

APPLICATION OF POLITICAL SATIRE IN *MISSION TO KALA* AND *DEVIL ON THE CROSS*

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Abstract

The study attempted to demonstrate how political satire is applied in a pre-independence African fiction Mission to Kala and a post-independence African fiction Devil on the Cross. Satire, mild or bitter, has a history of being used to expose the negative socio-economic and political realities perpetrated by both the sympathisers of colonialism and later the agents of neo-colonialism in the post-independence phase. The study employed the Marxist literary theory and Literary Onomastics through stylistic analysis and demonstrated how satire exposed the evils and how a 'training camp' in the colonial era was transformed into a 'jungle' in post-independent Africa. Character types in both periods exhibited parasitic traits such as greed, selfishness, narrow appetites and sadistic violence leading to exploitation and oppression. This historical transition was delineated on the basis of the colonised African elite and subordinates as the direct off-shoot of the African bourgeoisie groups, which created a symbolic connection between the two periods of time in the African context. The findings indicated that both texts maintained the Marxist outlook, employed ironic juxtaposition to satirise capitalism, each satirist employed a different style and Beti had the colonised African elite and subordinates as his targets of satire as opposed to Ngugi's comprador politicians, comprador and national bourgeoisie. The masses were not spared of criticism.

Keywords: *Comprador Politicians, Comprador and National Bourgeoisie, Satire*

Introduction

Literature written in different historical periods portrays different socio-economic and political realities. This is the case with *Mission to Kala* and *Devil on the Cross*. These two texts have their own political and socio-economic realities and are among the renowned works of literature though some similarities may exist which could establish the connection between the past and the present. Dominic Dipio (1998) argues that 'Marxism is essentially a political ideology...and Literature should be a political weapon' (p.173). Since Marxists uphold this view, Mathew Hodgart (1969), thus, observes that politics is a common topic that satire, as a literary genre, explores:

There is an essential connection between satire and politics, in the widest sense: satire is not only the commonest form of political literature, but, insofar as it tries to influence public behaviour, it is the most political part of all Literature (p. 33).

Satire explores politics which is defined as ‘concerning the state or its government or public affairs generally’ (Thompson, 1995, p.1057) and criticism is aimed at vices such as corruption, theft, selfishness, greed, sadistic violence, oppression, lies, abuse of power, and so on. Politics, as a subject of satire, focuses its attention on three elements namely: the economic system (which is capitalism in this case), the ruling class and the middle class citizens.

Considering the colonial society, Bulhan (2015) observes that ‘since violence and outsiders’ propaganda alone cannot sustain oppression, colonisers resorted to local agents to carry out the colonial mission. The most important of these were individuals who were educated in colonial schools or serving as subordinates in the colonial system’ (p. 243). It is, thus, evident enough that the African elite and subordinates of the colonial administration such as the indigenous servants or colonial lackeys and the traditional chiefs with a colonised mentality helped propel the colonial mission which was capitalistic in nature to satiate the ever-demanding industries in Europe for raw materials ignited by the industrial revolution. To access these raw materials, the colonialists depended on cheap labour provided by the Africans for their much needed profit back home in Europe. It is, therefore, undisputed to claim that colonialism and capitalism are one as rightly argued by Zeleza (1992) that capitalism is associated with colonialism and colonialism is universally reviled in Africa as evidenced in Mongo Beti’s colonial work of fiction.

Beti, like many other authors, during this time, was busy shaping a cultural nationalistic fiction as a means to assert indigenous identity amidst the mental confusion which colonialism brought about. Such literature was written when there was hope that after independence, Africa would prosper. Therefore, it ‘tended to be dominated by a forward-looking optimism’ (Pandurang, 2010, p.17) and criticism was targeted towards the colonial oppressive administration as well as the bootlicking subordinates like the colonial lackeys, local chiefs and the colonised elites. As a result, novels like *Mission to Kala* and *Poor Christ of Bomba* by Mongo Beti, *House Boy* by Ferdinand Oyono, *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe and *The River Between* by Ngugi wa Thiong’o were written. These and many other authors questioned and satirised colonialism and advanced the agenda of nationalism in their works of fiction.

