized cultures -- or colonizing cultures for that matter -- are monolithic, or have essential, unchanging features. Some of the major postcolonial theorists include Homi K. Bhabba "The Commitment to Theory", Edward W. Said *Orientalism*, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak “Can the Subaltern Speak?”

The concept of producing a national or cultural literature is in most cases a concept foreign to the traditions of the colonized peoples, who (a) had no literature as it is conceived in the western traditions or in fact no literature or writing at all, and/or b) did not see art as having the same function as constructing and defining cultural identity, and/or c) were, like the peoples of the West Indies, transported into a wholly different geographical/political/economic/cultural world. (India, a partial exception, had a long-established tradition of letters; on the other hand it was a highly balkanized sub-continent with little if any common identity and with many divergent sub-cultures). It is always a changed, a reclaimed but hybrid identity, which is created or called forth by the colonizers' attempts to constitute and represent identity. (hybridity = mixing of cultures; ex. double consciousness – one goes to an American University and gets educated then returns to native land only to find that he/she cannot identify with the culture anymore). The very concepts of nationality and identity may be difficult to conceive or convey in the cultural traditions of colonized peoples.

There are complexities and perplexities around the difficulty of conceiving how a colonized country can reclaim or reconstitute its identity in a language that is now but was not its own language, and genres which are now but were not the genres of the colonized. One result is that the literature may be written in the style of speech of the inhabitants of a particular colonized people or area, which language use does not read like Standard English and in which literature the standard literary allusions and common metaphors and symbols may be inappropriate and/or may be replaced by allusions and tropes which are alien to British culture and usage like African rhetoric and rhetoric figures. It can become very difficult then for Europeans to recognize or respect the work as literature but this fact has not restricted African writers from writing the story of Africa with an indigenous style and tradition.

In its essence, postcolonial literature has evolved as a reaction to the historical and political implications of the colonizer-colonized relationship and has, therefore, always been tied to alarger, public discourse. The writings, especially in the early stages of postcolonial literature, thus bear the imprint of the political development in the colonies since local writers often addressed the pressing historical and political issues of that time. In the pre-independence period, literature became a vital tool of political resistance, conjuring images of unified communities and shared cultural heritage intended to raise national awareness and mobilize communities.

In the context of African literature, from the 1930s onwards writers' commitment to social and political issues was regarded by many intellectuals as a moral duty. In the words of Chinua Achebe, "[…] an African creative writer who tries to avoid the big social and politicalissues of contemporary Africa will end up being completely irrelevant – like that absurd manin the proverb who leaves his burning house to pursue a rat fleeing from the flames" (Achebe,1968).

The pre-independence period in particular called for activism and involvement, and many African writers used literature as “a weapon of political liberation”, enlisting their workin the anti-colonialist cause (Boehmer, 175). There was an agreement that literatures hould be representative of the “moving spirit in the nationalist struggle” (ibid.) and that it should facilitate much needed social transformation.

Ngugi’s contribution to the language debate is widely known and studied, and he has theorized on the topic extensively. He passionately advocates for the overall development of African languages and their use in African literatures—in 1992 he founded the Gikuyu-language journal Mũtĩri, and continues to edit it—and he famously renounced writing in English. First, he committed to abandoning English in his fiction writing, and in a note on *Decolonising the Mind*, he bids a final "farewell" to English in all of his writings. Central to *Decolonising the Mind* is Ngugi’s "theory of language", in which "language exists as culture" and "language exists as communication": Language as communication and as culture are then products of each other.

For Ngugi, because he theorizes language as the foundation and carrier of culture, the role of the writer in a neocolonial nation is inherently political. To write fiction in English is to "foster a neocolonial mentality." On the other hand, writing in African languages is a blow to imperialism's systematic oppression. He advocates for African writers to reconnect with their "revolutionary traditions" of anti-imperialism in Africa (28). He states further that:

> I believe that my writing in Gikuyu language, a Kenyan language, an African language, is part and parcel of the anti-imperialist struggles of Kenyan and African peoples... I want (Kenyans) to transcend colonial alienation... We African writers are bound by our calling to do for our languages what Spencer, Milton and

> Shakespeare did for English; what Pushkin and Tolstoy did for Russian; indeed what all writers in world history have done for their languages by meeting the challenge of creating a literature in them, which process later opens the languages for philosophy, science, technology and all other areas of human creative endeavors. (*Decolonising the Mind* 28)

Ngugi also engages with this issue on a distinctly personal level; when he chose to abandon English, he chose to enact out his own theory in practice. As one biographer points out, "Writing in Gikuyu, then, is Ngugi's way not only of harkening back to Gikuyu traditions, but also of acknowledging and communicating their present" (29).

Against this backdrop, this study basically anchors on postcolonial literary theory as the theoretical framework for this study. The theory will help to explain the manifestation of rhetoric in Africa fiction. However, in postcolonial analysis of Ngugi's novels selected for this study is important because this critical approach deals with the way in which literature in colonized countries appropriates the language, images, scenes, traditions and so forth of colonized countries and it also examines the ways in which writers from colonized countries attempt to articulate and even celebrate their cultural identities and reclaim them from the colonizers.

Summary

This chapter began with the explanation of the main concept of the research (rhetoric and African fiction) and subsequently dovetailed in to the definition of the forms and devices of rhetoric, the theoretical framework of the study and the review of Ngugi's texts selected for this research. From the foregoing, the clues on the operational definition of postcolonial theory

leads this research in discussing the meaning, forms and uses of rhetoric in Ngugi's *A Grain of Wheat, Petals of Blood, Devil on the Cross* and *Wizard of the Crow*. However, all these distinctive tenets on postcolonialism are identified and used to evaluate Ngugi's Kenyan novels as African postcolonial texts.

CHAPTER THREE

Rhetoric and Postcolonial Experiences in *a Grain of Wheat* and *Petals of Blood*

This chapter through a postcolonial analysis of Ngugi wa Thiong'o's novels in English; *A Grain of Wheat* and *Petals of Blood* selects and critically analyzes rhetoric and its various devices (folktales, rhetorical questions, songs, allusions, proverbs, legends, myths, speeches etc). The content and context of qualitative research methodology that is deployed here enables the research to discuss the postcolonial problems that militate against the socio-cultural development of Africa. The analysis of rhetoric in Ngugi's English novels also pays attention to the way in which rhetoric re-enforce the novelist's themes, philosophies, commitment to certain causes and how they also sharpen his critical skills of persuasion in postcolonial Kenya. Ngugi's *A Grain of Wheat* and *Petals of Blood* are dissected to contain forms of rhetoric ranging from allusion, songs, myths, folktales, legends, proverbs and many other rhetorical figures.

The events in *A Grain of Wheat* take place in the days of 1963 before and on the day of Uhuru, Kenya's liberation from British colonial rule. The novel also features flashbacks of the past. *A Grain of Wheat* is about the events that lead up to Kenyan independence, or Uhuru. It is set in the background of Mau Mau rebellion. The setting is a Kenyan village; when the characters Gikonyo and Mumbi get married, in love and just starting their lives, Gikonyo is sent to detention. When he comes back after six years, Mumbi had his rival's child. They cannot find the words to talk about the past, and a wall is created between them. Mumbi's brother gets captured and hanged and the town realizes that, the one they thought to be the hero, was actually the betrayer. The title of the novel is taken from the Gospel according to St. John, 12:24. The novel weaves together several stories set during the state of emergency in Kenya's struggle for independence

(1952–59), focusing on the quiet Mugo, whose life is ruled by a dark secret. The plot revolves around his home village's preparations for Kenya's Independence Day celebration, Uhuru day. On that day, former resistance fighters General R and Koinandu plan on publicly executing the traitor who betrayed Kihika (a heroic resistance fighter hailing from the village).

Allusion in Ngugi's *a Grain of Wheat* and *Petals of Blood*

Allusion is an indirect reference; a reference to something supposed to be known, but not explicitly mentioned. Biblical and historical allusions dominate most of the speeches and the sequence of events in *A Grain* of *Wheat* and *Petals of Blood*. This form of rhetoric adequately depicts the oppression of Kenyans by their colonialist, resistance and religious hypocrisy on the part of the Europeans. For example, in the worldview of *A Grain of Wheat*, Ngugi portrays the peasants as Israelites who refused to eat the good things of Pharaoh, instead they chose to cut grass and make bricks with the other children. In Harry Thuku, people saw a man with God's message; go unto Pharaoh and say unto him:

> Let my people go; let my people go. And the people swore they would follow Harry through the desert. They would tighten their belts around their waist, ready to endure thirst and hunger, tears and blood until they set foot on Canaan's shore. (*A Grain of Wheat* 12)

This oppression depicted above is intensified by the declaration of a state of emergency over Kenya. By describing the Mau Mau War, the taking of the oaths of allegiance, and the refusal to co-operate in any way with the white colonizer, Ngugi portrays the essence of the rhetoric of resistance as the hallmark of postcolonial Africa and the Kenyan people as living up to their words as depicted in the excerpt above. In this way, the persuasion and sympathy elicited in the

minds of the Christian readers becomes more strengthened since theirs is a just cause, and since God Himself is reported to have identified with them and liberated the Israelites from the Egyptian bondage. The arousing of this sense of identification in the mind of the reader in postcolonial Africa is Ngugi's method of employing the Biblical allusions.

In the first motto of *A Grain of Wheat*, for instance, Ngugi also invokes the Biblical passage of 1st Corinthians Chapter 15, verse 36-37: "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain" (*A Grain of Wheat* 1). This passage expresses in concrete terms, Ngugi's persuasive call for sacrifice which is demanded by the legitimacy of the people's cause and which is portrayed as their only way to salvation. Through this rhetoric device, therefore, the reader is able to imagine the depth of the people's plight and hence identify with their efforts towards self determination. Through it, Ngugi also eulogises the Mau Mau uprising by equating it with the Biblical exodus of the Israelites.

Moreover, Ngugi's treatment of the Biblical allusions also reveals the ambivalence inherent in the white man's practice of his religion. It is this aspect of ambivalence that Mongo Beti recounts in *The Poor Christ of Bomba*. The Europeans are often displaying acts that contradicts their acctions as Christians. It is a contradiction in terms, for instance, to preach the equality of people but practice the subjugation of the other race; creating the binary opposite. This is one of the oddities which Ngugi will never entertain. As he is quoted by Ime Ikiddeh in a book titled *Introduction to Homecoming:*

> I say contradiction because Christianity, whose basic doctrine was love and equality between men was an integral part of that social force -colonialism -

> which in Kenya was built on the inequality and hatred between man and the consequent subjugationof the black race by the white race. (Ngugi's *Homecoming*, 31).

Since the white man is hypocritical to his faith, Ngugi sees no reason in the black man accepting this religion which serves as the white man's instrument for the perpetual subjugation of the black race. This makes Ngugi employ the Biblical allusions as an instrument of satire and persuasion. The satiric whip descends on Rev. Jerrod in *Petals of Blood* when he refuses to provide assistance to a dying child but merely dismisses the group of famished callers after reading the Biblical story of Peter and the Lameman (Acts of Apostles 3: 1 -6) to them. Jerrod tells them "As for the child who is ill ... I have already offered prayer for him. Go ye now in peace and trust in the Lord" (*Petals of Blood*, 148). The author presents this child as a 'lame' who needs help and Rev. Jerrod's faith and priesthood as hypocritical and, therefore, useless. Rev. Jerrod fails to appreciate that even Peter, to whom he alludes, had cured the lame man, thereby giving him 'all he had'. Through this rhetoric, therefore, the author satirizes the 'Joshuas' and 'Jerrods' of this world who profess Christianity only on their lips but turn dubious in the events where they should prove their faith. He also seems to suggest 'that Christianity inculcates in its African adherents a shallowness of mind that makes them lose their rationality and the characteristic commitment which the African shows to the welfare of his community. This explains why his 'good' African Christian characters such as Rev. Jackson Kigondu in *A Grain of Wheat*, Munira in *Petals of Blood* and the good servant in *Devil on the Cross* all possess that glib and treacherous character which never fosters the welfare of their communities. In contrast, those who rebel against the Christian faith like Kihika in *A Grain of Wheat* and the 'bad' servant in

Devil on the Cross, often possesse sterling qualities that contribute so much to the welfare of others.

The Biblical allusions are therefore used as a rhetorical device. One is to justify the actions of a people who found themselves in an oppressive position similar to that of the lsraelites, and who had to fight back in order to liberate themselves. The Biblical allusions in *Petals of Blood* tend to underscore this inherent exploitative philosophy of Europeans in colonial/postcolonial Africa. Here, the individuals alluded to existed in history and their actions (in satiricrendition) are equally historical. Therefore, while contributing to the success of Ngugi's fiction, the use of historical allusion enhances a thorough re-examination of the events of history (in Kenya in particular, and Africa in general), and also elevates these events to an international scope. Since the facts and figures alluded to have been fictionalized in their contents, they become satirical.

The results of the works of art which penetrate climes and cultures with their eternal message: let my peoplego, let my people go.The central or main value of the biblical allusions, is that just as the major driving force for the Israelites was the longing and search for the promised land, the Kenyan people's driving force and source of endurance was the desire and longing to repossess the land which was alienated from them. They are captives in their ownland and for them freedom from captivity will only have meaning if the land is freedfrom foreign captivity.

