

# Character Names and Types in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s *Devil on the Cross* and *Wizard of the Crow*\*

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Character names and character types are recognizable devices that mediate themes in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s fiction. These character names and character types encapsulate the social reality that the author writes about and comprise a fresh way of understanding his novels. From this encapsulation, authorial partisanship and worldview are decipherable. A cursory review of Ngũgĩ’s fiction reveals that these two aspects are sporadically found in his earlier fiction—*The River Between*, *Weep Not, Child* and *A Grain of Wheat*—but they become more evident features of Ngũgĩ’s style in *Petals of Blood* and are used to maximum effect in *Devil on the Cross*, *Matigari*, and more recently in *Wizard of the Crow*. For purposes of brevity, however, the discussion in this paper focuses on *Devil on the Cross* and *Wizard of the Crow*.<sup>1</sup> The section on *Devil on the Cross* appeared originally in *Ufahamu* and only minor changes have been made in the analysis of the text in that section.<sup>2</sup> The section on *Wizard of the Crow* is entirely new.

The system of character naming in Ngũgĩ’s later fiction has received mixed reactions from the few critics who have been able to identify the author’s deliberate choice of character names. Basing his analysis on an article by Cyril Treistar,<sup>3</sup> Gordon Killam, though unaware of the correct meaning of some of the names he cites, has touched on the realizable semantic potential in the names, concluding that the names help to add depth of meaning to *Petals of Blood*.<sup>4</sup> Lewis Nkosi dismissed as unlikely such names as “Sir Swallow Bloodall” that Ngũgĩ gives the leading capitalist in *Petals of Blood*,<sup>5</sup> while Peter Nazareth makes the observation that “[t]he novelist must trust his tale and his reader. He need not hammer home his message, as when he gives characters names like ‘Cambridge Fraudsham,’ ‘Chui’ (Leopard), and ‘Sir Swallow Bloodall.’”<sup>6</sup> It is apparent that Nkosi and Nazareth choose the most obvious character names and dismiss them offhand without pointing out why they are unlikely or even explaining the

qualities the names evoke, which would qualify the names as negative means that Ngũgĩ uses to hammer home the message, which, in any case, Nkosi and Nazareth do not state.

The criticism on the nature of the character names cited so far regards *Petals of Blood*. To Nkosi and Nazareth, the character names in *Devil on the Cross* would appear even more unlikely. However, this paper demonstrates that, given the social reality Ngũgĩ is depicting, the names he gives to his characters become foregrounded features that draw attention to the specific social traits that he describes. They aid him in the description and analysis of that reality. As such, they are interpretive signposts that allow the reader to see the characters as representative figures, as part of a larger framework. They act as the basis for the creation of character types. By acting as representative figures, the character names in *Devil on the Cross* become part of a symbolic structure if we rely on the basic definition of *symbol* as something that stands for something else. Geoffrey Leech and Michael Short define *symbol* as an expression of the universal through the particular, as a means of specifying detail, as something standing beyond itself. Leech and Short see the message in literature as a code, a symbolic structure.<sup>7</sup>

Rene Wellek and Austin Warren write in *Theory of Literature* that symbolism in a work of art is something calculated and willed, “a deliberate mental translation of concepts into illustrative pedagogic terms.”<sup>8</sup> In *Devil on the Cross* and *Wizard of the Crow*, where a character belongs in the class structure, what he or she will do and how he or she views the world is already suggested by the name he or she is given, so that in the course of the action, the character only reveals various aspects of his or her already suggested nature. The character names, therefore, become a deliberate translation of concepts into illustrative terms. They are a symbolic means of concretizing social forces, even telling us something of the writer’s attitude towards a particular character and the class he or she represents. In *Wizard of the Crow*, which is much more preoccupied with state repression, the names of the major characters illuminate the characters’ positions in the repressive state. A symbol, in a broad sense, can be taken as anything that signifies something else. X. J. Kennedy notes that in a symbol “the infinite is made to blend with the finite, to stand visible and as it were, attainable there.”<sup>9</sup> He defines an object,

an act, or a character as symbolic if “when we finish the story, we realise that it was that item . . . which led us to the author’s theme, the essential meaning.”<sup>10</sup> The *Oxford Dictionary* describes the symbol as something that stands for, represents or denotes something else, not by exact resemblance but by vague suggestion or by some accidental or conventional relation, especially “a material object representing or taken to represent something immaterial or abstract, as a being, idea, quality or condition, a representative or typical figure.”<sup>11</sup> There is some overlap between the symbol and the representative or typical figure, and a reading of both through the framework of allegory would also be a fruitful endeavor that is beyond the scope of this paper.

Characters in a literary work are devices that embody theme and meaning. In *Devil on the Cross* and *Wizard of the Crow*, understanding the way characters are symbolically named is a way of getting to the themes, to the meaning of the work under consideration. The symbolic names suggest something larger than the persons to whom they refer. They concretize or blend the infinite and the finite by suggestion. This suggestion is not vague but is deliberate and willed. Whereas the normal character name would appear to particularize a character, Ngũgĩ’s deliberate choice of semantically potent and socially loaded names helps to personify the social realities he portrays, helping to make the character a “this one,” an individual, and at the same time a type. This is the essence of typicality.

The character type has variously been described as the finite expression of the infinite, the derivative of social forces,<sup>12</sup> “the specific figure which concentrates and intensifies a much more general reality,”<sup>13</sup> a character who, according to Friederich Engels, “is simultaneously a type and a particular individual, a ‘this one.’”<sup>14</sup> The typical character represents the most important social, moral, and spiritual contradictions of his time. The individual is at the same time a type, given typical conditions that might have a certain individuality. Yet, the type is not the average man or the normal man, nor is he identifiable with a particular person. Georg Lukacs argues that “the more accurately a writer grasps his epoch and its major issues, the less he will create on the level of the common place.”<sup>15</sup> Robert Scholes and Robert Kellog assert that whenever we consider a character as a type, we are moving

away from considering him as an individual towards considering him as part of some larger framework.<sup>16</sup>

The type is the finite expression of the infinite, the specific figure from which we can extrapolate, the figure that concretizes and intensifies a much more general reality. This concretization in Ngũgĩ's later novels is enhanced through the characters' names, which allows us to particularize a character and, at the same time, see him as part of some larger framework.

Marx and Engels assert that in a society with class contradictions, art is influenced by the class antagonisms and the politics and ideologies of a particular class.<sup>17</sup> In such a society, characters in a work of art typify their particular class, a paraphrase of the materialist viewpoint that social being determines social consciousness, that one's material existence determines one's outlook. Hence, no character would be complete unless the influence social and human relations have on him is revealed. The Marxian worldview and the materialist viewpoint just cited exert a telling influence on Ngũgĩ's social outlook and more so in his characterization. On the basis of this, we can arrive at a classificatory typology of *Devil on the Cross* and *Wizard of the Crow*.