Beti and many other authors’ unrelenting zeal and hope for a better Africa found expression through satire and soon Africa realised her independence from the fangs of colonialism. Such hope, however, gave place to despair soon after African states became independent as the change of the political system failed to bring about the real socio-economic development that Africa longed for.

Consequently, the so-called local elite who later became petty bourgeoisie wanted only to replace the former rulers and govern in the same way, using the same laws and institutions giving rise to the ruling class or comprador politicians and the comprador bourgeoisie

whose existence is elaborated by Mao Tse Tung (1954) when he posits that elements of the emergent petty-bourgeoisie increasingly became ‘vassals of the international bourgeoisie, depending upon imperialism for their existence and development’ (p. 13), indicating their class transition or transformation to a more overtly comprador role.

The African ruling class had no much thought beyond that specific and narrow goal of gaining independence. They, as the new colonisers, inherited the colonial system whose function was not to serve the African citizenry but to exploit and oppress them. After independence, the flawed colonial state turned into a neo-colonial machine that not only oppressed the people, but also worked to the advantage of former colonial powers and their allies (Bulhan, 2008) through their local agents – the comprador bourgeoisie groups. A number of African politicians and intellectuals focused attention on neo-colonialism (Amin, 1973; Nkrumah, 1965): ways in which former colonisers (joined by the United States and the USSR) controlled behind the scene every African economic and political power. This sad scenario is exposed in *Devil on the Cross* by Ngugi wa Thiong’o.

Mongo Beti and Ngugi wa Thiong’o are both inspired Marxists and they wrote their respective satirical works in different periods. It is imperative to delineate how satire is used in the two selected texts representing two different periods in African history on the basis of form and content. Additionally, the study seeks to demonstrate who is satirised, and why and how the negative socio-economic and political realities are exposed in two different historical periods.

Literature

In *Mother is Gold: A Study in West African Literature* (1971), Adrian Roscoe claims that ‘Africa has a short history of satire’ (p. 131). His statement does not take into consideration the fact that satire existed in traditional African society as evidenced in the oral literature of various African communities. African oral literature is rich in expansion particularly with regard to the verbal arts (Wendland, 2004; Chukwumah, 2018; Chilala, 2011). Roscoe’s comment also implies that satire is a recent ‘innovation’ in Africa simply because Africans did not possess the skills in writing until Western education was introduced in the colonial period. However, Africa is rich in satire because satire has always been available in African oral literature and in other art forms. To uphold this view, George Test (1991) argues that: Satire is by no means confined to written forms. It is found in other art forms from the graphic arts to music to sculpture and even dance... In many preliterate cultures, satire occurs in trickster tales and oral poetry (p. 8).

David Jinja Risenga (1995) did a comparative study of satire and humour in the poems of four Tsonga poets and focused on the manner in which these two modes, that is satire and humour, communicate. Since these structures constitute the form of a poem, the formalist approach was considered suitable for the study. A sociological approach was employed in the study in which Anderson Ugwu (2018) compared Wole Soyinka’s *Trials of Brother Jero and A Play of Giants* which focused on the social and political ills prevalent in African societies, and how correcting these ills will make contemporary society a better place to live. By contrast, Ogweno’s study of satire in Okot’s three poems *Song of Lawino*

and *Song of Ocol*, *Song of Prisoner* and *Song of Malaya* does not view satire in the context of socio-economic power struggles; rather his focus is on the criticism of human foibles and weaknesses and he employs a stylistic theory in his analysis. Unlike Ogweno's approach, the current study attempts to demonstrate how satire is used or applied in the two selected novels in the context of both human weaknesses and socioeconomic power struggles in the pre-independence and post-independence period by employing both the Marxist literary theory and Literary Onomastics. The reason behind this approach is that parasitic tendencies such as theft, selfishness, greed, hypocrisy and sadistic violence lead to exploitation and oppression of the masses.