In yet another instance, in *Petals of Blood*, the narrator alludes to some historical personalities while trying to explain Abdulla's elusive feeling which arises out of his jealousy for Wanja's lovers:

> He was a dog panting ... now yapping at the call ofthe master. No. He was not a dog. He was Mobutu being embraced by Nixion, and looked so happy onhis mission of seeking aid, while Nixon made facesat American businessmen and paratroopers to hurryup and clear oil, gold and copper and uranium from Zarie. He was Amin being received by the Queen after overthrowing Obote… (*Petals of Blood* 315).

Symbolism, Legend and Songs as Rhetoric *A Grain of Wheat* and *Petals of Blood*

Symbolism is the representation of a concept through symbols or underlying meaning of objects or linguistics items. In its rhetoric domain, symbolism anchors its persuasive effects on the reader when a writer uses certain symbolic qualities or objects as imagery and direction for readers to believe the content, context and contours of a literary work. A symbol as a rhetorical device is seen as a thing or an image which is invoked to represent another; for persuasion, clarity of expression, deeper meaning, and better aesthetic appeal. Ngugi is one of those African writers who utilize a lot of symbols as recurrent rhetoric in their works. In all his novels, symbols abound which convey the unstable ideas and images which ought to be read into the expression so as to achieve a deeper understanding. In *A Grain of Wheat* and *Petals of Blood* Ngugi uses symbolism to depict imperialism and the quest for freedom in postcolonial Kenya. This view of rain as a symbol of victory and black solidarity is also carried into *A Grain of Wheat* where the black folk now explain why they see it as a good omen: people said the falling water was a blessing forthe "blacks" had won freedom. Murungu on high never slept; he always let his tears fall to this our land from Agu and Agu ... it had rained the day Kenyatta returned home from

England, it had alsorained the day Kenyatta returned to Gatundu from Moralal (*A Grain of Wheat*, 155).

As could be seen in the excerpt above, the rhetoric in the use of 'rain' assumes a symbol of triumph for the black man, an indication that nature; itself, is in sympathy with the plight of the Kenyans, and supports their dogged efforts at self-determination. There is also theidea of rain as a symbol of divine succour as seen in *Petals of Blood.* As could be observed in his treatment of the river and rain, Ngugi sometimes uses one particular element in the signification of two opposing ideas.His use of vegetation symbol in *Petals of Blood* is another case in point. However, this use of same symbols in the elucidation of two opposing ideas couldlead to ambiguities, since some readers may not always be able to deduce the appropriate interpretations. Though the process of arriving at a correct interpretation becomes more exacting to the reader, such effort is not quite useless since this makes for a deeper understanding when eventually accomplished. Ngugi is however, less evasive in his treatments of certain symbolic moment hence the reader captures their full import and significance with less difficulty. For instance, thedrinking of the local brew of the Thengeta spirit and the subsequent self-awareness that occurred in Africa (*Petals of Blood* 232 -38) is symbolic of the beginning ofa new wave of self-consciousness which leads Ngugi's black characters intopersonal search for the dismantling of capitalism, economic exploitation and imperialism.

A Grain of Wheat symbolizes the sacrifice that is needed in order to deal with the "problems of land alienation in Kenya" (156). It symbolizes the sacrifice Kihika makes for the redemption of his people. Kihika is theseed which must die before it can come back to life for a grain must die before it cangerminate into a new life. *Petals of Blood* deals with the corruption of the pure and

traditional life of old Ilmorog. The novel is set in the small remote village of Ilmorog, which serves for Ngugi as a metaphor for development throughout Kenyain the post colonial era. The worm on the petal symbolizes exploitative nature ofcapitalism and imperialism and it is an external force or factor just as capitalism is alien to the traditional values of the people of Kenya. *Devil on the Cross* symbolizes the devilish practices of imperialists in Kenya. Jomo Kenyatta stands for the saviour or Black Messiah that will deliver his people from bondage. Njoroge also creates asymbolic role for himself when he feels that like Jomo and Moses, he would lead his people out of bondage. The small village of Ngotho is a miniature representation of Kenya during the period of Emergency. As such, its experiences and principalcharacters are representative of those of a large group. The scene where Mr. Howlands threatens to castrate Njoroge as he had done his father, Ngotho, shows the European desire to deny the Africans their rights and manhood, as well oppression and bestiality.

In *A Grain of Wheat,* the race on Uhuru day is not just a way of finding out whowins Mumbi over but to find out who has been the most dedicated and steadfast person inthe struggle for independence. Neither Gikonyo nor Karanja wins the race becauseeach has, in one way or the other, betrayed the national cause. The person who winsis General R., running with his characteristic coolness and deliberation, the manwho he has perserved with unflinching single mindedness. The stool with a pregnant woman which Gikonyo will carve for Mumbi signifies the hope for the birth of a new and better Kenya in future. In *A Grain of Wheat*, water is an important symbol. People who are guilty of certain offences use water as means of making reparation.It is a kind of baptism through which one attains a new life. Mumbi has the urge to surrender herself to the pouring rain, Karanja is drenched in the rain; Mugo is beaten by the rain. Schools in all the novels of Ngugi stand for the black man's thirst for knowledge and Kenyans'

rejection of the imperialists attempt to impose their alien culture on them. The school buildings hurriedly and haphazardly erected stand forthe people's thirst for the white man's secret, even though in the midst of conflicts and abject poverty.

Moreover, in *Petals of Blood*, the legendary stories of Ole Masai and Dedan Kimathi are given new faces. Kimathi's ideals in life and his trial also constitute the subject matter of Ngugi's play, *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*, which he co-authored with Micere Mugo. But quite apart from the legendary tales of Masai and Kimathi, Ngugi also refers to other legendary figures across the African continent. They include names like Chaka, Toussaint, Samori, Nat Turner, Nkrumah, Arap Manyei and others. The novelist does not refer to the stories of all these legends just for the purpose of aesthetics or to embellish their plot. Their tales have a functional role in the history of postcolonial Kenya and in Ngugi's campaign for a true independent Kenya or Africa. Reference to figures like Kimathi or Ole Masai really accords them the important place that they deserve in Kenya's history. Kimathi and other freedom fighters were easily forgotten after Kenya obtained her independence. By using these legends in his fictional writings, the author rhetorically does justice to their memory and sacrifice by reminding Kenyans and his readers of the illustrious deeds of these historical figures.

Ngugi also intends to persuade, encourage and inspire all those who are willing to fight against neo-colonialism, injustice or greed in Kenya and in Africa by referring to such immortal figures in the history of Kenya. The legends are also referred to in order to remind the present authorities of the extent to which they have betrayed the independence cause. Consequently, Ngugi does not just succeed in reminding his people of their history and the need for them to learn from it but he also succeeds in inculcating moral values into them.

Furthermore, from the content of the persuasive characteristic of Ngugi's novel, the inclusion of songs and chants into the narrative of *A Grain of Wheat* has become a direct testimony and pointer to the fact that the writer has not written in a vacuum but has derived inspiration from the oral traditions of her community while at the same preserving these traditions for posterity.There are also examples of songs in Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *A Grain of Wheat* (1967) and Wizard of the Crow (2007). An instance of such is found when Mumbi visits Gikinoyo in his carpentry workshop and Gikinoyo asked if she has heard the new song. He consequently proceeds to sing the chorus below

Gikiyu na Mumbi,

Gikiyu na Mumbi,

Gikiyu na Mumbi,

Nikihiu ngwatiro. (Grain of Wheat 87)

When Mumbi informs Mugo about the suffering meted out to villagers by soldiers, the burning down of houses in Thabai and the taking of the women to trench, as a punishment for Kihika's offence and how Wamguke died in the trench, Mugo sings a dirge composed by the women at the trench in honour of Wambuku thus

When I remember Wambuku

A woman who was beautiful so

How she raised her eyes to heaven

Tears from the heart freely flow.

Pray true

Pray Him true

For He is ever the same God.

Who will forget the sun and the dust today

And the trench I dug with blood!

When they pushed me into the trench,

Tears from my heart freely flowed.

(Grain of Wheat 158)

In *Petals of Blood*, songs ranging from lullabies to songs on topical issues have been used by Ngugi as rhetoric. One of the important songs in the novel is the one that Munira taught his pupils on work and wealth. The song places importance on cows, goats, crops and money which are all forms of wealth. In the rural setting, wealth is not measured only in terms of money but in terms of livestock as well. The song also emphasizes the importance of rain in the lives of rural dwellers that depend on it for successful farming seasons. But apart from these aspects of the song, it also exhorts the children to value work for work is wealth.

A song is recorded in the novel as follows: "Cows are wealth! Work is wealth! Goats are wealth! Work is ... rains!" (21). Ngugi employs the preceding song in a rhetorical manner and as satirical device in the novel. In the worldview of the novel, the reader comes face to face with the realization that it is not hard work and honest labour that makes one rich in Kenya. It is cheating, corruption, selfishness and the rule of the survival of the fittest that can make one rich overnight. These negative trends of survival in postcolonial Kenya are viewed as the claws of capitalism. This state of affairs as it exists in the novel is not what Ngugi wants for his fellow Kenyans and

Africans. Interestingly, the writer's persuasion is geared towards making Kenyans to shun corruption and greed. Another song which the novelist uses to explore the important role that the church played in impoverishing Kenyans through evangelism and other forms of imperialism is recorded in the novel "They say that there's famine. But they don't say there's famine only for those who would not eat the bread of Jesus Many houses... Jesus" (*Petals of Blood* 135).

From the foregoing, the church's role in pre-independent Kenya and even in post-independent Kenya cannot be under-estimated. To Ngugi, the church in Kenya is not just an agent of European imperialism but also agent of the spiritual, cultural and physical impoverishment of Kenyans. For as Ngugi observes in *Church, Culture and Politics*, "acceptance of the Christian church meant the outright rejection of all the African customs." The result of such a stand taken by the church on indigenous customs is that "the missionary robbed people of their soul" (32). This observation made by Ngugi on the effect of the church's activities in the lives of Kenyans is attested to by the behaviour of characters like Mr. Ezekiel Waweru and Reverend Jerrod in *Petals of Blood*. They claim to be men of God but they are the most greedy and cold-hearted characters that one can come across in the novel. Thus, through a few songs which have been examined, it becomes evident that Ngugi scores a very good point in using some elements of rhetoric to express his postcolonial concerns and ideas. The themes of the value of western education and the disillusionment with post-independence leadership in Africa are preoccupations that Ngugi shares with Armah in *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born* and with Achebe in *A Man of the People*.

Proverb and Folktale as Rhetoric in Ngugi's *Petals of Blood*

The other form of rhetoric which Ngugi uses sparingly in *Petals of Blood* is proverbs. In *Petals of Blood*, proverbs are used effectively by Ngugi to put across his concerns about the importance of diligence and contentment in postcolonial Kenya. The first of these proverbs is found on page 18 in which he states that "wealth is sweat on one's hands". This proverb conveys the belief of the rural dwellers of Gikuyu in hard work and honest labour. They do not know how to cheat their fellow Kenyans through western education. On page 180, two other proverbs are used in the interaction between the delegation that goes to the city and Nderi wa Riera. The first one, "No elephant is unable to carry his tasks, however big and weightful" is used by the MP to explain the load of work that he has to do as a Member of Parliament and a minister. The irony of the situation is that the duty which is implied in this context is not a duty to the government and the people of Kenya. It is rather a duty to personal business. Nderi waRieri does not even visit his constituents and monies taken from them for the provision of potable water have gone down the drain without any explanation.

The second proverb, "there is no house with a male child where the head of a he-goat shall not be eaten" (180) is used by Njuguna. It is a succinct proverb in Kenya that encapsulates the delegation's complete belief in their Member of Parliament to be able to come to their aid. After all, they are not asking Nderi to cough up money from his pocket to salvage them from the effects of the draught. They simply want him to communicate their plight to the central government and the general public so that they can come to their assistance. As it turns out in the novel, Nderi refuses to help them and rather reads a different meaning into the delegation's journey to the city. It is Abdulla's donkey with its cart that draws the attention of the public to

the delegation's visit to the city and this really provides the magic solution they need to solve their problem.

Apart from proverbs, songs and chants, tales of preliterate African societies are often found in the narratives of African prose writers. These tales are in themselves fictional stories rooted in the traditions, customs and oral histories of African communities. They are usually told to amuse and amaze the listeners as they range from fairy tales, to trickster tales, fables, myths and legends. While tales are mostly entertaining, they are laced with didactic elements such that they teach morals and good behaviour and at the same time serve as a form of relaxation. Ngugi wa Thiong'o borrows from this aspect of the oral tradition in *A Grain of Wheat* as he makes Gatu tell a tale to Gikonyo to persuade him on the importance of being contented with little. The tale goes thus:

> A certain man was the only son of his parents. He wanted a woman. And the woman also wanted to marry him and have children. But the man kept on putting off the marriage because he wanted to build a new hut so that children would be born in a different hut. "We can build it together," she often told him. In the end, she was tired of waiting and letting life dry in her. She married another man. The first man went on trying to build the hut. It was never finished". Gatu completes his tale by saying, "Our people say that building a house is a life-long process. As a result, the man never had a woman or children to continue his family fire. (*A Grain of Wheat* 244)

Summary of Chapter Three

Clearly, Ngugi's early writing ponders the nationalist discourse of the 1960s by attempting to articulate the concepts of individualism and national identity. While the communities depicted in the novels struggle with disintegration and discord, the writer attempts to recreate the spirit of unity by reviving communal history and roots. To a certain extent, Ngugi's English novels are repetitive because they keep recycling the same elements of communal and national history, such as the founding myth, or the creation myth, of the Gikuyu, the prophecies of Mugo wa Kibiro anticipating the arrival of the white man, and the references to "Wachiori, the glorious warrior" and "Kamiri, the powerful magician" (Thiong'o, 3). On one hand, these allusions to the glorious past and the line of great tribal personalities counter the colonialist representation of indigenous communities as a historical entities, yet on the other hand, they reinforce the feeling of a shared history which functions as a source of unity and homogeneity. Particular socio-political discourse and are, to a certain extent, somewhat schematic, the political aspects of the narrative do not reduce the texts to mere tools of propaganda. The relation between fiction and history proves to be much more complicated than that, since "[i]n the very process of articulating a people's collective consciousness, the writer is led into active political struggles" (Thiong'o 73).