The classes in *Devil on the Cross* are historically traceable to the onset of imperialism both in its colonial and neocolonial phases. In the colonial phase, imperialism is abetted by a *pro-colonial* type, which sees loyalty to colonialism as a vehicle to satiate individualism. Independence only Africanizes the former colonial institutions that remain subservient to imperialist interests. This results in a *comprador bourgeoisie*, which is shown as a direct offshoot of the pro-colonial type. The comprador bourgeoisie becomes the dominant class and sets up reactionary regimes that minister to imperialist interests in the neocolonial phase. They enlist the help of the police, the clergy, and the conservative elite, which helps to prop up the reactionary regime, as is typical of the *reactionary* type. A national bourgeoisie fails to take root, being stifled by the comprador bourgeoisie with the help of the reactionary forces. The intellectual reveals only an academic commitment to change, being held back by class loyalties, hence the *uncommitted intellectual*. At the end of the spectrum is the *revolutionary* type comprising the workers and the peasants who oppose imperialism both in its colonial and neocolonial phases in *Devil on the Cross*. The revolutionary type pursues the people's legitimate

claim to the fruits of their labor and recognizes the need to free the country from exploitation whether foreign or local. It seeks to establish a social system that caters to the welfare of all, which entails the abolition of the class society and the establishment of a socialist state, thus rooting out imperialism. Because of its publication long after the fall of the Soviet Union and the dilution of the currency of grand narratives celebrating the dictatorship of the proletariat, *Wizard of the Crow* foregrounds the rise of a revolutionary group that destabilizes state power, but this transformative group is a cross-section of the society. The names given to the various types reflect the characters' class loyalties and political loyalties, thereby becoming symbolic.

In *Devil on the Cross*, Mūturi provides a key to the conception of the characters in the novel. For him, Heaven and Hell are illustrated in the very nature of class society. Mūturi sees the two as different, our lives being “a battlefield on which is fought a continuous war between the forces that are pledged to confirm our humanity and those determined to dismantle it.”<sup>18</sup> The characters in the novel are grouped into the creators (the workers) and the destroyers (the bourgeoisie) of life. Each man is seen as either a part of the forces for creating, building, and making humanity grow and blossom; or as part of the forces of destruction, of dismantling.<sup>19</sup> The various character names help to characterize these forces.

In their relations of production and reproduction, the two broad forces referred to above give birth to the four character types, namely the pro-colonial type, the reactionary, the uncommitted intellectual, and the revolutionary type. Authorial partisanship is identifiable with the revolutionary type, which seeks to make humanity grow and blossom.

As stated earlier, the isolating quality that delineates the procolonial type is a sympathy with imperialism, whether in its colonial or neocolonial phases. A cursory glance at the names of the pro-colonial type characters reveals that the bearers are naturally predisposed to parasitism, selfishness, greed, sadistic violence and theft, and points to the fact that the characters would be misfits in a social setting. These qualities also reveal that the characters are naturally indisposed to collectivism, their individual desire for selfish possession, and their greed taking the better of them. This explains why the characters supported

colonialism with its bourgeois individualism, a core attribute of these characters. It is to be noted that as a carry-over from *Petals of Blood*, capitalism in *Devil on the Cross* is shown as a jungle where only those with carnivorous tendencies survive. Colonialism, and later on, neocolonialism, helps to satiate these characters' narrow and greedy appetites. A look at the characters of Kīhaahu, Nditika, Kīmendeeri, Mwaūra, and Gītutu helps in illustrating these qualities.

A man who refuses to take sides with the liberation struggle, Kīhaahu argues for active support of neocolonialism, even deriding the efforts of the symbols of the liberation struggle like Kimathi. In him is revealed the individualism of the local bourgeoisie. He makes his fortune largely from breaking ranks and exploiting members of his own class. His activities are largely predatory and carnivorous, qualities that are hinted at by his names *Kīhaahu* ("the one who scares") and *Gatheeca* ("the one who pierces"). *Kīhaahu* might be derived from the Gīkūyū name for the kingstock, a connection that Ngūgĩ emphasizes by comparing Kīhaahu's mouth to the beak of the kingstock,<sup>20</sup> a comparison that emphasizes Kīhaahu's individualism, since as a Gīkūyū proverb states, a bird that has a beak does not pick up grains for another.

With all his cunning and wealth, Kīhaahu imagines that the height of his achievement would be in becoming a conveyor belt for international finance capital. In the novel, we are shown that without exemption, those who fought colonialism continue to fight off neocolonialism. Kīhaahu's endorsement of neocolonialism is shown to underline his then implicit pro-colonial sympathies.

Whereas Kīhaahu's pro-colonial sympathies may be a matter of conjecture, Nditika wa Ngūn̄ji's are more explicit. A homeguard during the emergency, Nditika promises the freedom fighters that he and his type would continue lording it over them even after freedom was acquired. His homeguard position enables him to acquire wealth and other people's lands. The name *Nditika* refers to one who carries heavy burdens. *Ngūn̄ji* refers to one who folds. Combined, the two names point to an essentially indelicate and indiscriminate character who carries anything and everything, one who selfishly keeps to himself anything he acquires. Nditika is a character who easily recalls Plyushkin in Nikolai Gogol's *Dead Souls*, a character who acquires little bits and ends for their own sake. Nditika reveals this grasping, indiscriminating nature in his

business concerns and his implied eating habits. In the novel, we are shown that physical ugliness is the defining characteristic of the procolonial type due to material well-being. Nditika's immense size emphasizes his acquisitive nature and implies a tasteless, avid eater. His business concerns are indiscriminately spread out over hoarding, smuggling, poaching, and export and import. Seen as a representative of his class, Nditika's longing for immortality is the expression of the longing to eternally hold onto what this class has acquired. Neocolonial patronage makes this possible.

A District Officer (D.O.) during the colonial times, Kīmendeeri was an active and brutal enforcer of colonial laws. This accounts for the violence suggested in both the sound of his name and its meaning. *Kīmendeeri* refers to "the one who smashes or grinds." The author provides the key to Kīmendeeri's character when he tells us that Kīmendeeri was given the name during the emergency "because of the way he used to grind workers and peasants to death."<sup>21</sup> As a D.O., we are told "he used to make men and women lie flat on the ground in a row, and then he would drive his land rover over their bodies."<sup>22</sup>

In the neocolonial set-up Kīmendeeri changes from the physical "smasher" or "grinder" of the emergency days to a psychological grinder. To satisfy his foreign masters and to help in the continued exploitation of the workers and peasants, he proposes that his class and its overlords should use the law, religion, education, and the mass media to stifle the workers' consciousness and to effectively kill the possibility of their rising against the exploitative order. By working on the psychology of the exploited and showing them that their exploitation is God-ordained and unchangeable, Kīmendeeri effectively grinds or smashes the workers' consciousness and dehumanizes them, thereby living up to his type and the meaning of his name.