Methodology

The research design is qualitative approach using desk research. The research instruments were primary texts namely; *Mission to Kala* and *Devil on the Cross*. Data collection involved the close reading of the two texts and secondary sources. Data analysis was done stylistically to demonstrate the relationship between form and content through the manifestation of satire using the Marxist literary theory and Literary Onomastics because Marxist critics agree with a stylistic critic who according to Emmanuel Ngara (1990) 'relates his analysis of the linguistic features to the consideration of content and aesthetic quality in art' (p. 12). Each kind of subject matter will demand a specific kind of vocabulary, and aesthetic aspects such as imagery, symbolism and figures of speech which lead to satire and constitute form. Content, according to Dipio (1998), refers to the experiences, ideas, themes, and characters that exist in a work of art (p.169). Satire often works indirectly by focusing on the characters' actions, thoughts and dialogue. The following specific tenets of Marxism ensure that the Marxist outlook is maintained: the ideology, the superstructure, the place of history in literature, typicality, dialecticism, and the relationship between form and content which is crucial and instrumental in the manifestation of satire.

Discussion

Politically, Beti turns to a savage satire against capitalism as the economic system and the ruling class or subordinates of colonialism represented by the local chief of Vimili and the chief of Kala. The colonial administration is also indirectly satirised. Old Medza and David Mama are his targets of satire and are among a few examples of the colonised local elites representing the direct offshoot of the comprador politicians and comprador bourgeoisie.

On the basis of typicality, Beti creates his character types using realistic characterisation to typify the social realities. In *Mission to Kala*, Beti employs ironic juxtaposition using Medza's explanation about the geography of America and Russia side by side to expose his indifference and criticism against the economic system called capitalism through the Kalans' negative response to the topic on America. He states ... 'the really astonishing thing, which still bothers me in retrospect, was that America left these simple-minded people stone-cold indifferent' (p. 60) but in the case of Russia, the Kalans show interest.

‘These people are very like us at bottom...they have got a sense of solidarity. They stand by one another, just as we do’ (p. 61). Ironically, Beti bitterly mocks capitalism by exposing its dehumanising and individualistic nature as opposed to the collective nature of communism through the observable difference in the Kalans’ stone-cold response.

Mission to Kala presents two chiefs as character types namely; the local chief who resides in Medza’s home village in Vimili town and the Kala Chief. These two traditional leaders portray similar parasitic traits such as selfishness, greed and sadistic violence resulting in exploitation and oppression as demonstrated below.

Using Medza as his tool of satire or satiric persona (Beti’s mask), Beti employs a lampoon against the local chief in Vimili and exposes his greed and selfish tendencies. He says ‘this local chief of ours was an ancient lecher with remarkable staying powers. Despite his age, he had got hold of the six prettiest girls in the district and was always on the lookout for more’ (p.16-17). A lecher is a sexual pervert and that is what the Kala chief is as well. The chief’s excess desire to possess anything and everything is representative of his type as a greedy and selfish carnivore who considers women as mere objects of possession and pleasure.

Beti employs a simile to expose the puppetry nature of the ruling class, particularly, the local chief by comparing him to a robot. This is seen when he says: ‘The colonial administration (who had nominated him in the first place) buttered him up. In return, he obeyed their commands like a robot and knew they would never throw him out’ (p. 17). A robot does not think for itself but its actions are remote-controlled and so are the local chief’s actions. In the same vein, the Satirist uses irony to expose the actions of the colonial administrators’ role in undermining the credibility of African chiefs. In view of this, Nkomazana and Setume (2016) argue that they viewed colonisation, commerce and religion as inseparable allies. They also emphasised the need for imperial responsibility (paternal guardianship) over the Africans because Africans were viewed as incapable of governing themselves. Ironically, Beti is sending a clear message that the only way by which the African chiefs could remain relevant to their colonial masters was to maintain their loyalty (subordination) to the colonial regime.