Ngugi's early work demonstrates that literature should rather be seen as part of a larger historiography because it reflects the complexity of the historical experience and clarifies the ambiguities of the moment. Moreover, the narratives provide "space within which an historical meaning can be contested" and thus become vital tools for "ordering and shaping history" (Ogude, 153). The African writer, then, positions himself as part of the history-making process that tries to redefine the historical account of the continent and find one's place within it (Ogude, 155).

Above all, the forms of rhetoric that have been analyzed in *A Grain of Wheat* and *Petals of Blood* have something to do with Ngugi's postcolonial concerns in his writings which he christened 'Decolonising the Mind'. These preoccupations include the quest for freedom, corruption in post-independence Kenya, oppression, resistance struggles, religious hypocrisy, the effects of colonialism on Africans, disillusionment with post-independence governments in Africa and the rest. But in addition to the reinforcement of these themes in the novels, the proverbs, songs, legends etc also enable Ngugi to achieve his argumentation of decolonization.

CHAPTER FOUR

Rhetoric and the Proverbial Reading of Postcolonial Struggles in Ngugi's Gikuyu Novels: *Devil on the Cross* and *Wizard of the Crow*

This chapter analyzes Ngugi wa Thiongo's use of proverb as a form of rhetoric in his Gikuyu novels, *Devil on the Cross* (1982) and *Wizard of the Crow* (2007) through the tenets of postolonial theory. The postcolonial setting of Ilmorog in *Devil on the Cross* x-rays the post-independent disillusionment by emphasising the presence of the colonisers through their African allies. The value of *Uhuru* (independence) is therefore reduced to an ordinary reality as the Mau-Mau (freedom) fighters who represent the masses, live in penury while the native imperialists live comfortably in the same society. In *Wizard of the Crow,* Ngugi wa Thiong'o presents the picture of the state of politics and power play in the post independent Africa unlike in *The Devil on The Cross* where he explains the economy of Africa.

The novels mentioned above were first written in the author' native language, Gikuyu, but later translated into English by himself. The novels are greatly infused with Gikuyu's oral traditions - *Devil on the Cross* extensively deploys Gikuyu's ancient rhythms of rhetorical devices such as, proverbs, myths, allusion and traditional story-telling in persuasive mode, while *Wizard of the Crow* as a comic and satirical novel is blended with a lot of rhetorical figures of Kenya ranging from myth, proverbs, songs, allusions and many others. This chapter therefore, takes futher interest in not only the thematic focus of the novels with regard to portrayal of postcolonial struggles and trauma in Africa but also on how the use of proverb as a form of rhetoric helps in achieving the themes and persuasion and the input of Gikuyu rhetoric like stories-within-the-story.

Plot Summary of *Devil on the Cross*

Set against the backdrop of the post colonial era in Kenya, Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Devil on the Cross* depicts irony at its peak – with the devil on the cross instead of Jesus. Written entirely in Ngugi wa Thiong'o's Gikuyu language after he declared he would no longer write in English, the book is a critical examination of Kenyan society. Deeply allegorical, it was written, allegedly on toilet paper, while the author was detained in prison. Through the characters of Wangari, Wariinga, Gaturia, Mwaura and Muturi, Ngugi explores various themes including exploitation, independence (sham freedom), education, religious hypocrisy, and sexual harassment. *Devil on the Cross* opens with a devastated and disillusioned Wariinga who is fleeing modern Kenya. Wariinga as a modern kareendi is chased from work after rejecting advances from her boss Kihara. Unfortunately, her kamoongonye (young man), John Kimwana, also jilts her. She is then evicted from her shack because she cannot afford to pay the rent.

Faced with these problems, she heads back to Illmorog as thoughts stream through her mind. As a young girl she had always dreamed of being an engineer but her dreams were shattered by the old rich man from Ngorika, the hairy chested Waigoka. More to that Wariinga does not like herself. She uses ambi cream to bleach herself. In her nightmares, while at school, she had always seen the devil like the European on the cross instead of Jesus. She faints along the way and is helped by a young man who then invites her to the devil's feast in Illmorog. On the way, they are joined aboard Robin Mwaura's car (the matatu matata matamu model T. Ford) by Wangari, an old woman, who is a victim of modern Kenya's problems. Despite her sacrifices, Wangari has reaped nothing from her fight for an independent Kenya. The poor woman does not have money to pay her fare. Robin Mwaura threatens to throw her out: "I do not want any wrangling between us. This car does not run on urine…cough up the money or get out... Let us

hear the sweet sound of coins or I will through you out…" (37). However, other passengers including Wariinga collect money and pay for her.

As the passengers make their way to Illmorog, they converse about Nairobi, Kenya's capital, the Mau Mau, and the modern harambee. Eventually, they make their way to the devils feast, where a competition is on to choose the best thief. The competitors talk about their wives, the cars they drive and those driven by their wives, and how they got their wealth. Meanwhile, Wariinga and Gaturia fall in love after meeting aboard the car (matatu), and Gaturia plans on introducing Wariinga to his parents. However, Wariinga is shocked to find that the old rich man who impregnated her is Gaturia's father. She takes her revenge and kills him.

Ngugi's message to the society especially about modern Kareendis is to be hopeful just like Wariinga does not give in to life's problems. Even after giving birth, she strives to get back to school takes up secretarial studies and later ends up as a mechanic.

Plot Summary of *Wizard of the Crow*

Ngugi wa Thiong'o's first novel in his mother tongue, Gikuyu, was written in a Kenyan jail on lavatory paper while he was a prisoner of conscience in 1978. *Devil on the Cross*, a satire on Kenya's kleptocracy, gets a humorous nod in his latest novel, whose eponymous "wizard" finds a man reading aloud from it in a crowded bar. The wizard is awed by a "talemonger" who can hold an audience so spellbound that "some of them had even forgotten that they had come here to drink".

Wizard of the Crow, originally serialised, was also partly destined to be read aloud, as much like a piece of theatre as fiction; Ngugi is also a playwright. Writing in English as James Ngugi, he

became one of Africa's leading authors, and his novels *A Grain of Wheat* (1967) and *Petals of Blood* (1977) are Penguin Modern Classics. But after he renounced his Christian name and staged plays in the language of Kenya's largest ethnic group, he was jailed and forced into exile - he now lives in California. Prison cemented his resolve to write fiction only in Gikuyu. "A slave first loses his name, then his language," says his wizard, and Ngugi's aim has been to restore both, to "decolonise the mind".

His new novel, *Wizard of the Crow*, is set in the Free Republic of Aburiria, and presents a fictitious African dictatorship that owes much to the Kenya of Ngugi's erstwhile persecutor, former president Daniel arap Moi. Yet the "Ruler", whose suits patched with big cats' fur have pinstripes composed of tiny letters spelling "Might Is Right", shares traits with despots from Marcos and Mobutu to Pinochet, Suharto and Idi Amin. As the author writes in an afterword, he drew on his exile in London in the 80s, when he helped to campaign to free political prisoners from Kenyan and other postcolonial dungeons. The novel's atmosphere of paranoia about the "M5" secret police has its roots in that reality.

Proverb as Rhetoric Device in *Devil on the Cross* and *Wizard of the Crow*

Nguigi wa Thiong'o largely demonstrates African wits and philosophies through the use of proverbs in *Devil on the Cross*and *Wizard of the Crow*. The rhetorical effects of the proverbs in the novels are seen largely in the area of Ngugi's brilliant manner of engaging the West ontologically; before the advent of colonialism in Africa verbal art and verbal expressions were basic tools of orality in which wisdom and African cultural heritage blended. The proverbs used in *Devil on the Cross* throw light on events and characters such as when the narrator observes that Wariinga uses skin-lightening creams forgetting the wisdom of the saying that "Aping others

cost the frog its buttocks" (*Devil on the Cross* 12). Numerous songs in the novel persuade Kenyans to shun greed, comment on, elaborate on, or illustrate events or provide relief. Some of the songs in the novel are often infested with Gikuyu proverbs and they suggest oral discourse through a series of proverbs and achieving phonological cohesion through alliteration, assonance, and rhyme, a young man sings proverbially to illustrate that the acquisition of money has become a creed in the country:

> That which pecks never pecks for another.
>
> That which pinches never pinches for another.
>
> That which journeys never journeys for another.
>
> Where is the seeker who searches for another? (*Devil on the Cross* 16)

The narrator uses stylistic devices that are associated with oral discourse. In this regard, he uses proverbs, on occasion indicating by implying that these are part of an oral discourse: "Is it not said that an antelope hates less the one who sees it than the one who shouts to alert others to its presence?" (*Devil on Cross* 7). The use of a proverb, as is evident here, underlines the narrator's apparent rhetoric not only because he apparently addresses the question to an aural audience but also because proverbs are pithy crystallizations of wisdom in the folkore of African communities and they are used in social discourse as well as in oral literature. Other proverbs and their usage in the worldview of the novel are stated below are:

Proverb Number	**Proverb**	**Content/Contextual Meaning and Rhetorical Effects of the Proverbs in *Devil on the Cross***
1	'He who wishes to sleep is the one who is anxious to make the bed' (19). 'The yam that one has dug up for oneself has no mouldy patches' (22) 'The sugarcane that one has picked out has no unripe edges' (22) 'The grade cow has stopped yielding milk. So is it now fit only for slaughter?' (25)	The first proverb here is said by Boss Kihara Waigokoin the novel and he uses it to persuade people to shun the ills in postcolonial and capitalist Kenya. The proverb also illustrates sexploitation; Kihara's lustful desire of having sexual intercourse with Kareenda before giving her a job. "Sister Kareenda, no man licks an empty hand. Take care of me and I will take care of you. Modern problems are resolved with the aid of thighs" (19). In her defence of having a young man as a lover (Kamoongonye), Kareeda replies her boss with the proverbs found on page 22 of the novel. Despite Kareendi's refusal to accept Kihara's lustful wish, it was obvious that she is a hypocrite. Kihara lends credence to this notion here: "Kihara is not even the first to eat from Kareendi's thighs, that a girl who has sipped at the delights of money can never stop drinking. He who tastes develops a penchant for tasting.

		A chameleon will always be a chameleon. A girl who starts going with men old enough to be her father while she is at school, to the extent of giving birth to babies when still a student, how can she stop herself?" (25). She replies Kihara with another Gikuyu proverb that is delivered in the form of a rhetorical question "The grade cow has stopped yielding milk. So is it now fit only for slaughter?" (25)
2.	'Happy is the man who is able to discern the pitfalls in his path, for he can avoid them' (7).	The prophet of Justice (the narrator of the novel) uses this proverb to persuade the people of Ilmorog and of course Kenyans that it is better for a man to understand the cause of his problems before looking for the solutions.
3	'That which is born black will never be white' (11)	Here Wariinga is persuaded to value her African identity despite being born black is the actual cause of her travails in capitalist Kenya. Most times when Wariinga appears happy and forgets the 'blackness of her skin and laughed with all her heart, her laughter completely disarmed people" (11). Ngugi's deployment of this rhetoric shares affinity with the central

		message of cultural collision that his fellow East African writer, Okot p' Bitek, revealed in *Song of Lawino* and *Song of Ocol*.
4.	'Aping others cost the frog its buttocks' (12) 'A borrowed necklace may lead to the loss of one's own' (20).	The first proverb was made by Wariinga on account of self-indictment for imitating a girl's stride. Rhetorically, this proverb that is popular among the Gikuyu people serves as advice to Africans to desist from imitating foreign traditions and religion: following the precepts of European ideologies will make African culture and traditions to go into a state of oblivion. The analyzed proverb here has the same undertone with the one found on page 20 of the text: 'A borrowed necklace may lead to the loss of one's own' (20). The preference of European culture over African culture by Africans is what Chimalum Nwankwo in his article 'The Muted Index of War in African Literature and Society' called "colonialism still at work" (1).
5	'When a bird in flight gets tired, it will land on any tree' (33).	The narrator uses this proverb to console Wariinga over her travails to get a bus that will

		take her to Ilmorog. The proverb in its Gikuyu origin means every problem has a solution and its rhetoric effect is that Kenyans should remain hopeful of better things to come since the struggle for the attainment of freedom (Uhuru) was not an easy one.
	'Gikuyu once said, a single finger cannot kill a louse; a single log cannot make a 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' (52) 'The leopard did not know how to scratch, it was taught' (54). 'Gikuyu said, the sun does not rise the way it sets' (56). 'Caution is not a sign of cowardice' (56).	The first Gikuyu proverb here talks about the need for unity in diversity to achieve national development in postcolonial Kenya and Africa at large. In the novel, Muturi explained that: Humanity is in turn born of many hands working together… The unity of our sweat is what makes us able to change the laws of nature, able to harness them to the needs of our lives, instead of our lives remaining slaves of the laws of nature. That's why Gikuyu also said: Change, for the seeds in the gourd are not all of one kind… Humanity, fruit of the work of our hands and minds striving together to subdue nature, is what distinguishes a human being from a

		beast, a tree and all other creatures in nature's kingdom' (52).
		The second Gikuyu proverb in page 54 clearly shows that people's actions to rebuild Africa are the bricks that can construct either a developed or underdeveloped continent. The last proverbs on page 56 serve as an indictment on the avaricious and capitalist mindset of Mwaura, a taxi driver, in postcolonial Kenya. Generally, these proverbs serve as persuasive utterances for Africans to work towards restructuring the continent for efficient growth.
6	'The wound of a rich man never produces pus' (65) 'It is said that, the fart of a rich man has no smell' (65). 'He who work with the rich might himself become rich' (65).	These proverbs stoutly illustrate the dangers of materialism exhibited by the chains of capitalism in postcolonial Kenya. Greed and untamed ambitions of Kenyans to become rich led the society into deeper conflicts and traumatic experiences in their postcolonial mode.