Perhaps the character who best sums up the nature of the bourgeoisie in the neocolonial set-up is Gītutu wa Gataanguru. *Gītutu* refers to "a big jigger" while *Gataanguru* is a diminutive term that refers to a belly infested with tapeworms, which produces a bloated effect. His physical form appears like the graphic illustration of the jigger:

Gītutu had a belly that protruded so far that it would have touched the ground had it not been supported by braces, that

held up his trousers. It seemed as if his belly had absorbed all his limbs and all the other organs of his body. Gītutu had no neck, at least his neck was not visible. His arms and legs were short stumps. His head had shrunk to the size of a fist.<sup>23</sup>

Further, Gītutu reveals that his hands have almost disappeared because they have no work to do and his belly is becoming larger and larger because it is constantly overworked. This captures his essential traits—a jigger, a parasite, one who does not produce but lives off the best that others produce—as the description of his eating habits shows.<sup>24</sup> Characteristic of his class, he eats more than he needs and most of what he eats is stored in his body as waste. Five of his eight Christian names—Rottenborough Groundflesh Shitland Narrow Isthmus—are therefore suggestive. His size is a result of exploiting the people. In a figurative sense, therefore, Gītutu feeds on the people’s ground flesh, an aspect that is captured in the ground flesh of his name. This explains Gītutu’s plans of selling land in pots and tins to the poor, plans that are meant to take advantage of the people’s quest for land. Like his type, he still needs foreign overlords in depriving his people of one of their basic necessities.

As an aspiring bourgeois, Mwaūra reveals the dehumanizing philosophy that is required to make it in his class. His name means “the one who steals,” and it implies one who would steal somebody’s clothes off one’s back. There is something casual and indifferent about Mwaūra’s approach to human life, which emphasizes the *Mwaūra* aspect. He kills, or has people who stand in his way to riches killed, quite casually, as if he were actually taking back a life that belonged to him. The examples from the emergency, when Mwaūra was a homeguard, suffice to illustrate this.

It is significant that Mwaūra is the one who arranges for Mwīreri’s death for a fee. As a member of the Devil’s Angels, he is responsible for the murder of those who refuse to be robbed. He represents the pro-colonial type, sellouts during the colonial period, but people who in the neocolonial stage worship at the shrine of money, ready to commit any crime, “in loyal obedience to the molten god of money.”<sup>25</sup> These characters are shown as people who are devoid of any positive and humanistic outlook on life. Mwaūra’s principles (or lack of them) are representative.

Characteristically, Mwaūra tells us: “As for me, *I would sell my own mother* [emphasis mine] if I thought she would fetch a good price.”<sup>26</sup> Further, he says: “Business is my temple and money is my God. I don’t examine things too minutely. . . . Show me where money is and I’ll take you there.”<sup>27</sup> This desire to make money excludes any moral scruples, and it is the defining characteristic of the bourgeoisie in this novel. It is due to this that they sold their motherland to colonialism, and it is for this same reason that they continue to sell it into neocolonialism. All this is meant to ensure individual gain, the human and social costs notwithstanding. These characters are naturally indisposed to collectivism, their individual desire for selfish possession and their greed taking the better of them. This explains why the characters supported colonialism with its bourgeois individualism, the very nature the characters exhibit. Colonialism, and later neocolonialism, help to satiate the characters’ narrow, selfish, and greedy appetites, unlike the workers, whose individual appetites are absorbed in the collective, finding inspiration in communal ideals. Rising to the dominant class, which is shown to be oppressive, the characters become dehumanized by the desire to possess.

Opposed in one respect to the comprador bourgeoisie is the national bourgeoisie, which, in *Devil on the Cross*, is represented by Mwīreri. In a very limited sense, Mwīreri is an example of the nationalist. Mwīreri believes in national theft, “the theft and robbery of nationals of a given country, who steal from their own people and consume their plunder right there in the country itself,”<sup>28</sup> and argues against foreign domination in national theft. In this sense, he becomes the nationalist who seeks to build up a national capital stock for the development of his own country. This desire for “self-supporting theft” is captured in Mwīreri’s name, which means “the one who brings himself up.”

Mwīreri’s idea of building a national capital stock by exploiting the local people has the net result that there is no substantial improvement in the people’s material life. As such, it compares with that of the comprador bourgeoisie in terms of results. Significantly, the comprador bourgeoisie has Mwīreri eliminated, underlining the fact that for the dominant class, what matters is not merely the exploitation of the citizenry. This exploitation has to be done in cahoots with, in fact largely for, the neocolonial forces.

The comprador bourgeoisie, themselves the police of the colonial regime, figuratively speaking, use the police force to safeguard their exploitative hold on the country. In Ngũgĩ's later works, we are shown that the continued exploitation of the people is made possible by the support that the bourgeoisie receives from the police force. This is well illustrated through Inspector Godfrey in *Petals of Blood*, Superintendent Gakono in *Devil on the Cross* and Inspector Wonderful Tumbo [stomach] in *Wizard of the Crow*.

*Gakono*, a diminutive derived from the Swahili word *mkono* for "hand" refers to a disabled or withered hand and connotes that of the beggar. In the novel, we are shown that the only order that the police help to maintain is the exploitation of the poor. Thinking that Wangarĩ has information on the common "thieves," Gakono praises her, telling her that if all people were to volunteer information like her, "the whole country would be cleansed of theft, robbery, and similar crimes and *those who had* [emphasis mine] would be able to enjoy their wealth and sleep soundly without any worries."<sup>29</sup> When he interrupts the meeting of "thieves" at the cave and realizes his blunder, we are told that when he is criticized angrily by the master of ceremonies, "[he], springing to attention started offering apologies and *begging for forgiveness* [emphasis mine] in a trembling voice."<sup>30</sup> A law enforcement officer, Gakono, like a child caught in the wrong, mumbles his apologies in an unpunctuated, incoherent, and jumbled sentence of about a hundred words. This is the trembling of the beggar in the presence of his provider. We are shown that Gakono and his force are essentially withered, disabled, and unable to bring about any change in the status quo. They merely superintend and guard against any change from a system that implicitly benefits them, hence their reactionary nature. In the more repressive state represented in *Wizard of the Crow* the reactionaries are much more entrenched in the coercive surveillance apparatus of the state.

In *Devil on the Cross*, there is the hope that Gatuĩria would discover his side as being with those who seek change. This is the hope that is anticipated in the name *Gatuĩria*, which means "the seeker," "the quester." At the beginning, Gatuĩria is portrayed as a radical, a potential revolutionary who rejects his father's property to do the bidding of his heart. One would then suppose that after rejecting his class origins, after his studies, Gatuĩria would live up to the meaning of his name and search for a way to light up the

darkness into which his father's class was leading the country and subvert it.