Beti likens the local chief to a robot using a simile because they acted as political cohorts of the colonisers in organising forced labour gangs, and as such ‘he had been feared by everyone, because he betrayed fugitives to the authorities and acted as an informer’ (p. 17). African chiefs were used by the colonial authorities to access cheap or forced labour to sustain capitalism on which the colonial economy was based as confirmed by Césaire (2000) as he defines the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised as one limited to ‘forced labour, intimidation, pressure...’ (p. 42). Ocheni and Nwankwo (2012) observe that ‘the capitals transport and industrial organisational life associated with it, were alien to the African economy and labour force. It was, therefore, hard for the Africans to voluntarily and willingly move to seek for jobs in the new industries developed with the exported capital’ (p. 48). Thus, the only way Europeans could get the much needed labour power from Africans or colonial lackeys to work in the mines and plantations was through forced labour, which attracted sadistic violence because Africans were not willing to give their labour towards the alien economic system (capitalism or foreign capital).

Beti exemplifies how the superstructure was effective enough to sustain colonialism (and/or capitalism). Beti says despite the chiefs' powers being weakened, 'the colonial officers...had perfected a new system of oppression. This, while superficially conforming with, the law's requirements, enabled them to keep the population under their thumb, and exploit them exactly as they wished' (p. 117). In short, the colonial officials manipulated the law whenever they wanted to satiate their appetite for labour.

Furthermore, Beti employs a lampoon which is a direct attack on an individual using Medza as a satiric persona against the local chief. This was shown when he writes: 'The bastard! ...My hatred could hardly go deeper; as time went on it simply spread out, till today, it embraces not only the polygamous as a class, but also every kind of monopolist, profiteer, extortionate employer ...bloated fat-belly' (p. 17-18). Medza lampoons the local chief as a monopolist, profiteer and extortionate employer typical of a capitalist who depends on his subjects to satiate his greedy, selfish and narrow appetite for wealth and comfort. Medza also refers to the local chief as 'this local politician, this village dictator' (p. 17) who considers him as his enemy over his pretty girls.

Dialecticism comes to the fore when the youths oppose the chief's exploitation and the new system of oppression, which he executes with the help of colonial officers. This opposition does not shake the chief's power but creates fear (p. 118).

Beti continues to criticise certain aspects of African tradition through Medza as his satiric persona. It is Medza who lampoons the inordinate acquisition of wives by the chief of Kala when he refers to the chief as 'the old swine'. Beti is fully aware that polygamy is legitimate in a traditional or patriarchal society. However, he condemns pitilessly the tendency not to respect the human value of women as most of the women in Beti's pre-independence novels are very passive and are exploited for sex and labour to satiate the narrow and greedy appetites of men.

The chief of Kala has hijacked Medza into marriage with his daughter out of greed and selfishness. In view of this, Beti employs a metaphor to demonstrate satire when Petrous Son of God puts in, 'but what a crafty old goat her father is! Ever since Jean-Marie turned up in Kala, I bet the old devil only had one idea in his head – to marry Edima off to him' (p. 143). Referring to the Kala Chief as 'a crafty old goat' is metaphorical to suggest his unscrupulous and selfish behaviour elaborated by Zambo:

He will have someone in the city now to help him with his dirty business deals...Some people are silly enough to think he's generous; but the only people he lays himself out for are those who can do him a rather bigger favour in return (p. 143-144).

Old Medza is the next target of satire living in the city of Vimili characterised by the bourgeois, capitalistic European culture which has negatively impacted the colonised Africans. With this view in mind, Old Medza is an ambitious character that zealously embraces capitalism or commercial materialism to stay materially well-up above others in terms of labour-power and wealth. Using Medza as his satiric persona, Beti employs sarcasm to suggest what Western hypocrisy and commercial materialism could do to people like Old Medza in colonial days:

My father was a real shyster, come to think of it...He was a living example of the astonishing results that can occur when Western hypocrisy and commercial materialism are grafted onto a first-rate African intelligence... but my father was the quintessential Westernised native of one generation back (p. 153).