7	‘Gikuyu said, “Don’t look down upon a drop of rain” (77). ‘Gikuyu said a long time ago, that he who used to dance can now only watch others doing it?’ (79)	The proverb is a piece of advice to people that no person in the society should be underrated. The capacity to complete great tasks is not really dependent on one’s size but intellect.
8	When an European gets old, he likes to eat veal’ (99).	This proverb serves as advice for Africans not to see Europeans as superior beings but members of the same metaphysical empire with Africans.
9	‘He who searched diligently would eventually find wealth’ (180).	This is another advice to the local business men and capitalists who vie with one another to boast about how they become rich. They are advised in this proverb to desist from acquiring ill-gotten wealth.

Moreover, in the worldview of *Wizard of the Crow*, the following proverbs help to establish the rhetoric in the novel and judging them from their contextual meaning, they serve as warning or advice to Africans and project postcolonial philosophies especially cultural hybridity and decolonization of Africans from European culture. Here are the proverbs:

Proverb Number	**Proverb Type**	**Contextual Meaning and Rhetorical Effects of the Proverbs in *Wizard of the Crow***
1	'The eye goes wherever it wants.' (51)	This proverb means there is no limit to what man can achieve despite being in a system of oppression. Kamiti uses the proverb to encourage himself about remaining hopeful and calm the curiosity of the secretary of Titus Tajirika who felt angry with him for barging into her office with effrontery and making demands for employment even at a time the country was not employing people. Kamiti is unemployed despite bagging B.A Economics and Master of Business Administration (MBA) from the University of India. "Madam, if I told you my story you would know why I have to see your boss. Right now I don't mind even cleaning toilets" (51). This depicts the exaggeration of the severity of unemployment, by dramatizing the plight of the unemployed in Kenya. The rhetoric effect of the proverb is

		realized on account of saying humans need to be bold when making demands for human freedom.
2.	'He who keeps the company of lepers becomes a leper.' (146)	This proverb is what Kaniruru uses to show the importance of African philosophy-rhetoric. According to him, "It's not only white people who know logic. We too have logic, black logic found in our proverbs" (146). This rhetoric agrees to the undertones of Chinua Achebe's 1975 essay"Morning Yet on Creation Day". The Negritude Movement championed by Leopald Senghor also stood for the promotion of African culture and philosophy just as Chinweizu upheld the value of African identity and culture. In another way, Kaniuru said 'he who keeps the company of lepers becomes a leper' (146), contextually he used it to mock the resistance struggle against the Ruler of the Free Republic of Aburiria that his (Kaniuru) former wife, Nyawira happens to a stout

		member. The members are radicals who fight for the freedom of the oppressed in Aburiria to the detriment of their private lives.
3	'A pig is fried with his own fat.' (181)	The Wizard of the Crow uses this Gikuyu proverb to castigate Titus Tajirika who has suddenly developed white-ache, a desire for Eurocentric lifestyle especially on becoming a White.

From the foregoing, it is glaring that proverbs are pithy crystallizations of wisdom. The rhetoric in the proverbs lays emphasis on persuasive advice to Kenyans about the effects of colonialism and neocolonialism as well as the means of descent survival in Kenya's postcolonial era. For instance, there is a popular Aburirian saying "ire is more corrosive than fire, for it once eroded the soul of a Ruler" (*Wizard of the C*row 3). Another saying has it that the Ruler "... like the aging white man of the popular saying, fed on spring chicken" (*Wizard of the Crow*4), where 'spring chicken' is a euphemism for young school girls, and 'fed'is an apt polite form for 'sexual indulgence'.

In an attempt to find a solution to the growing rebellion by the people's assembly, the ministers use a proverb: "Don't you have a proverb that says that if you throw peanuts to a monkey, you will distract it long enough to be able to snatch its baby?" (*Wizard of the Crow* 641). By spicing the text with proverbs, Ngugi, like Chinua Achebe and Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo, blends local African flavour with the borrowed English language, thus, succeeding in embellishing a foreign

language with local idiom. This, as it were, sits well with Ngugi's commitment to the postcolonial struggle over the appropriateness of European languages in defining and voicing non-European identities.

CHAPTER FIVE

Decolonizing the Mind through Rhetoric in Ngugi's *Devil on the Cross* and *Wizard of the Crow*

Ngugi wa Thiong'o is a postcolonial African novelist, strong defender of African culture and an active campaigner for the use of indigenous African languages in African literature. He is a postcolonial theorist who strongly uses literature as a tool to decolonize the Eurocentric minds of Africans. He does this perfectly by using forms of rhetoric or rhetoric devices to pursue this ideology in his novels. Some of the forms of rhetoric or rhetoric devices discussed in this chapter are propaganda, the creation of binary opposite via oratorial speeches, myth, riddle, Africanism, hyperbole, repetition, rhetorical questions etc.

Propaganda as Rhetoric Strategy in Ngugi's *Devil on the Cross* and *Wizard of the Crow*

"The most effective tool of politicians" is what Sam Omatseye of *The Nation* newspaper calls propaganda. Simply, propaganda (mostly seen in as a form of rhetoric) is an act of spreading false or exaggerated information in order to advance a cause or bring a person, group or an institution to disrepute. In literature, the use of propaganda as a literary technique is to manipulate the public opinion for or against one's idea or the other. Jegede, (41), describes it as any novel that deals with a special social, political, economic or moral problem. She explains further that a novelist may advertise a doctrine by inciting the readers into action. The language of propaganda is usually persuasive to the targeted audience. This is a pointer that rhetoric is an important tool of achieving propaganda. Rhetoric is a two-edged sword i.e., it can be used positively and otherwise.

Nguigi wa Thiong'o, as a postcolonial theorist and an ardent subscriber of Marxist's ideology deploys rhetoric heavily to achieve propaganda in his attempt to promote anti-colonial ideology in *Devil on the Cross* and *Wizard of the Crow.* Ngugi effectively puts to work the service of rhetoric to enlighten, instigate and persuade his audience to join hands in the fight against colonial instruments of oppression be it political, economic or religious. Here are some excerpts to justify Ngugi's anti-colonial stand against religion as not a path to salvation per se but an instrument of subjugation:

Excerpt A

> On the farm he'll build churches or mosques depending on religious inclination of the workers. He will employ priests. Every Sunday the workers will be read sermons that will instruct them that the system of milking human sweat, human blood and human brain- the system of robbery human labour power and human skill- is ordained by God and that it has something to do with the eventual salvation of their souls. (*Devil on the Cross*188)

Excerpt B

> Aburirians were deeply religious. Even street sweepers were forming their own sects and gaining followers! So once they hear the raider from the Lord, people will take whatever they say as a direct command from above. (*Wizard of the Crow* 750)

Excerpt C

> He had seen among the religious zealots, educated professionals, and high-ranking civil servants who on the surface pretended not to believe in the occult a

> priest who use to denounce sorcery every Sunday once came to him at dawn, only to bump into one of his parishioners at the shrine. Each had proceeded to claim the wizard as a relative and offered this as the reason for their visit. Both had excused themselves and said they would come back another time. (*Wizard of the Crow* 368)

Ngugi in the excerpts above achieves his rhetoric through what Niyi Osundare (21) calls "the anthropological style" in his *Style and Literary Communication in African Prose Fiction*. It is a style usually employed to bombard a work with extra-literary sermons and tracts. Young (62) calls it informational style. It is used to educate the audience about what they do not know. The enlightenment may be passed through an ideological point of view. In the case of Ngugi, the readers are enlightened against economic suicide they commit in the name of God using Marxist point of view which holds that religion is the opium of the masses. Excerpt A informs the masses that religion is an instrument of repression in the hands of the imperialists as it discourages revolution which is expected to bring about social change in Marxism while excerpt B informs the reader why religion has been successful as a repressive tool. Excerpt C exposes the readers to religious hypocrisy among the elites to further argue that religion is used to deceive people.

Again Ngugi uses his rhetoric anthropologically to warn Africans against remaining hybrids with a miserably schizophrenic identity. He revolts against cultural hybridity (mimicry) as means of tackling the problem of identity in the post-colonial Africa. The problem of cultural hibridity is satirised with the inability of members of the elite class to speak their native language in *Devil on the Cross.* Postcolonial identity question is achieved through naming in *Wizard of the Crow.* Consider these excerpts:

Excerpt D

> Our culture has been dominated by the Western imperialists' cultures… Cultural imperialism is mother to slavery of the mind and body. It gives birth to mental blindness and deafness that persuades people to allow foreigner to tell them what to do in their own country. (*Devil on the Cross* 58)

Excerpt E

> Gatuira spoke Gikuyu like many educated people in Kenya who stutter like babies when speaking the natural language but conduct fluent conversation in foreign languages. (*Devil on the Cross 56*)

Excerpt F

> For his part, his father liked initialising his two African names, Mugwanja and Wangahu to form Matthew M.W. Charles and sometimes, leaving them out together, he was Matthew Charles or simply Mr Charles. He was angry with those who called him Caruthi, the African language version of Charles, even if prefixed with a title. He would not of course have raised any objections if they had called him Sir Charles, but in their ignorance the village folk insisted on calling Bwana Caruthi. (*Wizard of the Crow78*)

It is clear that the author is bitter about the rate at which African heritage withers away due to the acceptance of Western culture through religion and western education. He therefore raises a louder alarm that portrays cultural imperialism as another dangerous weapon in the colonial arsenal. Ngugi opines that the real Uhuru for Africans is attainable only when they refuse to

surrender their psyche to western manipulations. Excerpt D exposes the people to the danger of cultural imperialism as a sustaining pillar of neo-colonialism as it gives way for collaboration between native and foreign colonialists. Excerpts E and F point out some behaviours that encourage Western cultural domination. As seen in the Excerpt E, Africans prioritise speaking imperial language while their indigenous languages are allowed to suffer. Some Africans also feel great answering to foreign names. Through language Ngugi discourages Africans against promoting the imperial culture as a means of countering the claims of the orient that African has no language. The excerpts also achieve Frantz Fanon's recommendation that urges the colonised to reclaim their voice by visiting their past.

Language is also used to instigate Africans against all cultures that encourage colonialism, be it capitalism, autocracy or imperialism. Through instigative rhetoric, the postcolonial tenet of resistance is achieved. Consider these:

Excerpt G

> But in the glory of your nation you'll see the face of God. Happy is the man who willingly defends the shadow of his nation, for he will never die; his name shall live forever in the hearts of the people. But he who sells the shadow of his nation, for he will never die; his name shall live forever in the hearts of the people. But he who sells the shadow of his nation is damned, for his name shall forever be cursed by generations to come, and when he dies he will become an evil spirit. (*Devil on the Crow* 65)

Excerpt H

> The so-called national army is a colonial institution. It was trained to hate its own people. The soldiers even hate themselves... Those trained-to-kill nationalists fighting for freedom, how can they feel for the nation whose emergence they fought?.. A new army for a new Aburiria, not with gun guiding politics but a politics of unity guiding gun to protect social justice. These weapons are to protect our right to political struggle and not a substitute for political struggle. (*Wizard of the Crow*759)

The above excerpts are used to implant courage of the martyrs in the young heroes so as not to compromise. A writer, like a political propagandist, would study the sensitivity of his audience and speak to them in a language of the sentiment he pretends to share with them. Ngugi uses biblical allusion to persuade his people to be ready for a fight against the colonialists in Kenya even if that would be achieved with their blood. Understanding religion as a repressive tool which would be difficult to defeat using other methods, Ngugi shares the religious sentiments of Kenyans by going religious. People have been brainwashed that their God is not in support of revolution but Ngugi uses the same repressive weapon to activate their conscience. Excerpt F instigates people against the imperial structure which uses the superstructure against the people. People are persuaded to confront such anti-people arrangement and agitate for a people-friendly military institution.