In the novel, Mūturi, as the representative of the oppressed, throws the challenge to Gatuīria, the representative of the intellectuals: "Bring your education to us and don't turn your backs on the people. That's the only way."<sup>31</sup> However, Gatuīria does not take up the challenge, and though critical of the oppressive regime, his political commitment remains purely academic. He becomes an example of the uncommitted intellectual in Ngūgĩ's mid-career writing, who sways from learned expositions on the exploitative system—therefore, apparently taking the side of the masses—to identification with his bourgeois roots. Significantly, Mūturi entrusts his gun to Warĩinga because Gatuīria cannot be trusted. The gun is supposed to be an invitation to the workers' feast to be held sometime in the future, a feast to which Gatuīria is not invited due to his non-commitment.

After the events at the cave, Gatuīria completes his oratorio, which tells the story of his country. We are told that after two years of hard work, the music is complete, and Gatuīria is so pleased with this work that he could "even visualize the audience surging out of the concert hall, angry at those who sold the soul of the nation to foreigners and babbling with joy at the deeds of those who rescued the soul of the nation from foreign slavery. Gatuīria hopes that above all, his music will inspire people with patriotic love for Kenya."<sup>32</sup> Ironically, this piece of music, which should be part of a national heritage, is to be Gatuīria's engagement gift to Warĩinga. Ironically, too, after completing this musical score that tells the story of those who sold the soul of the nation to foreigners, Gatuīria draws closer to his father, an example of those who now sell the nation into neocolonialism. As fate would have it, Gatuīria's music is never performed. This limits it to a personal possession and disqualifies Gatuīria, with all his criticism of the status quo, as a contributor to the heightening of the national awareness of the past and present of sellouts, and in inspiring and channeling that patriotic life for Kenya into positive action that brings about structural changes to reward those who have always fought off the foreigners.

Gatuīria fails because he undertakes to write a revolutionary song as an academic pursuit without immersing himself in the lives of those he writes about and taking sides with them, as

Fanon would have championed.<sup>33</sup> Fashioned by Gatuĩria alone, the oratorio becomes a purely academic venture, written for, and not with, the oppressed. Even at the hour of trial when Gatuĩria has a chance to show whose side he is on, he fails. When Warĩnga has shot down his father, we are told: “Gatuĩria did not know what to do, to deal with his father’s body, to comfort his mother or to follow Warĩnga. So he just stood in the middle of the courtyard, hearing in his mind music that led him nowhere.”<sup>34</sup> However dubious a carrier of the people’s revolution Warĩnga may be, if Gatuĩria was to identify with the people for whom he composed the oratorio (which we are meant to believe is the song he hears in his mind), his logical place would be by Warĩnga’s side. But, like he had done at the cave, Gatuĩria just stands there, unsure of what to do.

Gatuĩria has searched and quested so far only to discover his lack of commitment to changing that which be found. As such, his criticism of the exploitative system remains only academic. This failure to take sides with the oppressed and the exploited is a criticism of intellectuals who, like Gatuĩria, just search for the causes of the social ills, recommending only academic solutions with which they do not even identify. At the beginning, we had been led to believe that Gatuĩria had cut his class ties and was searching for identification with the oppressed. His remains a purely academic search which consigns him to the uncommitted petty bourgeois intellectual. His lack of political commitment would, therefore, appear to be captured in his name—the questor, the seeker.

At the beginning of this paper, attention was drawn to a definite partisanship that is apparent in the character name choices in Ngũgĩ’s later works. The discussion so far has centered on characters for whom Ngũgĩ obviously feels little sympathy, characters he does not invite us to identify with. The rest of the discussion on this novel dwells on the three characters in *Devil on the Cross*, whose ideals Ngũgĩ clearly shares.

In the novel, Wangarĩ exemplifies the conscientization of the peasants. Her name evokes two qualities, and in negating one of these, there is a pointer to the possibility of the transformation of society. It could be derived from the leopard (*ngarĩ* in Gĩkũyũ), thus conjuring up the image of a tenacious animal. Wangarĩ reveals this tenacity in fighting for her rights. Again, it could be

derived from the Gīkūyū tradition, referring to members of the Aangari clan, who according to legend, were both mean and steadfast in defense of their principles. This steadfastness reinforces the tenacity already referenced. In the novel, Wangarī displays both these qualities.

Though young during the emergency, Wangarī carried bullets and guns to the freedom fighters in the forests. And though young, Wangarī was aware of the movement's goals, to shed blood, as she says, "so that our children might eat until they were full, might wear clothes that kept out the cold, might sleep in beds free from bed bugs."<sup>35</sup> In embracing the struggle with its motive of sharing communally, Wangarī, then, transcends the limitations of meanness implied in her name. She also transcends the carnivorous and predatory nature that one associates with the leopard and which Chui in *Petals of Blood* embraces. By embracing the current struggle and displaying the ferociousness that one associates with the leopard, Wangarī in fact attains an agentive stature, her only limitation being her lack of understanding of the workings of the forces the peasants are up against. Through her negation of the negative qualities evoked by her name, we are shown that for the Gitutus to be re-integrated into the society all that is needed is for them to submerge their selfish instincts, thus freeing their energy to be absorbed in the collective ideals, which would then humanize them.

Traditionally, the Gīkūyū women wore copper ornaments around their necks and on their hands. These were called *mīrīnga*, which can be loosely seen as rings. *Warīnga* of *Devil on the Cross* refers to a woman who wears such rings as adornments, thus translating as "of the rings" and conjuring up the image of a beautiful woman.

A cursory glance at the bourgeois characters' habits and presumptions in *Devil on the Cross* shows their objectification of women: a woman is regarded as a decoration, a flower to adorn men's lives. She is seen as a game to be played when a man is bored or old, rekindling a kind of vitality that the wives cannot, by implication, rekindle. She is an animal to be hunted. The woman, especially the young woman, is seen as veal or the spring chicken for an old man's toothless gums. She is perfume to be applied when it is scented but to be discarded at will when it has lost its scent. She is the fruit to be picked at leisure, sucked juiceless and

discarded, and is something that can be owned. She is the rings to be worn, an adornment to men. At another level, the woman is regarded as a being with only one organ.

It seems to be Warĩnga's role in the novel to emphasize that women play more than a sexual role and should, in fact, be taken on an equal basis with men. As such, Warĩnga emphasizes that the woman is not man's flower, an inanimate object, that ornament to be worn to decorate the man, or the scented perfume that the man wears when going to dance, discarding it once it loses its scent. The key to Warĩnga's name and character then is what she is conceived of as a reaction against.