Being a product of the capitalist European culture (a Westernised individual), Old Medza exhibits parasitic tendencies such as individualism, exploitation, greed and selfishness typical of a capitalist. He is, thus, referred to as a 'shyster' or 'a dishonest person' (Cambridge, 2008, p. 1333) and his capitalistic tendencies are exemplified in this:

As Medza takes us back into time, three instances are crucial to demonstrate the tricks Old Medza employed to amass wealth at the expense of the vulnerable fellow Africans – simply put; it is the idea of trying to lord it over others as an individualistic, self-centered creature. In his hay days, he desired to build a magnificent coconut plantation perhaps second to none in Vimili town. The style that Medza's father used to build a magnificent coconut plantation involved taking advantage of the passion for parties and family gatherings his compatriots had. He invited all his half-brothers and nephews to work on his plantation after giving them a great deal of wine. Having become a tradition, every month, the family turned up to work for Medza's father as long as feasts and wine were prepared for them. For the next trick, he would offer to repay the dowry himself on behalf of any woman out of sheer brotherly kindness, and in turn, a woman who has left her husband would spend several days with Medza's family working in the plantation. Because of these tactics, the coconut plantation developed into the most imposing plantation in Vimili. Lastly, Old Medza made a lot of money from the plantation and being a tough creditor, he would give the money to anyone who cared to have it on loan. Consequently, the backwoods boys never managed to pay back the money, which Medza's father already knew. Therefore, the jobs or backwood boys would pay in kind by giving out their flocks such as sheep or goats and after Medza's father got all this livestock, he took it to town and sold it at a cracking profit. Old Medza's tricks demonstrate how the upcoming future African bourgeoisie took advantage of the weak and desperate individuals or labourers to exploit them and amass wealth, something which was typical of the colonial system.

Ironically, Beti exposes the cunning ways of the next greedy and selfish local elite, David Mama, who is a well-trained cabinet-maker and, perhaps, a product of a colonial school in trade skills who, using family labour, owns a workshop typical of the petty bourgeoisie. He can be compared to Gatheeca who breaks the ranks against the members of his own class or fellow elites. Being an uncle, he cunningly takes advantage of kinship to lecture Medza about what blood is, only in an attempt to get some of his gifts lavished on him during those night sessions. Naively, he does not understand that greed and selfishness leading to exploitation is the main aim of Mama's lecture.

In view of this analysis, Ndigirigi (2015) makes a very crucial connection between the colonial and the post-independence realities through the colonial local elites and subordinates in colonial society, and the comprador and national bourgeoisie groups who show similar symptoms of the 'colonised mind':

The colonial phase, imperialism, is abetted by a pro-colonial type, which sees loyalty to colonialism as a vehicle to satiate individualism. Independence only Africanises 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 (p. 192).

Instead of using Ndingirigi's term 'pro-colonial type,' this study employs the terms 'colonial local elites or colonial African elite and subordinates.' Thus, the connection between pre and post-independence realities lies in Ndingirigi's observation. This connection is aimed at perpetuating colonialism beyond independence according to Rodney's argument:

The main purpose of the colonial school system was to train Africans to participate in the domination and exploitation of the continent as a whole.... Colonial education was education for subordination, exploitation and the creation of mental confusion and the development of underdevelopment (p. 263).

In *Devil on the Cross*, symbolically referred to as the Jungle or Hell on Earth, Ngugi explores politics and the emerging stable African middle class as his subject of satire with bitterness. He bitterly criticises capitalism, the comprador politicians, comprador bourgeoisie, the national bourgeoisie, the aspiring bourgeoisie, and the West or the imperialists as his targets of satire. Ngugi creates his character types using caricature and semantically and socially loaded names to typify the social realities. Ngugi crafts his character types that belong to the social class structure and what he or she does will do. How he or she views the world is already suggested by the name he or she is given.