Also, using rhetoric, Ngugi summarises all colonial instruments which people should watch with suspicion. He said:

Excerpt I

> This means that the churches, the schools, the poetry, the song, the cinema, the beer halls, the clubs, the newspaper will all act as brain-washing poisons whose purpose will be to convince the workers that in this world there is nothing as glorious as slavery to the Kimeendeeri class, so that each worker will look forward to the day he dies, when his body will become fertilizer to make the farm ever more productive. (*Devil on the Cross*)

The Creation of Binary Opposites through Rhetoric in *Wizard of the Crow*

This is another postcolonial tenet which is well known in Edward Said's *Orientalism* where he maintains that the political and economical target of the west is not to relent in creating binary oppositions which will forever be maintained on social segregations. Ngugi puts rhetoric at work to demonstrate Said's binary oppositions claim in *Devil on the Cross* and *Wizard of the Crow*. He X-rays the social structure, the categories of people that can be found in the postcolonial Africa using a language of poetry. Consider the force of oratory in the following speeches:

Excerpt A

> I believe that black has been oppressed by white; female by male; peasant by landlord; and worker by lord of capital. It follows from this that the black female worker and peasant is most oppressed. She is oppressed on account of her colour like all black people in the world; she is oppressed on the account of her gender like all women in the world; and she is exploited and oppressed on account of her class like all workers and peasants in the world. (*Wizard of the Crow* 428)

In *Wizard of the Crow*, Ngugi illustrates the binary structure of the society without recourse to the poetic language he uses in *Devil on the Cross*. The example that is cited from *Wizard of the Crow*explains another structure of postcolonial interest – gender. Like the ones cited above, there is emphasis on the good and bad which symbolises a reference to the West and postcolonial countries known as *the other*.

Repetition and Rhetorical Questions as Rhetorical Devices in Ngugi's *Devil on the Cross* and *Wizard of the Crow*

Repetition of words (anaphora), phrases, or clauses create rhythm through syntactical patterning, while the use of a number of soft consonant sounds indicate pleasure in the first question and of a number of hard consonant sounds indicate woe in the last question of the excerpt below, as well as the same number of syllables in the two questions below, exploit phonological possibilities of language suggestive of meaning:

> The brilliant light she had seen was no longer there. She saw the road that she had previously thought of as wide and very beautiful now suddenly become narrow, covered with thorns. The path that she had thought would lead her to Heaven now led her to a hell on earth. So the seas of pleasure had all along been seas of fire? So the carpet of flowers on which she had trodden had actually been a carpet of thorns? So her wings had not been really wings but chains of steel? (*Devil on Cross* 146)

This is not an isolated instance of the narrator's exploitation of phonological features of the language, as is evident in the last four consecutive phrases but syllabically similar tonal units in the clause, "The Wariinga of today has rejected all that, reasoning that because her thighs are

hers, her brain is hers, her hands are hers, and her body is hers" (*Devil on the Cross* 220) and in the syllabically similar sentences, "He did not see Wariinga open her handbag. He did not see Wariinga take out the pistol" (*Devil on the Cross* 253); in each case, repetition of similar syntactical structures enhances rhythm.

The repetition of words and the impersonation of characters who utter them enhance her narrative's ostensible oral discourse; such is her repetition of an employer's similar supposedly endearing words to the secretary he is propositioning: "Beautiful Kareendi, flower of my heart," "Darling, flower of my heart" (*Devil on Cross* 21), "*Please* Kareendi, little fruit of my heart," "Kareendi, my little fruit, my little orange, flower of my heart," "My little fruit, be mine now, be my girl," "My little fruit," "Kareendi, my new necklace, my tomato plant growing on the rich soil of an abandoned homestead" (*Devil on Cross* 22), and "My little fruit, my love" (*Devil on Cross* 23). The endearment has phonological features that enhance the employer's ostensible oral discourse, however. Not only is this discernible in the two phrases—"be mine now, be my girl"—of similar syllabic length but also is this suggested in this sentence where rhyme marks significant pauses and together with parallel elements creates rhythm as the employer talks about the letters he intend to send to the secretary: "For I want to send them care of the address of your heart, by the post of your heart, to be read by the eyes of your heart, thereafter to be kept within your heart" (*Devil on Cross*22).

Comparable to phonological features are rhetorical questions, with similar words or similar syntactical constructions repeated at intervals, characteristic of forms of public discourse such as the ones implying an aural audience through the second-person pronoun she uses in three consecutive paragraphs "Kareendi, where can you turn now?" is the last sentence in the first

paragraph, “Little Kareendi, where will you turn?” is the penultimate sentence in the second paragraph, and “Who will wipe away Kareendi’s tears now?” is the last sentence in the third paragraph (*Devil on Cross* 17). Also, consider the effect of rhetorical questions in the following song and utterance in Waringa’s tale of postcolonial Kenya.

> Today’s dance-song proclaims:
>
> That which pecks never pecks for another.
>
> That which pinches never pinches for another.
>
> That which journeys never journeys for another.
>
> Where is the seeker who searches for another?
>
> Turn these matters over in your mind, and ask yourself: That kind of song- where is it leading us? What kind of heart is it nurturing in us? The kind that prompts us to double up with laughter when we watch our children fighting it out with cats and dogs for leftovers in rubbish bins? The wise can also be taught wisdom, so let me tell you: Gikuyu said that talking is the way to loving… So let us ask ourselves: Moaning and groaning- who has ever gained from it? (*Devil on Cross* 16)

These rhetorical questions are unanswered issues about African anti-colonial struggles but Ngugi aptly persuades Africans not to concede defeat of their decolonization struggles. In fact the overall development of emerging postcolonial states is a gradual process but an achievable vision by Ngugi when viewed within the rhetorical questions above.

Consequently, using these literary creations in the novel suggests rhetoric as its ostensible mode of transmission. Four or more characters in the novel make confessions to themselves or to others or make public declarations. This narrative technique involves a speech act, shows features more often than not associated with oral discourse and presumes or presupposes an aural audience. On the whole, it takes three main forms in the novel: monologue, dialogue, and speech-making. The monologue is a form of intrapersonal oral discourse; to this extent, it is a form of confession to the novel's implied audience. One of its examples is when Warīīnga asks herself questions, as she unknowingly discloses her innermost feelings and thoughts to the audience:

> She sat down on a box and held her head in her hands, wondering: Why should it always be me? What god have I abused? She took a small mirror out of her handbag and examined her face distractedly, turning over her many problems in her mind. She found fault with herself; she cursed the day she was born; she asked herself: Poor Wariinga, where can you turn now? (*Devil on the Cross* 11)

The dialogue, a form of interpersonal oral discourse as it is an interlocution between two people, employs elements associated with rhetoric when a character confesses or discloses intimate facts of one's life to another character. These elements comprise use of genres of oral literature, dramatic techniques, rhetorical questions, and phonological features, as illustrated when Warīīnga narrates her tribulations to the young man in Nairobi by creating Kareendi as a literary persona to disclose her tribulations, which are typical of girls of her class and education at the hands of unscrupulous lovers and elderly employers. Her narration takes on the form of a confession; indeed, at the end of her narrative, she tells the young man: "Thank you for listening to me so patiently. My heart feels lighter, just as it used to feel after I had confessed to the

Catholic priest" (*Devil on the Cross* 27). As a father-confessor, the young man is a listener who she addresses directly and asks a rhetorical question: "So tell me, you who held my hand so that I shouldn't fall again: does this mean that the Kareendis of modern Kenya have only one organ?" (*Devil on the Cross* 25).

Again, Warringa dramatises the narrative and impersonates characters, in the process taking on various characters' roles and voices. What is more, a ballad, an oral narrative, the proverbs, and the verses that she brings up in the course of the narrative augment its ostensible oral discourse, as do the repeated same or similar words or similar and varyingsyntactical constructions:

> "Take a girl like me," Wariinga said, gazing down at one spot as if she were talking to herself. "Or take any other girl in Nairobi. Let's call her Mahūa Kareendi. Let's assume that she was born in a village or in the heart of the countryside. Her education is limited. Or let's say, perhaps, that she has passed CPE and has gone to a high school. Let's even assume that it is a good school…. (*Devil on the Cross* 17)

In another way, Ngugi raises further questions about loss of Kenyan culture in postcolonial Kenya in the excerpt below:

> Where are our languages now? Where are the books written in the alphabets of our national languages? Where is our own literature now? Where is the wisdom and knowledge of our fathers now? The centres of wisdom that used to guard the entrance to our national homestead have been demolished; the fire of wisdom has been allowed to die; the seats around the fire of wisdom has been thrown on to a rubbish heap; the guard posts have been destroyed; and the youth of the nation has

> hung up its shields and spears. It is a tragedy that there is nowhere we can go to learn the history of our country. (*Devil on the Cross* 58-59)

On the other hand Tajirika in *Wizard of the Crow* uses rhetorical questions for which he in turn supplies the answers. Do you know what it means to get a contract to supply even tea, butter, and cigarettes? He answers, such a contract "could make one wealthy for the rest of one's life.' Such rhetorical question is used to re-emphasize and drive home his point to the Wizard so that he (i.e the Wizard) could understand his need and plight and urgently make him a potent charm. In this novel then, both Kamiti and Nyawira are the Wizards of the Crow representing the indomitable human spirit that can never die. ArigagaiGathere is the story teller who narrates the ballad of 'the famous Wizard of the Crow who could change himself to anything' (766). The Wizard of the Crow then emerges a clever postcolonial diviner with the ability to interrogate and possibly treat the ailments of the postcolonial and emerging globalization on Aburiria.

Wizard of the Crow is a creation of a new myth of the wizard who can perceive oppressive cycles of postcolonialism now manifested in globalization. He is the wizard who represents the people andcan create a new consciousness that can overcome the stalemate of African politics in the age of globalization. But the title can further be read as a proverb whose metaphor the reader should seek to decipher and in the process understand the condition of the post colony in the era of globalization. The orality of the *Wizard of the Crow* is enhanced by the experimentation which the author did with Kikuyu language. The novel is not crafted with 'pure' Kikuyu that we find in *Devil on the Cross* and *Matigari*. The Kikuyu used in this novel sounds more contemporary, which includes adoption of English words and terms into Kikuyu orthography. The narrative language especially that of ArigagaiGathere is interspersed with Kiswahili jargon. In the process

the novel attempts to enrich the Kikuyu language giving it the ability to transcend any limitations in expressing the realities of globalization.

Moreover, the oral narratives in *Wizard of the Crow* is another refined and embedded rhetoric which does not only have persuasive effect on readers of the text but a digressive from the mainstream plot, butalso illuminates and comments on the larger story. In the novel, there are many oralnarratives that blend into the main plot like the stylistic pattern of Chinua Achebe's deployment of folkale into the fabric of his novels. During one of his exploits, a businessman exhorts theWizard of the Crow through a story of the great battle between the sun and the wind. The storyis used rhetorically by the businessman to illustrate why the Wizard should make him win over his enemies.Another narrative is given by Kamiti and it concerns wily water creatures, who could transformthemselves into beautiful women, to lure unsuspecting men into the deep sea with disastrousconsequences. There is also the parable of the curse from a wronged he-goat, [according tothe novel's second theory about the Ruler's illness], which seeks to explain the Ruler's illness (*Wizard of the Crow* 4). This parable is given by the omniscient narrator at the beginning of the novel.

But the story that illustrates Ngugi's prowess in exploiting orality is Nyawira's. It is a *Narrativeof the blacksmith, an ogre, and a pregnant woman*, which Nyawira performs to Vinjinia'schildren - Gacigua and Gaciru. The rendition gives one the feeling of real oral performance:the participation of the children in the narrative by way of their curiosity and questions, the song that is sang by the bird, allusions to real people and the impersonation of the narrative'scharacters - the ogre, the bird, the blacksmith and women. Though it covers only four pagesin the novel (*WC* 154-157), this oral narrative can be interpreted as an expanding

symbolover the entire text.The narrative is a critique of the Aburiria regime, which has failed the test of leadership. The woman's pregnancy symbolically represents the hope for the much awaited new constitutionaldispensation in Aburiria. In the novel, this hope is threatened by the Ruler whose counterpart, the ogre, is a threat to the newborn baby in Nyawira's narrative. Whereas the blacksmith risesto the occasion and moves with speed to destroy the ogre, Aburiria is crying for a saviour orsaviours to get rid of the Ruler and restore the country.

Decolonization: Africanism as rhetoric device in Ngugi's *Devil on the Cross*

Africanism which is an African rhetoric and a weapon of cultural decolonialization is peculiar in *Devil on the Cross*, as a method of retaining the oral quality of the narration despite translation. Some of the Africanisms that would be cited are deliberately spared to emphasise subjects of colonialism and capitalism and a means persuasion for Africans to decolonize their mindsets against western imperialism.

i. "Kereendi of easy thighs" (a cheap woman) (*Devil on the Cross*25)
ii. Woman's thighs are the table on which contracts are signed? (Only women that allow themselves to be sexed can get favour from the rich men) (*Devil on the Cross*19),
iii. "It is your kind of talk that is ruining this country" ("Kind of talk" portends ideology) (*Devil on the Cross*78),
iv. "Kihira is not even the first to eat from Kereendi's thighs" (not the first person to have sex with helpless ladies) (*Devil on the Cross25*)
v. "Where would America be today without theft and robbery?" (Capitalism and imperialism have developed America) (*Devil on the Cross* 79)

vi. "I personally believe in the democratic principle that states that *he who is able to grab should be allowed to grab* (I believe in the democratic principles that allow cheating) (*Devil on the Cross* 80)

vii. "I took out the pen and the paper of the heart, and calculate thus;" (I thought deeply) (*Devil on the Cross* 143).

Riddle and Allusion as Rhetoric Device in Ngugi's *Devil on the Cross* and *Wizard of the Crow*

In *Devil on the* Cross and Wizard *of the Crow*, Ngugi succinctly explains the manifestation of Kenyans passion for Eurocentrism, abuse of African culture and loss of morality through forms rhetoric; riddle and allusion. Apart from oral narratives, riddle is also a form of rhetoric in Ngugi's *Wizard of the Crow*. The Wizard of the Crow cleverly solves the question of what defines one's identity through this riddle: "First, help me solve a riddle ... What is the first thing that tells who a person is?" to which Vinjinia replies "The colour of one's skin" (*Wizard of the Crow* 181). This is an indictment of the obsession of Vinjinia's husband, Tajirika, with changing his skin colour from black to white. The experiment later flops and he is left with weird half-white and half-black complexion. This is the height of the quest for European identity by Africans and Ngugi uses this rhetoric to instruct Africans to shun Eurocentrism and get decolonized.