Given the traditional and chauvinistic view explored above, it is significant that Warĩnga studies engineering at the polytechnic, a "male" subject, and takes martial arts, both of which are meant to make her self-reliant. It is also significant that after her mental metamorphosis, Warĩnga meets Ghitahy, the man who almost ruined her life. Like all the other bourgeois characters, Ghitahy believes that the woman is a flower, an ornament that can be bought like property. Like the other characters, Ghitahy can only hope to get Warĩnga by promising her gifts and not through the art of courtship.

Warĩnga's refusal of Ghitahy's gifts is a refusal to become his fruit, his flower, or ornament, somebody else's property. Though acting out what appears to be a personal revenge, she kills Ghitahy "to save many other people, whose lives will not be ruined by words of honey and perfume."<sup>36</sup> In killing Ghitahy, therefore, Warĩnga at one level kills the destroyer of womanhood, the symbol of her debauchery, thus symbolically removing the obstacle to the realization of women's dreams. In this way, she points to the need to see the "humanness" behind the beauty, hence the recognition of women as apart from their beauty and their sex.

At another, less credible level, Warĩnga eliminates a representative of the exploiting force, since Ghitahy means "the one who scoops," the indiscriminate scooping that is characteristic of the bourgeoisie. By agreeing to keep Mũturi's gun for him earlier in the novel, Warĩnga endorses the workers' call and accepts the invitation to the workers' feast that the gun symbolizes. At the confrontation with Ghitahy, we are told that Warĩnga looks at him "like a judge at an unrepentant prisoner who is pleading

for mercy,”<sup>37</sup> and when she shoots him, it is as “a jigger, a louse, a weevil, a flea, a bedbug . . . a parasite that lives on the trees of other people’s lives.”<sup>38</sup> Underlying all these descriptions is an emphasis on Ghitahy’s parasitic nature, which is the defining characteristic of the dominant class. As a member of the producer class whose basic humanity is denied by the dominant class, Warĩnga is a fit judge of the parasitic class. Her shooting of Ghitahy is shown as part of the larger struggle to root out such parasites from the society.

In *Detained*, Ngũgĩ asserts that Warĩnga was meant to be a fictional reflection of the resistance heroine in Kenyan history, conceived along the lines of Mau-Mau women cadres.<sup>39</sup> However, this reflection is unrealized in *Devil on the Cross*. While Warĩnga appears a credible protagonist exemplifying the liberation of women, even going through a revolutionary change, she fails as a reflection of the “resistance heroine of Kenyan history.” She is a character who develops from passion to purpose instead of vice versa. At the end, her perception is still clouded by too much passion.

If we disregard the unreality of, and the coincidental nature of Warĩnga’s action of killing Ghitahy, and concentrate on the action itself, it becomes clear that Warĩnga is inadequate as a carrier of the people’s revolution. We are told that after killing Ghitahy, Warĩnga walked on without looking back but she knew that “the hardest struggles of her life’s journey lay ahead.”<sup>40</sup> The beauty of a suggestive open ending aside, the fact that Warĩnga has not been part of any organized resistance compounds the lack of clarity as to what these struggles are, thus raising questions whether Warĩnga has any plan of action to ensure the true liberation of the society. In this action, she is bound to be alone, though Mũturi’s parting words earlier were that she would not be alone, since the workers and peasants would be behind her. But the workers as a conscious force shaping the future society are undeveloped. We see glimpses of this force at the demonstration to chase out the “thieves” and “robbers” from the cave. Their consciousness, indeed their presence, is neglected in favor of Warĩnga’s metamorphosis into a mentally liberated woman, basically a feminist. While she is portrayed as the representative worker, Warĩnga’s intellectual physiognomy is more developed towards the women’s liberation theme than as that of a carrier

of the workers' and peasants' revolution. She remains an example of the much heralded strong Ngũgĩ women characters: strong, but nevertheless women who are all passion, with no clear-cut programs for redeeming the society, characters who inevitably and invariably need men to conscientize them and to channel their passion towards positive change in society. Wanja in *Petals of Blood* and Guthera in *Matigari* are the same as Warĩnga. However, *Wizard of the Crow* presents a much better agentive woman, Nyawĩra.

At the beginning of this paper, attention was drawn to the distinction that Ngũgĩ makes in his characterization through the character of Mũturi. In *Devil on the Cross*, Mũturi himself best exemplifies the productive forces that seek to humanize the society. He is a worker who specializes in carpentry, stone working, and plumbing. He can, however, do anything that involves work with the hands. This contrasts with the bourgeoisie as exemplified by Gĩtutu, whose hands are almost disappearing because they have no work to do. As a builder, Mũturi is the representative worker. He is Mũturi, "the builder," not merely "the smith" of *Petals of Blood*.

There is a way in which Mũturi's full name—Mũturi wa Kahonia Maithori—can be seen as a complete semantic unit in itself, which then means "the builder or maker of that which heals the tears." In trying to organize the workers for higher pay in Boss Kihara's company, in helping to organize the Ilmorog workers to confront their oppressors, Mũturi is helping to create the awareness, the force that will wipe away the tears of those who are exploited. Mũturi, as the creator, the builder and producer, and the one who creates that which will heal the tears of the producers, is created to take away the power of destruction from the clan of parasites. Whereas in *Petals of Blood* we only see the productivity of the workers, the producers in their work activity, Mũturi's name in *Devil on the Cross* effectively captures this productivity and enhances the dichotomy between the producers and the destroyers.

Mũturi's significance in *Devil on the Cross* appears to be the fact that he is the one who links the workers in the various places. He has travelled widely in Kenya, doing all sorts of jobs. As he reveals, he is a delegate of a workers' secret organization in the capital and wherever he is, he is acting on their behalf. He shows

that the confrontation of the workers and the owners of capital is part of an ideal to usher in a more just society. The gun he gives Warĩnga indicates the imminence of the inter-class war. The suggestion here is that the gun will be used to confront the armed presence of the owners of capital in a bid to wipe away the tears of the exploited.

As the recruiting agent of the workers' organization, Mũturi fans the awareness of those who are victims of exploitation. Through his efforts, the owners of capital are pitted against the owners of labor. By fanning the awareness of the workers as their representative, Mũturi becomes the maker, the builder, the creator of that which will heal the workers' tears. Given the abused humanity of the workers, Mũturi's act of humanizing them is a revolutionary step. Added to that, we are meant to see that Mũturi is a champion of the workers' revolution which is invariably aimed at wrenching power from the dominant class and establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat, a social set-up where the products of labor go back to the producer. This enhances his revolutionary stature.

At another level, Mũturi is the folkloric smith who has come back from the smithy to deliver his wife from the suffering inflicted upon her by the Ogre, the figural image of capitalism. His contribution to the raising of the workers' awareness is the sharpening of the swords that will be used to bring down the Ogre.