Initially, Ngugi employs ironic juxtaposition to satirise the economic system and exposes its greedy, sadistic violent and selfish nature through the two contrasting songs placed side by side. These traits in the second song are inherent in African politicians and the middle class and are one of the causes of Africa's political, socio-economic malaise immediately after independence. For example, during the fight for independence, the patriots under Mau Mau sing with great expectations like this:

*Great love, I found there
Among women and children
A bean fell to the ground –
We split it among ourselves (p. 35).*

The patriots put emphasis on communism. On the contrary, the greedy, violent and selfish home guards and imperialists sing with impunity as follows:

*Self-love and the love of selling out
Among the traitors of the land.
The bean we steal from the people –
We struggle to see who can grab it all (p. 35).*

The author demonstrates that during the fight for independence in many African countries ‘organised unity took two forms’ (p. 34); the real patriots and the self-seeking individuals each with different expectations from independence. Ndigirigi (2015) observes that ‘capitalism in *Devil on the Cross* is portrayed as a jungle where only those with carnivorous tendencies survive. Colonialism, and later on, neocolonialism, helps to satiate these characters’ narrow and greedy appetites’ (p. 194).

Considering the self-seeking middle class, and comprador politicians who took up governance after independence, Ngugi employs a metaphor to refer to them as a clan of parasites as he satirises capitalism – an economic system:

*Each of the two forces builds a heart that reflects the nature of its clan.
Therefore, there are two hearts: the heart built by the clan of parasites,
the evil heart, and the heart built by the clan of producers, the good
heart (p. 50).*

The real patriots are those with a good heart and belong to the clan of producers or labourers while the compradors just like their counterparts, the middle class, possess an evil heart and they, thus, belong to the clan of parasites.

Ngugi furthers his criticism of capitalism through a folktale using the image of the ‘ogre’ by which the parasitic tendencies are exposed:

*The ogre had sunk his long nails into the neck and shoulders of the
peasant. The peasant was the one who went to the fields to get food....
The ogre’s job was to eat... and to sleep soundly on the back of the
peasant. As the peasant became progressively thinner and more
depressed at heart, the ogre prospered... (p. 59).*

The folktale is an extended metaphor and it is suggestive of the parasitic nature of the economic system called capitalism propagated by the compradors and the middle-class citizens. Metaphorically, the ogre is capitalism and does not swallow peasants but feasts on them for its satiation.

At this juncture, Ngugi turns to the use of semantically potent and socially loaded names to create character types whose names fall in the No-sense theory as his characters live to fulfill what their names entail. The semantically potent names, caricature, simile and sarcasm are employed to expose the capitalistic or evil nature of the compradors (African politicians), comprador bourgeoisie, national bourgeoisie and aspiring bourgeoisie who are all participating in the competition of theft and robbery in the cave. They work hand in hand, as agents of neocolonialism, with the imperialists to exploit the masses.

The first competitor is Ndaaya wa Kahuria and Ngugi employs caricature through the use of similes and adjectives to portray the distorted appearance of this particular competitor as follows:

The suit that this competitor was wearing was the kind that had been baptised Napier-Grass-Son-of-Trembling. It showed no sign of ever being pressed. He was tall and lanky. But his eyes were big. They were like two electric bulbs hanging from a tall, thin eucalyptus tree. His arms were long, and he swung them this way and that way as if he did not know what to do with them (p. 91-92).

Ngugi distorts and magnifies Ndaaya's appearance to expose his ability to use his big eyes to see sharply and co-ordinate well with his long arms and fingers as they slide swiftly and stealthily in people's pockets. In short, Ndaaya is a smooth, sly criminal or thief as he boasts: 'if these long fingers were to slide into your pockets, I assure you that you wouldn't feel them' (p. 92). Despite his magnified appearance, his ability in theft and robbery is met with angry protests from fellow participants who think Ndaaya is just a small thief because he steals to satiate his hunger. In view of this reaction, Ngugi employs sarcasm to hit hard at the greedy nature of capitalists: 'here, in this cave, we are interested only in people who steal because their bellies are full' (p. 92), says the master of ceremony. Rules that are potent with sarcasm are established so as to get rid of such characters as Ndaaya:

...every competitor must reveal the number of wives he has – wives and/or mistresses, ...give a brief account of the career in theft and robbery, ... show how theft and robbery can be increased in the country, show how we can strengthen ties between us and foreigners (p. 96).