Moreover, *Devil on the Cross* contains numerous allusions to the Bible; yet their origins relate to oral discourse. The Bible and orality thus being no strange bedfellows, the ostensible orality of the words from the Sermon on the Mount which *Boss* Kĩhara regurgitates as he proposal to his secretary becomes evident: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock, and it

shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (*Devil on the Cross* 23).

Moreover, telling his fiancée about his life in the United States of America, where he had studied music instead of business administration which his father had preferred, Gatuiria alludes to the parable of the prodigal son. At the same time, reporting the exchange he had had with his father on his return to Kenya, he alludes to the parables of the talents and the prodigal son in a story-within-a-story, rich in features germane to oral discourse such as repetition of phrases or clauses, rhetorical questions, and parables and sermons:

> He asked me, "Apart from money, what else is worth struggling for on this Earth? How can you bury your talent in the ground like the wicked, ungrateful servant?"…He summoned me again and asked me: "How can you strip me naked before the whole church congregation? How can you strip me before God, so that even babes in arms can see my nakedness? Remember the Ham of old, who saw Noah's nakedness and refused to do anything about it—what did the Lord do to him? Do you know? He was cursed to sire the children of darkness forever. If God had not later had mercy on him and sent the children of Shem to our Africa, where would we, the children of Ham, now be? Go away. Follow in Ham's footsteps. Go and wander about the world, and return home only after you have stopped casting before swine the pearls of your talents and eating rubbish from the same plate as those swine. (*Devil on the Cross* 134-35)

The sermons and the parables the novel uses are forms of rhetoric that Jesus delivered to aural audiences. Consequently, employed in the novel, the parables and the sermons underpin its ostensible oral discourse and persuade people to live moral lives and be diligent always.

On the part of Ngugi's *Wizard of the Crow*, situations in the novel are graphically depicted with more or less direct allusions to Biblical myths. An example is drawn from the memorable scene depicting the 'frozen' time marking the breakup between the Ruler and his first wife, Rachael. It is recalled that "the food provided was the same as the last supper" (*Wizard of the Crow*8). The Ruler, in anticipation that Rachael will come to him contrite and lachrymal, assumes a Godly status over her: "I am your beginning and your end" (*Wizard of the Crow* 8). These rhetoric features intensify the orality of the novel because, as Walter Ong notes, "the orality of the mindset in the Bible, even in its epistolary sections, is overwhelming. For God is thought of as speaking' to human beings, not writing to them. Thespoken word is always an event, a movement in time" (*Wizard of the Crow*31).Another allusion to the Bible is seen in the attempt by the Ruler to feed multitudes on a cakeduring his annual birthday festivities in much the same way "Jesus Christ once did with justfive loaves and two fishes" (*Wizard of the Crow*12). The comparison of the envisaged Marching to Heaven or Heavenscrape tower to the House of Babel in the Bible, therefore appears to admit rhetoric.

In an apparent ridicule of Biblical wisdom, the Ruler announces that while Mosaic snakesswallowed Pharaonic snakes in the Bible, in Aburiria, the tables are turned and it is the timefor Pharaonic snakes to swallow the snakes of the new Moses. This insularity to the reality ofpersonal action, is accentuated by the Ruler's elevation to a symbol of worship complete witha motto 'On His Mighty Service (OHMS)'.Another allusion to the Bible is the Ruler's arrival at

the All Saints Cathedral on a donkey complete with a carpet of reeds and cheering multitudes in imitation of Christ. But Ngugi does not confine himself to the Bible alone. He also allows Kamiti to see the wisdom in Hanuman'sparting words to Rama in Ramayana. In the performance of oral narratives, narrators arewont to make allusions to real life events, including the names and actions of members of theaudience. This digression from the mainstream text to other (sub)texts outside the narrative isnoticeable in the widespread use of Biblical allusions by Ngugi.

Ngugi explains the reason behind biblical allusion to *The Weekly Review* (10), "I have also drawn from the Bible in the sense that the Bible was for a long time the only literature available to Kenyan people that has been available to them in their national languages." This reflects an attempt to identify with the people whom he writes for. Many biblical stories are related in the narration of *Wizard of the Crow*. The biblical story of Tower of Babel, (Genesis 11: 1-9), how Jesus stays in the wilderness for forty days and nights, (Matthew 4: 1-11), how Jesus rode a donkey to Jerusalem, (John 12:14), the story a king who walks among his people and many others are related in *Wizard of the Crow*. Ngugi's *Devil on the Cross* and Amos Tutuola's*The Palm-wine Drinkard* are referenced to emphasize the postcolonial State of Africa. Buchi Emechita's *Joys of Motherhood*, Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*. Mariam Ba's *So Long a Letter* and many India feminist writers like Arundhati Roy are referenced in *Wizard of the Crow* to illustrate gender discourse in postcolonialism.

Furthermore, folktale is used by Ngugi as a form of rhetoric. In his childhood memoir, *Dreams in a Time of War*, acknowledges his induction to the world of fiction through the oral narrative performances by his step-mother, Wangari and half-sister Wambia, and to some extent by his

mother, Wanjiku. These stories were told in the ideal traditional setting and have had a life-long grip on the novelist.

> Every evening…children gathered around the fireside…and the performance would begin. Sometimes, particularly on weekend older Siblings would bring their friends and it would become a story telling session for all…. Whenever I think of that phase of my childhood it is in terms of the stories in Wangari's hut at night and their re-birth in her daughter's voice during the day. (17-20)

In the presentation of his Gikuyu novels, the narrator in the story is conceptualized as the traditional oral story teller narrating to an interactive audience through a didactic and persuasive voice. All his Kikuyu novels begin with the traditional Gikuyu tale telling formula, *'Ugaiitha'* (Say *iitha*), to which the audience responds, *iitha!* In the Gikuyu traditional story telling sessions, this method of storytelling is addressed to all members of the audience during the storytelling session as *Ugaiitha.* This pattern becomes rhetorical when it elicits the undivided attention of the audience and creates rapport between the storyteller and the audience. By assenting to the narrator by saying, *iitha*, the listeners become important agents in making the story effective for persuasion (Mwangi 34, Gikandi 211).

This oral formula addresses the individual reader/listener who is in direct conversation with the narrator. The reader is conceived as a listener and the formula prepares the reader for the long flight into fantasy. Immediately after the formula, the novelist however indicates that the story he is about to tell is 'a modern story as is the case in *Devil on the Cross*. Conventionally, the use of the traditional opening oral element situates Wa Thiongo's Gikuyu novels within the Gikuyu oral tradition. The novelist also represents the narrator in the *Devil on the Cross* as an accomplished

rhetorician but reluctant oral artist. The narrator has to be coaxed and persuaded by Waringa's mother and the 'pleading cries of many voices' (*Devil on the Cross*1-2) in order to tell the story. This fits well with the renowned traditional story tellers. Sometimes they had to be goaded, almost beseeched by the audience before they agree to tell a story. But beyond this, the narrator is also an 'oral poet (*'Muiniwa Gichandi'*) and a prophet of justice whose duty is to reveal what now lies concealed by darkness (*Devil on the Cross* 2).

In the Gikuyu oral tradition, the prophet is one of the five key pillars in shaping the destiny of the Kenyan society. The narrator has to be persuaded almost forced by the supernatural force and voice to narrate the story of Waringa by the fireplace, the favourite traditional site of African oral literature performance. "The moment the voice fell silent I was seized, raised up and then cast down into the ashes of the fire place. And I took the ashes and smeared my face and legs with them and I cried out: I accept, I accept …" (*Devil on the Cross* 2). The other four pillars in the community were the medicine men, elders, the prosperous and the warriors.

Apart from the narrator, a key variable in defining oral literature performance in Africa is the audience. The narrator in Wa Thiongo's Gikuyu novels is keenly aware, especially in *Devil on the Cross* of the audience he is addressing. As Kiiru observes 'the narrator's implied audience is aural… that he is not only addressing, but also inviting to play part in narrating the story (Kiiru 19).

Also, rhetoric in the form of oral traditions in African fiction normally associated with oral discourse dominates in Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Devil on the Cross*. Prominent among these features are, the first-person narrator, allusions to the Bible, oral literature, and confessions. First, the first-person narrator, a character hailing from the Ilmorog, assumes an oral persona in telling

the story as "Gīcandī Player" (*Devil on the Cross* 7). According to Vittorio Pick, *gīcandī* is an ancient "elaborately expressed" but orally transmitted "poem of enigmas….sung…by singers in a duet" (*Devil on the Crow* 149) as they play a gourd instrument—the *gīcandī*, a kind of rattle—on which beads are embedded. The narrator therefore is a rattle player, one of two people in a pre-literate society engaged in a verbal contest; to this extent he is an oral artist in a society where the mode of discourse is oral. It is in this role that the protagonist's mother asks the narrator to "tell the story of the child I loved so dearly" (*Devil on the Cross* 7).

Furthermore, the narrator describes himself as a prophet. That as a prophet his discourse is in all probability oral. This is evident in a speech that suggests phonological patterning resulting from the repetition of same sounds and syntactical patterning resulting from the repetition of words and clauses as he talks to his ostensible aural audience:

> So, come, come my friend. Come, my friend, come with me so I can take you along the paths that Wariinga walked. Come, let us retrace her footsteps, seeing with the eyes of our hearts what we saw, and hearing with the ears of our hearts what she heard, so that we shall not be hasty in passing judgment on the basis of rumour and malice. (*Devil on Cross* 215)

An earlier speech in the novel that is delivered in verse accentuates the phonological and syntactic patterning is here:

> Come,
>
> Come, my friend,
>
> Come and let us reason together.

> Come and let us reason together now.
>
> Come and let us reason together about
>
> Jacinta Wariinga before you pass judgement on our children…. (*Devil on the Cross* 8-9)

These speeches are reminiscent of Isaiah's oral message from Jehovah to the Israelites who have disobeyed Him: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (*The Holy Bible*, Isaiah 1:18). The narrator's implied audience is aural. While his role as a rattle player and a prophet suggests this aural audience, his use, once in a while, of the first-person singular pronoun for himself, the implied second-person pronoun for the audience, and the first-person plural pronoun for both him and his audience suggests an aural audience that he is not only addressing but also inviting to play a part in the narration of the story; narrative false starts not only accentuate the presence of this audience but also indicates patterns or turns in conversation through pauses suggestive of oral discourse. As these two statements show, such is the use of the exclamation mark to imply the imperative mood or the ellipses to mark significant hesitation or pause in the narrative "Wait! I am leaping ahead of the story. Wariinga's troubles did not begin at Ilmorog. Let us retrace our steps" (*Devil on the Cross* 10).

After two years of Wariinga rejection of the temptations of Satan at the Ilmorog golf course:

> Two whole years since the Devil's feast at the thieves' and robbers' den gave birth to the sorrow of jail and death. Two years…. Where shall I begin? Or should I stop involving myself in other people's lives? He who judges knows not how he himself will be judged. The antelope hates the man who sees it less than him who

> betrays its presence. But I too was present at Nakuru. I saw with my eyes and heard with my ears.
>
> How can I deny the evidence of my eyes and ears? How can I run away from the truth?
>
> It was revealed to me.
>
> It was revealed to me.
>
> Where shall I pick up the broken thread of my narrative?
>
> Listen. Two years had passed….
>
> No, I shall not proceed at the same pace as before. The seeds in the
>
> gourd are not all of the same kind, so I will change the pace and manner
>
> of my narrative. (*Devil on the Cross* 215)

As a result the story appears as a presentation to an audience that the narrator seeks to involve in a manner similar to an artist seeking to involve an audience during a performance of oral literature.

At the same time, the exploitation of phonological possibilities of language for aesthetic effect underscores too the nature of the ostensible oral discourse of the novel. To this end, as this example from Wariinga's early life shows, the sibilants and the soft consonant such as "l" that sometimes alliterate underpin the semantics of the sentence describing her perception of the smooth life with her sugar-daddy lying ahead of her, "suddenly she saw the world brighten; she saw a brilliant light illuminating a road that was broad and very beautiful" (*Devil on the Cross* 143).

Significantly, oral speech-making on the other hand gives the novel a feel of forensic rhetoric when a character discloses predominantly private experiences to a group of characters; to this extent, it becomes a confessional or declaratory mode of discourse, as evident in the two settings it is for the most part used: the *matatu* and the cave. The features the speech-making employs are direct address, biblical allusions, oral literature, interruptions, dramatic techniques, and other rhetorical devices. Used especially in the cave, the second-person pronoun suggests that the speakers have aural audiences that they not only are addressing but also seeking to involve in an oral discourse. This can be seen when Gatuīria uses direct address to tell an oral narrative to his fellow passengers in the *matatu* through questions—"How am I going to tell you?" (62) "Why do I say these things?" and "What could Nding'uri do now?"—and statements—"Let me tell you briefly the story that the old man from Bahati told me" (63). When Kihaahu wa Gatheeca uses direct address to imply a second-person pronoun addressee—whom he simultaneously seeks to involve in the address through the use of the first-person plural pronoun—the implication of an ostensibly aural audience is apparent; the formulaic overture to telling oral narratives and the repetition of similar phrases reinforce the oral quality of his address:

> I am not praising myself for the sake of it. We came here to hold a seminar in modern theft and robbery. I'll sing a song about myself that will move our foreign guests to make me overseer of other overseers, watchdog over other watchdogs, messenger above all other messengers. Say yes, and I'll tell you a story full of wonder. (109)

Musicality as well as cohesion arising from alliterative, assonant and parallelism further enhances the oral texture of the address:

> I am the cock that crows in the morning and silences all the others.