The foregoing analysis of a cross-section of the characters' names in *Devil on the Cross* demonstrates how the character names become expressive of the characters' social reality. The discussion illuminates the social essence of the characters, illustrating the fact that the individual's thoughts and deeds become representative of his or her class and concretize certain aspects of the larger society. In the novel, the naming of characters is part of a symbolic structure, an expression of the universal through the particular, a concretization of the universal or the abstract, in essence a means of typifying characters. Discussion now moves to *Wizard of the Crow* in which we find extensions of the basic character types found in *Devil on the Cross*. For that reason, discussion of the characters in the second novel will focus on the little differences with the earlier one.

*Wizard of the Crow* features two broad character types: a reactionary political elite that is also pro-colonial and a

transformative cadre that features the committed intellectual who combines environmental and political activism and a liberatory praxis that foregrounds the rights of women. The Ruler, Machokali, Sikiokuu, Big Ben Mambo, and Tajirika represent the first group while Kamĩĩ and Nyawĩra represent the second.

The Ruler in the fictional state of Aburĩria imagines himself to be all-sovereign, with power over all life in Aburĩria. In *Mũrogi wa Kagogo*, the Gĩkũyũ version of *Wizard of the Crow*, the head of state's full name is given as "Mwathani Mũtagatibu Rayithi II wa Njamũhũri ya Aburĩria,"<sup>41</sup> which translates as "His Holy Lord, the Second President of the Republic of Aburĩria." By translating the title as Ruler, Ngũgĩ injects in the name a deliberate vagueness, that still relies on a single word in the original title—*mwathani*—which conjures up the idea of a man who exercises unquestionable authority.<sup>42</sup> A more consultative/democratic head of state would have been named *mũtongoria*, which suggests a leader rather than a ruler. By going with a title that evokes the image of an all-powerful sovereign, Ngũgĩ draws attention to his authoritarian streak. The Ruler brooks no dissent in the domestic and the national space and his enemies are punished through an asymmetrical deployment of power that recalls the Monarch in Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* to whom any resistance to his rule is an injurious affront to his person:

Although redress of the private injury occasioned by the offence must be proportionate, although the sentence must be equitable, the punishment is carried out in such a way as to give a spectacle not of measure, but of imbalance and excess; [. . .] punishment . . . affirm[s] . . . the physical strength of the sovereign beating down upon the body of his adversary and mastering it: by breaking the law, the offender has touched the very person of the prince; [. . .] the prince or . . . those to whom he has delegated his force . . . seizes upon the body of the condemned man and displays it marked, beaten, broken. . . .<sup>43</sup>

This is the way the Ruler hopes to discipline his wife Rachael for questioning his authority in the domestic space; it is the way he kills his enemies—who we are told that he massacres for sport, and whose skeletons are stored in a special chamber in State House where he performs his daily renewal of his sovereign power

to take human life. It is the way he would want to display the dissident Nyawīra's broken body. He imagines himself as God's equal, and he insists that he is co-extensive with the state of Aburīria. However, in an interesting reading of the Ruler's body, Robert Colson argues that "The Ruler's image of sovereignty is of a single body, his own, that represents the totality of the nation, not the Hobbesian Commonwealth that is comprised of the members of the body politic who have given their consent and invested power in the sovereign."<sup>44</sup> Colson notes further that the Ruler experiences a malady called Self Induced Expansion, which seems to correspond with the loosening of his grip of power over the territorial space. This malady requires a doctor to study his symptoms and therefore disaggregate his body as a list of possible medical conditions.<sup>45</sup> In this way, the Ruler has to subject himself to the sovereign gaze of the doctor, who becomes in Colson's reading—borrowing from Foucault—"the eye that governs."<sup>46</sup> But the inversion of this gaze extends to the general population, which reduces the Ruler's imperfect body to an object of derisive laughter. But even more fundamentally, if, as Colson recognizes, The Ruler's claim to be co-extensive with Aburīria relies on an organismic metaphor of the political body,<sup>47</sup> that claim seems to be undermined by the fact that for all its claims over the territorial state, the surveillance mechanism of the state is a series of apparatuses that do not always work in concert. The specific division of the apparatus of surveillance and propaganda between Machokali (the Orwellian Big-Brother eyes of the state), and Sikiokuu (the big ears of the state), and Big Ben Mambo (the big-mouthed broadcaster of state propaganda) raises questions about the functioning of the state as a single organism.

In *Wizard of the Crow*, Ngũgĩ satirizes the ruling elite for their readiness to sacrifice anything to gain power and riches. We are told that before his rise to power, Machokali—then named Markus—was an ordinary legislator. But he underwent an operation on his eyes at a London hospital "because he wanted . . . [them] enlarged, to make them ferociously sharp, or as he put it in Kiswahili, *Yawe Macho Kali*, so that they would be able to spot the enemies of the Ruler no matter how far their hiding places. Enlarged to the size of electric bulbs, his eyes were now the most prominent feature of his face, dwarfing his nose, cheeks, and forehead."<sup>48</sup> His devotion to the Ruler earns him the position as head

of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “so that Machokali would be his representative eye wherever, in whatever corner of the globe lay the Ruler’s interests. And so Machokali he became, and later he even forgot the name given at his birth.”<sup>49</sup> While the Ruler probably flatters himself that he is a greater player in the world system than he really is, it is telling that Machokali, the man named after his eyes, is to be the Ruler’s eyes around the globe. Much of his usefulness is actually on the domestic stage, where he masterminds two rather disastrous state ceremonies that were supposed to legitimize the Ruler’s majesty, thus illuminating the limitations of the panoptic modality of power. He effectively establishes his own parallel state, and when he travels abroad, he delegates Tajirika to be his own eyes and ears on the national scene.

Sikiokuu had also been a legislator before he decided to have his ears enlarged in Paris so that “he would be able to hear better and therefore be privy to the most private conversations . . . all in the service of the Ruler. His ears were larger than a rabbit’s and always primed to detect danger at any time and from any direction . . . and he was made Minister of State in charge of spying on the citizenry.”<sup>50</sup> But this put him into a “mortal struggle” with Machokali over “which organ was more powerful: the Eye or the Ear of the Ruler.”<sup>51</sup> This competition motivates the two to spy on each other, and report their suspicions to the Ruler. A lot of these suspicions revolve around the Ruler’s fear that each is laying the groundwork to eventually succeed the Ruler, who imagines that his reign will never end. On his part, Big Ben Mambo took part of his name from “the clock at the British Houses of Parliament” and the Mambo part due to his deployment to propagate the Ruler’s propaganda after he had his tongue and his lips elongated so as to better communicate the Ruler’s commands.<sup>52</sup> To round off the reactionaries in power is Tajirika, who suffers from whiteache, an epidermalized inferiority complex that drives him to seek surgeries to change his black skin to white, and who also literally worships money. His name loosely translates into “get rich” and he has no scruples about how he acquires his wealth. When he gets bags full of corrupt money, he protects them with his body forming the sign of the cross.<sup>53</sup> Further, we are told that he is so spineless that he will do anything to save his skin and property.<sup>54</sup> It is this mentally colonized man who eventually overthrows the Ruler and becomes “emperor” of Aburīria. It is telling, however,

that before his designs on the presidency crystalized, Tajirika had tried to sell an idea to the Ruler that would have made Aburīria a “corp colony,” a privatized state, which the head of state only manages on behalf of global finance capital.<sup>55</sup>

A cursory review of the characters of the Ruler, Machokali, Sikiokuu, and Tajirika shows how closely the meaning of their names is allied with their characterization and also the function that these characters serve in *Wizard of the Crow*. Ngūgĩ ironizes their greed for power and wealth, but this greed is concretized in their names and titles. Their functioning as instruments of state surveillance is also suggested in their names. On the opposite side are those who oppose state tyranny in the novel, represented by Kamĩtĩ and Nyawĩra.