Ngugi implies that considering theft and robbery as a career and suggesting how these vices can be multiplied in the country is sadly ridiculous.

The next competitor is Gitutu wa Gataanguru. At this point, Ngugi turns to his tradition in this text of creating the character types on the basis of names that are heavily loaded with terrible meanings and they fall into the No-sense theory as these typical figures live to fulfill what their names entail. Ndigirigi (2015) posits that *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. Ngugi further employs caricature characterised by adjectives to demonstrate 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 (p. 97).

Gitutu's hands have disappeared because he hardly does any work and his belly is growing larger because it is frequently overworked. The word 'jigger' refers to a parasite or one who does not produce but thrives on the best that the workers and peasants produce and these bourgeoisie characteristics are typical of the class Gitutu belongs to – the capitalists.

In the same vein, five of his eight Christian names 'Rottenborough, Groundflesh, Shitland, Narrow and Isthmus' are, thus, satirically suggestive as observed by Ndirigiri (2015):

His size is a result of exploiting the people. In a figurative sense, therefore, Gitutu feeds on the people's ground flesh, an aspect that is captured in the ground flesh of his name. This explains Gitutu'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 (p. 196).

Ngugi conveys a vivid satiric message that suggests that capitalism, as an economic system, is exploitative and parasitic in nature. A Comprador bourgeois like Gitutu has to depend on his links with foreign overlords (IMF, World Bank, foreign investors, etc.) in exploiting the masses of their basic needs to satiate his insatiable appetite for wealth.

In addition, Gitutu's arms are as short as a stump which implies meanness which is illustrated in his greedy thoughts:

My friends, when we reach the stage of selling soil to peasants in tins and pots ...the other idea I'd like to follow up is how we, the top-grade tycoons, can trap the air in the sky, put it in tins and sell it to peasants (p. 106).

Ngugi, like his counterpart Beti, does not relent in turning against the exploited masses to shake them off their deception and docility through sarcasm as Gitutu boastfully refers to the masses as gullible as the reason behind his wealth: 'my fame spread throughout the ridges. And my bank account swelled. It was from the same gullible people that I later got a few cents to buy my many farms; coffee, tea, wheat plantations and ranches' (p. 105). Ngugi is making a case in point here when he suggests that gullibility is one of the vices that encourage these carnivores to continue lording it over the workers and peasants.

Furthermore, Ngugi continues to demonstrate his bitter criticism against the agents of capitalism in the neocolonial era. He, however, turns his attention to one demon in the name of Kihaahu wa Gatheeca who begins as middle class then ends up as a comprador politician. His foreign name is Lord Gabriel Bloodwell-Stuart-Jones and is 'particularly good at bourgeois women' (p. 108), not school-girls. To expose Gatheeca's carnivorous and predatory traits that enable him to break ranks and exploit members of his own class (the bourgeoisie), Ngugi employs caricature and a name loaded with semantic potency:

Kihaahu was a tall, slim fellow; he had long legs, long arms, long fingers, a long neck and a long mouth. His mouth was shaped like the beak of the kingstock; long, thin and sharp. His chin, his face, his head formed a cone ...he looked like a 6-foot praying mantis or mosquito p. (107).

Using caricature, Ngugi compares Kihaahu's mouth to the beak of the kingstock, a bird whose beak, according to a Gikuyu proverb, "does not pick up grains for another" (Ndigirigi, 2015, p. 194). In the same vein, his predatory and carnivorous nature is hinted at by his names 'Kīhaahu (the one who scares) and *Gatheeca* (the one who pierces). *Kīhaahu* might be derived from the Gikūyū name for the kingstock' (Ndigirigi, 2015, p. 194).