> I am the lion that roars in the forest, making elephants urinate.
>
> I am the eagle that flies in the sky, forcing hawks to seek refuge in their nests.
>
> I am the wind that stills all breezes.
>
> I am the lightning that dazzles all light.
>
> I am the moon, king of stars, at night.
>
> I am the king of kings of modern theft and robbery. (109)

The thieves who address the crowd in the cave make it clear that their audience is aural because of the use of not only the second-person pronoun but also ellipses indicating a sign of hesitation or pause and questions directed at theaudience:

> My name is Ndaaya wa Kahuria. If I seem ill at ease and awkward, it's only because I'm not used to standing up before such a large audience. But these hands you are looking at…" and he stretched out his hands to show the audience his palms and fingers,"…these hands you see are used to dipping into other people's pockets. If these long fingers were to slide into your pockets, I assure you that you wouldn't feel them. (94)
>
> Some of you may be looking at this little belly of mine, and when you see how it droops and when you hear me panting, you may be asking yourselves: How can Gītutu, son of Gataangūrū, manage one wife and two young things? Our people, I would like to ask such sceptics the following question: why have you forgotten our proverbs? (100)

Suggesting this aural audience are numerous allusions in characters' speeches in the *matatū* and the cave to biblical oral discourse in the form of parables, prophesies, or sermons that enhance the novel's ostensible rhetoric.A central plank of these is the parable of talents whose opening verse Mwireri wa Mukiraai recites in the form of a nursery rhyme, thereby enriching its oral discourse, and using soft consonants as well as sibilants that underscore the tone of his speech:

> Mwireri wa Mukiraai lowered his voice. He spoke gently, in a slow, soft voice, as if he were singing a lullaby to send their souls and minds to sleep…. '…For the Kingdom of Heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, whocalled his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one hegave five talents, to another two, and to another one.... (81)

From this point on, the parable is cited at numerous intervals and becomes a significant motif in the novel. Similarly, characters use forms of rhetoric such as narratives, proverbs, riddles, and songs in their speeches, thereby enhancing the novel's supposed rhetoric. In this regard, the mention of the hyena—a detestable, foolish or greedy character in oral narratives—in Mwaūra's speech, replete with lexical and syntactical repetition, suggests oral discourse; the fourth to the eighth sentences are phonologically significant, for the syllabic similarity in the fourth and fifth sentences and the syllabic similarity in the alternate four subsequent sentences create rhythm in similarity and variation in sentence length while mid-sentences pause in the six sentences underline the rhythm and suggest orality:

> As for me, there is no song I wouldn't have sung then. Even today there's no song I wouldn't sing. I say this world is round. If it leans that way, I lean with it. If it stumbles, I stumble with it. If it bends, I bend with it. If it stays upright, I stay

> upright with it. If it growls, I grow with it. If it is silent, I am silent too. The first law of the hyena states: Don't be choosy; eat what is available. If I find myself among members of the Akurinu sect, I become one of them; when I'm with those who have been saved, I too am saved; when I'm with Muslims, I embrace Islam; when I'm among pagans, I too become a pagan. (*Devil on the Cross* 47)

Nevertheless, *Wizard of the Crow* compared to *Devil on the Cross* and other fictional texts by Ngugi presents a more advanced rhetoric. While it opens with the traditional oral narrative formula, *Ugai i tha,* the narrator requests the audience to clean up their ears so that they can hear this (new) narrative in the spirit of those who are gone, those who are alive and future generations (xi). *Wizard of the Crow* is the story of Aburiria, an imaginary African country under the timeless dictatorship of the leader, 'the eternal ruler of the free republic of Aburiria, 'whose reign has no beginning and no end' (17, 6). The rulers main quest is to build the towers, 'Marching to Heaven', to fulfill his dreams of sharing residence with God.

At the point the novel opens, it shows 'His Excellency', the ruler as a person that is suffering from a mysterious disease and there are many theories as to its cause. The first theory was that the illness was caused by ruler's anger for being denied airtime during a visit to Washington. The second theory was that the illness was caused by a curse from 'the he-goat that cried tears like a human being when it was singled out for sacrifice. The disease could also have been his long reign or by a curse from Rachael's tears, his wife who he had consigned into eternal exile in a mansion on seven acres for daring to voice concern over his sexual exploits on school girls. The fifth theory was that the illness could have been caused by the evil spirits he kept in his temple

‘who had now turned their backs on him and withdrew their protective services’ (*Wizard of the Crow* 10).

In *Wizard of the Crow*, the rhetoric is actually preserved by the narrator who relies on rumours and many unreliabletales from others and especially from the policeman, Arigaigai Gathere. Indeed it is in the tales of Gathere, narrated in the first person that there is the juxtaposition of realism and fantasy that creates and sustains theWizard of the Crow as a modern sorcerer.The Wizard of the Crow eventually becomes the dominant character through who the rest of the events in the novel are revealed. The persona of the *Wizard of the Crow* is created after the ‘beggars’ disrupted the dinner in honour of visiting mission from the global bank. Arigaigai Gathere chases Nyawira and Kamiti, who are disguised as beggars, right up to Nyawira’s abode in the slums of Santa Lucia. To shield themselves from arrest Kamiti falls back to an old trick of the mystic of the wizard that he had learnt and practices as game when they were children (84-85).

He erects the cardboard with a bundle of rags and bones and a dead frog and lizard with the caution; WARNING! THIS PROPERTY BELONGS TO A WIZARD WHOSE POWER BRINGS DOWN CROWS AND HAWKS FROM THE SKY.TOUCH THIS HOUSE AT YOUR OWN PERIL. SGN.WIZARD OF THE CROW (77). This trick works on ArigagaiGathere. He takes to his heels believing that the two beggars he followed were indeed ‘djinns of the prairie sent by the Wizard of the Crow to trick him to his death’. He flees from the scene but on reflection he views the encounter as a sign that pointed to ‘he who could solve his problems’ and sure enough h the magical Wizard of the Crow is born (77). During his

subsequent visits, he becomes the first client of The Wizard of the Crow and the wizard treats him of his obsession with his enemies.

In the mirror of the Wizard, he is able to see his enemies and through a scratch with a knife on the mirror, the enemy is vanquished as indicated in a road accident.And now that his enemies were no more, he waited to see whether his life would take a different course.This too comes to pass when he is appointed a security agent in the office of the ruler (113- 119, 128) for his ability as the only policeman who could chase the djinns in the prairies who are apparently responsible for distributing seditious leaflets against the projects of the ruler. From then on, all types of people start trooping to the abode of the Wizard of the Crow to have their problems solved.Kamiti's make-beliefantics and the fantastic narrative vision of ArigagaiGathere have turned him into a respected wizard, 'Sir Wizard' and Nyawira's hovel has become the 'Shrine of the Wizard of the Crow' (132, 133).

The ailment that afflicts Titus Tajirika becomes the first major test of the divination powers of Kamiti as the Wizard of the Crow. Once Tajirika is appointed the chairman of 'the marching to heaven project' he amasses bribes from would be contractors and at the end of the first day he contracts a mysterious disease after gazing at himself in the mirror.He keeps on scratching his face and can only bark *'If'*, and *'if only'* (172). The Wizard of the Crow diagnoses him as being possessed by 'the Daemons of whiteness' and suffering from a severe case of 'white-ache' (180-181).He proceeds to treat him by inoculating him with a dose of whiteness. He must loose his African identity, become a willing slave, then as white, occupy the lowest ranks either as a punk, prostitute or at best he and his wife assume the identity of an old ex-colonial couple. This

position shocks Tajirika and his wife Vinjinia out of the clutch of the disease of whiteness (Waita 15).

When the leader of Aburiria is struck by a strange illness during the American trip, Constable ArigagaiGathere insists that only the Wizard of the Crow could divine the illness of the ruler. Right from the time it struck, he knew it was no ordinary illness. Only the Wizard of the Crow who could wrestle it to the ground. Using the story of 'The Elephant and the Thorn', Gathereurges the minister for foreign affairs, Marcus Machokali, not ignore his advice to bring the Wizard of the Crow to New York the way the elephant ignored the tiny thorn in his feet and eventually died of the infection caused by the thorn (473-477).When finally the Wizard of the Crow arrives, he diagnoses the ruler's disease as the affliction that points towards the end of his rule. His rule can no loner serve the interest of the global market and his bloated pregnancy must lead to the birth (still birth?) of 'BABY D. Baby Democracy' (*Wizard of the Crow* 698).

The Kikuyu title of the novel, *MurogiwaKagogo,* literarily translates to mean the 'one with the ability to poison the crow'. In traditional Kikuyu setting, this metaphor would refer to person who has executed an extra ordinary feat comparable to poisoning the crow which is resistant to all threats to its life and apparently lives forever. But author translates *murogi* as 'the wizard' which is more consistent with the narrative strategy of this tale which emerges as a game, a play with words and situations to create a magically realistic characters.

In *Wizard of the Crow,* Ngugi wa Thiong'o again teaches an important lesson through the use of a symbolic tale that contributes to the overall meaning of the novel. The tale of the ogre and the pregnant woman Nyawira tells to her boss's children captures in parable the pains and torture

Aburirians were subjected to during the reign of the dictator. When the children ask for tales Nyawira yields and tell them a story about a blacksmith, an ogre, and a pregnant woman. The tale goes thus

> A certain blacksmith went to an iron smithery far away. In his absence, his pregnant woman gave birth to two children…the ogre was really a bad nurse. After cooking food, he would dish it out and put the plate in front of the woman, but as soon as she stretched her hand to pick it up the ogre would quickly take the dish away and say: "I see you don't want to eat my food, but it is all right, I will eat it for you." The ogre did the same with water: "You don't want to drink it? I will drink it for you."…one day the woman saw a weaverbird in the yard. In exchange for castor oil seeds, the bird agreed to take a message to the blacksmith far away…the bird flew and flew until it finally reached the smelting yard and landed on branches of a tree. It was very tired, but it sang:
>
> *Blacksmith smelting iron.*
>
> *Make haste, make haste*
>
> *Your wife has given birth*
>
> *With the ogre as the midwife*
>
> *With the orgre as the nurse*
>
> *Make haste, make haste*
>
> *Before it is too late*

The weaverbird jumped from tree to tree, trying to attract the smith's attention. Now, the blacksmith was with others, and at first they simply chased it away as a nuisance, but seeing the

bird's persistence they took the time to listen to it more carefully. It was then that the blacksmith remembered that he had left a pregnant wife behind and realized that the bird was telling him of the danger facing his wife and children. He gathered his spear and shield and ran as fast as his leg could carry him, soon his reached home, where he joined his wife and children and with their combined strength they were able to defeat the evil creature. (*Wizard of the Crow* 153-156)

The oral roots of contemporary African literature can never be overemphasised in as much as Europeans believe they taught Africans everything they know and this provides a good justification for prose writers to include elements of African oral past into their narratives to show appreciation and justification for the age long traditions of the continent as our traditions continues to identify and define who we really are.

Hyperbole and Myth as Rhetoric in *Devil on the Cross*

In so many ways hyperbole and myth are also integral elements in African rhetoric and Ngugi did not fail to utilize these oral genres properly for persuasion. The elements are strategically exploited in the novels to interrogate the postcolonial and globalization dimensions in Africa. In *Devil on the Cross*, the novelist employs hyperbole and the device of oral testimonies to accentuate the sterile capitalistic ventures in postcolonial Africa. The story of Jacinta Waringa, 'the heroine of toil,' unfolds in the structure of a journey motif that is common in the folktale tradition. In the first journey Waringa and four other characters are fated together in Mwaura's taxi christened *Matata Matatu Matamu* bound for Ilmorog. As they travel to Ilmorog they reveal themselves to the reader through the use of testimonies and flashback. Through this technique, it is glaring that the characters past and present coincide.

By co-incidence they are also bound together by an invitation to the 'devil's feast' in which there will be a competition to select the seven cleverest thieves and robbers from Ilmorog. The testimony technique is further exploited in the den of thieves where the competition to determine the greatest thief is taking place. The testimonies of the thieves are structured as oral performances steeped in Kikuyu oral traditions as the thieves relieve their capitalistic achievements and make proposals for even greater exploitation and dispossession of the people. As Mwangi observes the novelist allows the characters to use oral literature to emphasize the 'extent to which they will go to justify their greed and abuse of women' (Mwangi 39).

The novelist employs hyperbolic satire and invites the reader and the audience within the competition site to believe and interpret the truth and fantasy of the testimonies. The first testimony in the competition is that of NdayaWa Kahuria whose name can be translated to 'Long Son of Grabber', grabber being in the diminutive. His name befits his physical description by the author and his profile as a chicken thief and a pick pocket. But this is 'a competition of thieves and robbers who have attained international status' (93), Ndaya Wa Kahuria is thrown off the podium and evicted from the feast. His participation nevertheless forces the organizers to re-think the regulations governing who can participate and they come with seven rules. The number seven echoes seven rules or laws of the 'Hyena Kingdom', a modern folkloric representation of the greed, corruption and ineptness of the modern middle class in Kenya. The laws are folkloric and may vary from one person to another depending on the context and occasion but their referential base is the motif of the character of the greedy hyena common in Kikuyu folktales.