In a lot of ways, Kamĩtĩ represents the typical vacillating intellectual in Ngūgĩ’s writing. An unemployed college graduate when we first meet him, Kamĩtĩ has all the insecurities of Waiyaki in *The River Between*, Munira in *Petals of Blood*, and Gatuĩria in *Devil on the Cross*. His name evokes Kamĩtĩ Prison, the notorious maximum-security jail in Kenya where Ngūgĩ himself was detained in 1977. In a suggestive encounter halfway through the novel, both Kamĩtĩ and Tajirika find themselves thrown in the same prison by Sikiokuu. Objecting to his status reversal, Tajirika seeks Kamĩtĩ’s help to secure his release from prison, to which Kamĩtĩ poses the important question: which prison? He posits that there is the prison of the mind and the other of the body.<sup>56</sup> Because of his supplication to the fetish god of capital and state power, Tajirika effectively lives in Bentham’s panopticon. On the contrary, Kamĩtĩ’s body may be temporarily imprisoned, but he refuses to let subjection take root in his mind, regardless of the surveillance to which he is subjected. Arriving at this mental condition required some growth on Kamĩtĩ’s part.

Kamĩtĩ’s name is suggestive on two levels. On the one hand, it is a family name that connects him to the *mĩtĩ* clan, which has a heritage of herbalists and fortune-tellers.<sup>57</sup> Kamĩtĩ takes to herbology and fortune-telling mid-way through the novel before he actually knows that that was supposed to have been his destiny in the traditional society. He is able to use this power for social good. However, as an apolitical citizen at the beginning of the novel, Kamĩtĩ is effectively complicit in his own oppression. That would seem to be the second layer of suggestiveness that Ngūgĩ

was aiming for by naming the character Kamĩtĩ. While Kamĩtĩ naturally takes to herbology, it takes Nyawĩra’s conscientization to get him to see that he, like a lot of people in Aburĩria, is living in a mental prison. As a synecdoche of the oppressed country, Kamĩtĩ illuminates the limitations of the disciplinary machinery of state power and prison as the site of regulation and subjection à la Foucault.

Unlike other agentive males, like Mũturi, who show women the possible route to take in order to bring positive change in society, Kamĩtĩ is politically awakened by Nyawĩra to take a side in the theater of politics—either on the side of those who fight for justice and civil liberties or of those who refuse to fight and therefore perpetuate oppression by default. Kamĩtĩ takes the escapist route, espousing his idealistic belief in “humanity, divine, indivisible” and he argues that the solution to social ills is self-examination: “We all need to look deeply in our hearts and the humanity in us will be revealed in all its glory. Then greed and the drive to humiliate others will come to a halt.”<sup>58</sup> Seeing no possible role for him to play in a corrupt society and seeking to remain uncontaminated, the incurably romantic Kamĩtĩ temporarily withdraws to live as a hermit in the wilderness outside the city. He even tries to convince Nyawĩra to abandon human community and its problems and join him there. But showing Kamĩtĩ how everybody is imbricated in politics, Nyawĩra concretizes her social activism for him by comparing the ruling elite to the folkloric Ogre that snatched food and water from the mouth of the expectant mother whose husband had gone to the smithy (she tells this story earlier to Gachĩgua and Gachirũ).<sup>59</sup> Like the expectant mother, the people can subvert the Ogre even as they send for help, or they, like Kamĩtĩ, can resign themselves to their fate. Eventually, Nyawĩra is able to convince Kamĩtĩ to use his God-given powers of divination to heal the wounded souls of the people.

At a climactic ceremony during which Kamĩtĩ was expected to betray Nyawĩra’s whereabouts, Kamĩtĩ rallies the people to adopt the regendered identity of Nyawĩra—the soul of the exploited and oppressed workers and citizens in the country. Despite the pervasiveness of the instruments of surveillance, Kamĩtĩ, the character named after a prison symbolic of the both the repressive colonial and neocolonial Kenyan state, asserts his mental and political liberation. He refuses to let the panoptic

modality of power naturalize itself in his own mind and in the minds of the average Aburīrians that he motivates to rebellion, thereby showing that subjection is not the natural corollary of discipline. Nyawīra deserves credit for his political maturation, a process that leads to the dethronement of the divinity that surrounds state power.

Kamīti's conscientization by Nyawīra seems like a rewriting of the relation between Mūturi and Warīinga in *Devil on the Cross*. The more politically mature Nyawīra is suggestively connected to Warīinga in that when Kamīti first meets her in his job search, she is reading *Shetani Msalabani*, the Swahili translation of *Devil on the Cross*. Like Warīinga, Nyawīra works for a construction company headed by a lecherous man. Unlike any of the other strong Ngūgĩ women characters, Nyawīra has not had a moral fall for which she attempts to compensate through social activism. Born to privilege, she commits class suicide after a car accident that nearly cost her her life, after which members of her own privileged class did not even stop to help her. Instead, it was somebody with a donkey cart who rushed her to hospital.<sup>60</sup> She comes to see the hollowness of the crass materialism that defines her parents and eventually her husband who had married her in the hopes of upward social mobility. Nyawīra puts value in honest work, a refreshing breath of fresh air in a society bedeviled by sloth, greed, and corruption. In this way, she lives up to the meaning of her name, Nyawīra—the hard worker. Even though she is a college graduate, she is willing to do any work that ensures her own autonomy. While Ngūgĩ's mid-career novels like *Petals of Blood* and *Devil on the Cross* were peopled with revolutionary types who dreamt about a new heaven and a new earth after the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, Nyawīra leads a group of Aburīrians who return to the soil and cultivate traditional crops in self-governing communities. They establish a symbiotic communion between the human and natural environment that is informed by the simple principle: "You take, you give."<sup>61</sup> Her community members not only give to each other, they also give back to nature so that both become self-sustaining. This work of production is done with the hands. They celebrate the dignity of work, the hard work embodied in Nyawīra's name. Combining environmental and political activism, the members of Nyawīra's group—the Movement for the Voice of the People—go

beyond mere resistance to a liberatory praxis. If the mid-career works were peopled with characters who invested in a revolutionary rhetoric that might now seem dated, the positive characters in *Wizard of the Crow* transform their world into a more humane and egalitarian order without the revolutionary rhetoric.