The second competitor, Gitutu Wa Gitanguru, perhaps has the longest English name on earth; "RottenboroughGroundfleshShitland Narrow Istmus Joint Stocks Brown."(97). Gitutu in Gikuyu

language alludes to the big rodent which defecates on the same place creating heaps of waste next to its lair. Gitanguru is derived from the word Ndanguru describing a proud person with a 'don't care attitude'. He has become wealthy because he learnt that to be cunning is more rewarding than hard work. Armed with this 'wisdom' and letters of recommendation from his father he amasses wealth by buying land from white settlers departing from the countryafter it gains independence. He sub-divides the land into small plots and sells it to the landless and makes huge profits. He now has a vision of the time when the rich would buy all land in the country, pack it and start selling it in tins and pots to the peasants.

The third competitor, KihahuWaGatheeca also has an English Name; Gabriel, Bloodwell Stuart Jones. He learns early not to behave like the foolish girl in the Kikuyu folktale who picks pears with her eyes closed. In the folktale, a group of girls climb the pear tree and agree to pick the fruits with their eyes closed. All the girls close theireyes except one. When they descend she finds that all the fruits she picked were not ripe. She climbs up the trees again to pick the ripe fruits as the other girls go home. Meanwhile, the owner of the tree who is an ogre returns and captures the girl.

Kihahu Wa Gathecha decides to 'open his eyes' by 'throwing away the pieces of chalk' and opening a private school, He engages an old European lady as the Principal. African names and languages are banned in this school and surely, children of the rich flock into the school assuring WaGathechaearns his millions. He uses his wealth to establish housing development companies and to climb the political ladder. He proposes that in order for the rich to make more money, they should develop houses the size of a bird's nest and rent them out on the basis of 'one man one nest' (117). Nditika wa Nguunji who gives the fourth testimony is a smuggler and a black

marketer. He is guided by a simple philosophy; grab, extort and confiscate. If you find anything belonging to the masses, take it because 'if you do not look after yourself, who will?' (180). However his wealth alienates him from himself because it does not substantially differentiate him from the poor. Like the poor people he has one Mouth, one stomach and one penis. He proposes that an organs' spare part factory where the rich can replace their ageing organs should be established. This fantasy almost becomes a reality with the establishment of such a factory in the *Wizard of the Crow,* where the character, Tajirika, is able to purchase and fit white body parts in an attempt to find a lasting cure of his 'white ace'affliction (*Wizard of the Crow* 741-742).

Summary of Chapter Four and Five

These chapter has clearly examined rhetoric in the recent fiction of Ngugi wa Thiong'o; *Devil on the Cross* and *Wizard of the Crow*. The forms of rhetoric (proverb, folktale, myth, speeches, rhetorical question, repetition etc) analyzed here are important signposts of Ngugi's portrayal of Kenya in postcolonial era. This chapter also discovered that in decolonising the culture of Africa from Eurocentric philosophy, rhetoric should be effectively deployed by Africans in communication and written discourse; showcase to the world African cultural heritage. This could be easily done by going back and reclaiming the African past as suggested by Fanon through rhetoric. Even with his native Gikuyu, Ngugi is able to drive home his anti-colonial ideology more effectively than he did while writing in English. This is a pointer that his proposition for African writers to reconnect themselves to their roots by using rhetoric in their texts or writing in their native languages is valid. However, writing African literature in African indigenous languages would be appropriate for only the African writers who have achieved renown and have some canonical literary texts to their names in world literature.

CHAPTER SIX

Summary and Conclusion

This scholarly research through the premise of postcolonial theory examined the use and importance of rhetoric in Ngugi wa Thiong'o's novels in English; *A Grain of Wheat, Petals of Blood* and Gikuyu novels; *Devil on the Cross* and *Wizard of the Crow*. It studied the interface between rhetoric and oratory. This interconnection has been so unique that rhetoric and rhetorical figures are used as means of persuasion, imparting of moral lessons, communication and cultural identity.

Canice Nwosu remarks that despite major peculiarities seen in the study of the oral traditions of many continents, "Africa is known for rich cultural heritage" (1). This rich cultural heriatege manifests in the persuasive oral elements in Africa. The forms of rhetoric and rhetorical figures that exist in Africa are proverbs, myths, songs, tales, odes, legends, riddles, oral narratives, etc, while rhetorical figures in Africa are, repetition, rhetorical questions, hyperbole, allusion, parallelism, etc. Within the framework of figurative language, these rhetorical devices are deployed as rhetoric by African novelists like Ngugi wa Thiong'o in the novels studied so far. This study drew attention to the rich cultural matrix from which these speech patterns have arisen, tracing this black rhetoric from western Africa in the form of classical oratory to the western world's contribution of traditional classical rhetoric through to the re-discovery of rhetorical tropes in postcolonial African fiction in East Africa (Gikuyu).

The forms of rhetoric mentioned ealier therefore, add local flavour and realism to the story in keeping with the postcolonial celebration of cultural, social, regional, and national differences. As a renowned postcolonial writer and theorist, Ngugi is a reputed advocate for indigenous

languages and he has lived up to this challenge by writing in Gikuyu. By adapting English and remaking it to suit his own aesthetic specifications (through the infusion of persuasive oral elements), Ngugi performs cross-cultural interaction, which echoes the hybrid identity that characterizes the postcolonial reality.

Gikuyu's traditional culture also provides subject and background for a large body of the fiction produced in the modern period and appears in snatches in even novels like Ngugi four novels so far studied, concerned with contemporary decolonization process in Kenya. Many of these depictions of customary blessings, proverbs, stories, rituals, ceremonies, etc are intended primarily to convey the sense of the lives of the indigenous people, thus providing characterization and background for the protagonists. Many other examples, however, are used contrastively to illuminate the differences between African ways and those of the colonizers. This historical aspect of rhetoric not only grounds it as something that is basic to human speech patterns, but also shows that this tradition is much older than the interpretations it has received from people across the globe.

The critical examination and illustration of Ngugi's exploitation of rhetoric in his fiction were taken from his postcolonial novels *A Grain of Wheat*, *Petals of Blood*, *Devil on the Cross* and *Wizard of the Crow*. The rhetoric and rhetorical devices found in these novels are succinctly used to achieve the following tenets of postcolonialism: cultural hybridity, binary opposites, creation of binary opposite as understood in Edward Said's *Orientalism,* use of language to destabilize the dominance of the West and to challenge Spivak's position which states that the colonized can only write meaningfully in colonizers' language among others. Writing in his native Gikuyu, gives Ngugi a better chance of natural thought and creativity and this justifies the position of

anti-colonial writers in Africa on cultural hybridity. The best thought of a writer is proved only to be well flavoured in his native language. It also disproves Spivak's notion that the colonized can only write with colonizer's language.

In Ngugi's English novels; *A Grain of Wheat* and *Petals of Blood*, the forms of rhetoric that have been analyzed so far ranging from proverbs, songs, legends, folktales, myths, symbolism and allusion in *A Grain of Wheat* and *Petals of Blood* have something to do with Ngugi's concerns in his writings. These preoccupations include corruption in post-independence Kenya, the effects of colonialism on Africans, disillusionment with post-independence governments in Africa and the rest. But in addition to the reinforcement of these themes in the novels, the proverbs, songs, legends and myths also enable Ngugi to achieve his argumentation of decolonization. *Devil on the Cross* and *Wizard of the Crow* depart considerably from the realistic mode that can be found in Ngugi's English novels. The novel adopts the hyperbole of a folktale and relies heavily on Gikuyu oral literary strategies to unfold the story of the postcolonial nation. They exploit the devices of repetition, allusions, speech making and integrates the use of various oral literature genres including proverbs, songs and folktales unlike the forms of rhetoric found in *A Grain of Wheat* and *Petals of Blood*.

Traditional songs, for example, enliven the texts of most of these works. Ngugi's four novels offer songs sometimes intended primarily to reveal Kikuyu legend and myth andto inform readers about his community's traditional culture—the praise of Kikuyu and Mumbi in *A Grain of Wheat* (202) or the pleas for the gift of oratory in *Devil on the Cross* (9), for example. Some songs, like those celebrating the Freedom Fighters in *A Grain of Wheat* (26), those commenting on neocolonial political corruption in *Petals of Bloods* and *Devil on the Cross*, and those vowing

to overthrow neoimperialism (*Devil on the Cross* 47), reflect recent and current political realities. Ngugi's traditional songs also celebrate circumcision (*Petals of Blood* 207), acknowledge the frequent difficulty of distinguishinggood from evil (*Devil on the Cross* 25), and lyrically express love (*Devil* 241).

Most of these verses are presented in English, but Ngugi does not translate the Congolese popular tune played at the Devil's feast in *Devil on the Cross* (93). The original educational and social function of the traditional song, then, not just itscontent, is presented to suggest subtly the changes wrought by colonialism. Frequently, that change is demonstrated by the inclusion of Christian hymns or by references to Western popular music. In *Devil on the Cross,* Ngugi satirizes missionary hypocrisy with a chant, "The Beatitudes of the Rich and then Imperialists" (209).

Based upon a traditional Kikuyu poetic form, the song of the gikaandi player, Ngugi's *Devil on the Cross* combines mythic and realistic elements throughout. The Devil appears one Sunday on a golf course in the town of Ilmorog in Iciciri District to tempt Ngugi's heroine, Jacinta Wariinga. By the end of Jacinta's story, with her striking Gikuyu dress, her traditional songs, and, most importantly, her killing of the Rich Old Man from Ngorika, representative of neocolonial vice, Jacinta assumes the characteristics of a tribal saviour. Ngugi uses the tradition of myth, legend, and storytelling to recall the need forheroism to combat dangers to the people.

As condensations of wisdom, aphorisms can be seen as "stories" in small. They reflect the didacticism of much orature and indicate the accepted teaching-learning relationship among members of the community. The selected novels for this study also present numerous examples

of lengthier tales that, through their content and the dynamics of their performance, demonstrate this educative interaction and set the platform for persuasion. Emphasized by the novelist is the emotional and psychological benefits of instructing and being instructed or persuading and being persuaded. Both the teller and the listener feel closer to each other and to the community as a whole through the experience. The act of retelling the traditional myths and listening to them, instructing others in legendary knowledge or clan wisdom andpartaking of this instruction, is shown to be itself a ritual of unity.

Significantly, in *Wizard of the Crow* it appears that the accidental manner, in which Kamiti grows into the all-powerful Wizard of the Crow, raises the question of Africa's easy susceptibility to deceit. This unique imagination is in keeping with orality, which predisposes people to accept the unexpected. Oral features allow for indirect reference to actual people, events and places. The aesthetic value in this oblique style cannot be gainsaid. And through the beauty of the rhetoric devices, didactic messages are passed on to the audience without unsettling tender sensibilities. In blending formal English with Gikuyu orality, Ngugi achieves local flavour and realism to the story in keeping with his post-colonial appreciation of cultural, social, regional, and national differences. Ngugi's orality in the novel appears to retain aspects of his indigenous language, a strategy that helps to reclaim the beauty of his past.

It is evident from the argument in the study that an effort has been made to discuss some forms of the oral tradition that Ngugi uses in his writings. Other aspects of the verbal arts such as oaths, animal tales and the rest have not been examined in the study. However, a few elements of the oral tradition which have been selected from the four novels and discussed in this study point out to one thing Ngugi scores good aesthetic points by resorting to their use.

From the foregoing, the first major function of the aspects of rhetoric in Ngugi's writings is to provide him with an avenue to be able to express the themes of his writings especially the ones on persuasive mode. Such themes are better expressed through the use of allusions, proverbs, oral tales, songs, and so forth as demonstrated in the exegesis of this study. The second role that the forms of rhetoric or rhetorical devices play in Ngugi's writings is to provide a context for him to express his commitment to certain objectives. Ngugi is not just a staunch supporter of the promotion of African culture and its values but he also tries to demonstrate to his readers the way such values and forms of culture can be promoted. He does this by incorporating them into his themes. Also, Ngugi is able to rhetorically portray to his readers what goes on in the Kenyan society instead of telling them such things through the use of mere elements of orality. Finally, Ngugi is able to carve an identity that is distinctive to him through the use of oral art form, rhetoric, a genre that is neither new to the world nor African in origin.

This study has therefore examined and analysed the use of rhetoric in African fiction with an apt focus on the English and Gikuyu novels of Ngugi wa Thiong'o, a Kenyan postcolonial novelist. Generally, the discussion and analysis of rhetoric in African fiction; Ngugi's selected novels demonstrates a collapse of the dichotomy between oral and written discourse. Rhetoric, therefore, plays a central role in the literary creation and conception of the Gikuyu novels. The oral strategies have enabled the novelist to transcend the limitations of the traditional realistic novel and create works that provide deep insights to the African postcolonial status in era of modernization. Wa Thiong'o's greatness as a renowned writer in Africa has been confirmed by the last two novels (*Devil on the Cross* and *Wizard of the Crow*) written in Gikuyu away from his English novels *A Grain of Wheat* and *Petals of Blood*. The literary achievement has been possible due to the author's ability to appropriate traditional Kikuyu rhetoric and the extensive

use of Gikuyu oral literature in the literary discourse. As it has been stated earlier that this study can revamp future scholarship in this area, this research firmly anticipates futher studies like the rhetoric of African indigenous language in African literature or the rhetoric of African feminism in Ngugi's novels.

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