The texts discussed in this paper were written after what Ngũgĩ has described as an epistemological crisis. After writing *A Grain of Wheat*,<sup>62</sup> he said, “I underwent a crisis. I knew whom I was writing about, but whom was I writing for?” because the workers and peasants he wrote about would not be able to read his works in English.<sup>63</sup> While the switch to writing in Gĩkũyũ might have partly solved the problem of audience, Ngũgĩ also rejuvenated his form to include elements of storytelling that are more characteristic of popular culture. The texts that come after *Petals of Blood* are much more pitched to a popular audience. The names of the characters in these later works present recognizable types and become a comfortable entry point for the popular audience reading the texts. But if *Devil on the Cross* was the first experiment in writing for the popular audience and, thus, might have given Nkosi and Nazareth reason to complain, *Wizard of the Crow* is a much more refined and complex novel that requires the kind of encyclopedic and intertextual knowledge that the popular audience would not readily access. As such, the character names and types in the latter novel provide only entry-level access to the text, unlike the earlier texts. There is, of course, the larger question of the efficacy of art that is posed by Ngũgĩ’s attempt to lay bare the forces that continue to plunder the postcolonial spaces represented in his fiction. If reaching the popular audience through art was supposed to engender the equivalent of the “Arab Spring,” that moment may yet come in the future. What Ngũgĩ has managed to do through character naming and typology is to lay bare the contradictions of his age: modernization has not yet brought with it the culture of modernity in these postcolonial spaces.

The symbol is a blending of the infinite and the finite, an expression of the universal through the particular. The type is the specific figure from which we can reasonably extrapolate meaning, that concentrates and intensifies a much more general reality. The two are, therefore, related in the quality of concretization. Ngũgĩ combines the two, with the symbolism in the name helping to enhance the typicality of the character. We can now close

our discussion with what appears to be a tautology. Given the foregoing observations, we cannot expect a Gītutu, a Nditika, or a Tajirika to comprise the revolutionary type. Conversely, we cannot expect a Mūturi or Nyawīra to comprise the reactionary type. Certain qualities in the names of the characters decisively point to the character type. In each novel's structure, the character name acts as the springboard for the creation of the character type.

### Notes

\* This is the author's new version of an essay which originally appeared in *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies* 19, nos. 2-3 (1991) as "Character Names and Types in Ngūgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Devil on the Cross*."

<sup>1</sup> Ngūgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Devil on the Cross* (London: Heinemann, 1982); Ngūgĩ, *Wizard of the Crow*, trans. Ngūgĩ wa Thiong'o (New York: Pantheon, 2006).

<sup>2</sup> Gichingiri Ndigirigi "Character Names and Types in Ngūgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Devil on the Cross* and *Wizard of the Crow*," *Ufahamu*. 19:2/3.1991

<sup>3</sup> Killam cites as his source Cryril Triestar, "An Addition to the Genre of the Proletarian Novel: Ngūgĩ's *Petals of Blood*," *Nairobi Times*, November 6, 1978.

<sup>4</sup> *An Introduction to the Writings of Ngugi*, 106. For example, Killam takes Nderi of *Petals of Blood* to refer to a vulture, whereas it refers to the eagle. He takes Mūturi to mean "black" while the name actually refers to a "smith" or a "builder."

<sup>5</sup> Lewis Nkosi, *Tasks and Masks: Themes and Styles of African Literature* (Harlow, Essex: Longman, 1981), 73.

<sup>6</sup> Peter Nazareth, "The Second Homecoming: Multiple Ngugis in *Petals of Blood*," in *Marxism and African Literature*, ed. George M. Gugelberger (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1985), 127.

<sup>7</sup> Geoffrey Leech and Michael Short, *Style in Fiction* (New York: Longman, 1972), 155.

<sup>8</sup> Rene Wellek and Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1949), 189.

<sup>9</sup> X. J. Kennedy, *An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry and Drama* (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1987), 615.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 205.

<sup>11</sup> Oxforddictionary.com/symbol online access 05/18/15.

<sup>12</sup> Boris Suchkov, *A History of Realism* (Moscow: Progress, 1973), 19.

<sup>13</sup> Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 101.

<sup>14</sup> Frederick Engels, as quoted in Georg Lukacs, *Writer and Critic* (New York, NY: Grosset and Dunlap, 1974), 35.

<sup>15</sup> Lukacs, 58.

- <sup>16</sup> Robert Scholes and Robert Kellog, *The Nature of Narrative* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), 204.
- <sup>17</sup> Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *On Literature and Art* (Moscow: Progress, 1978), 17.
- <sup>18</sup> Ngũgĩ, *Devil on the Cross*, 53.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 187.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 187.
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.
- <sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 166.
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.
- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 179.
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 205.
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 227.
- <sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 206, 222-223.
- <sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 254.
- <sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.
- <sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 253.
- <sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 249.
- <sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 254.
- <sup>39</sup> *Detained: A Writer's Prison Diary* (Nairobi: Heinemann, 1981), 10-11.
- <sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 254.
- <sup>41</sup> *Mũrogi wa Kagogo*, 3.
- <sup>42</sup> The Ruler's divinity is emphasized fairly consistently in the novel. For example, at the first major state ceremony the Ruler refers to himself as "Lord Generosity who rewarded the truly repentant" (Ngũgĩ, *Wizard of the Crow*, 20). This a combination of the Christian God and the Gĩkũyũ one, whose name was *Ngai*, also celebrated as *mugai*—the one who shares out his worldly possessions. Sikiokuu refers to the Ruler as "Your Mighty Presence" (161), as "Almighty Esteemed Father" (241), and as "Our Savior" (243).
- <sup>43</sup> Ngũgĩ, *Wizard of the Crow*, 49.
- <sup>44</sup> Robert Colson, "Diagnosing Dictatorship: Illness, Medicine, and the Critique of Sovereignty in *Wizard of the Crow*," in *Unmasking the African Dictator: Essays on Postcolonial African Literature*, ed. Gĩchingiri Ndĩgĩrĩgĩ (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 2014), 168.
- <sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 175.
- <sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 175.
- <sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 180.

- <sup>48</sup> Ngũgĩ, *Wizard of the Crow*, 13.  
<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 13.  
<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 14.  
<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 14.  
<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 15.  
<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 178.  
<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 228-229, 258.  
<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 746.  
<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 379.  
<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 294.  
<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 87.  
<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 209.  
<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 79.  
<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 758.  
<sup>62</sup> London; Heinemann, 1967.  
<sup>63</sup> Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, *Decolonising the Mind* (Nairobi: Heinemann, 1986), 72.

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