Furthermore, using the caricature and semantically potent name of Kihaahu wa *Gatheeca*, Ngugi pitilessly exposes the dirty games played by politicians in post-independent African societies such as corruption and lies in African politics as a way of gaining political mileage when *Gatheeca* speaks with impunity:

I literally poured money into the pockets of those around me...I gathered a choir of Nyakinyua women about me, who sang praises and inverted stories of how I had fought for freedom and had provided land and education and other lies like those (p. 113).

Through the character of *Gatheeca*, Ngugi exposes how politicians in post-independent Africa thrive on sadistic violence and buying of members from other political opponents:

*Then I employed a youth wing, whose task was to destroy the property of my opponents and to beat those who murmured complaints about me. I had five opponents...bought them out for 50,000 shillings each. They both made public announcements that they were withdrawing in favour of *Gatheeca* (p. 113).*

Furthermore, Ngugi goes to an extent of exposing the game of vote-buying where *Gatheeca* 'spent a total of 2,000,000 shillings' (p. 114) and getting kick-backs from government projects as *Gatheeca* boasts: 'the company that won the tender for building the houses was Italian. ...it had first given me a small back-hander of about 2,000,000 shillings' (p. 115).

To this end, *Gatheeca*, full of sarcasm, mocks the masses by thanking them for their weaknesses which play to his advantage as exposed here:

That's why I'm grateful to the masses of the Kenyan people. For their blindness, their ignorance, their inability to demand their rights are what enable us, the clan of man-eaters, to feed on their sweat without their asking too many awkward questions (p. 116).

In short, Ngugi is showing us that politicians thrive immensely on the blindness, gullibility and ignorance of the masses (the ruled) to satiate their appetite for long stays in power and wealth in today's Africa.

The next competitor, a comprador bourgeois, is Nditika wa Nguunji. Ngugi graphically (caricature) describes Nditika using similes and adjectives to show his ugly appearance:

Nditika wa Nguunji was very fat. His head was huge, like a mountain. His belly hung over his belt, big and arrogant. His eyes were the size of two large red electric bulbs, and it looked as if they had been placed on his face by a creator impatient to get on with another job...The Jacket had tails cut in the shape of the wings of the big green and blue flies that are normally found in pit latrines... (p. 178).

Nditika's physical ugliness and immense size expose his acquisitive nature and implies a tasteless, avid eater. He satiates his appetite for wealth and property by hoarding, smuggling, poaching, export and import. Ngugi emphasises Nditika's indiscriminate qualities through the character names as explained by Ndigirigi: 'the name Nditika refers to one who carries heavy burdens. Nguuji refers to one who folds' (2015, p. 194). Put together, the names 'Nditika' and 'Nguunji' refer to a character who carries everything and selfishly keeps to himself everything he acquires. His homeguard position enables him to acquire wealth and people's land, boasting that he and his fellow colonial lackeys were lording it over the masses in colonial days. He further reminds the masses: 'and when freedom comes we shall continue to lord it over you' (p. 279). Nditika's desire to create a factory that can manufacture human parts such as two sexual organs, two mouths, two bellies and so on, suggests greed and his longing for immortality.

Ngugi turns his attention to Robin Mwaura who represents the lackeys and sell-outs in the colonial period, but a type who in the post-independence or neocolonial era is the aspiring national bourgeois. Ngugi abandons the use of caricature for a moment to satirise his target and relies on the semantically potent name of 'Mwaura' which means "the one who steals' (Ndigirigi, 2015, p. 196) to expose the greedy, narrow and selfish appetites of those local thieves who choose to steal from their fellow nationals without any link with the outside forces. People like Mwaura are ready to commit any crime 'in royal obedience to the molten god of money' (p. 27), and they are ready to sacrifice anyone who stands in their way to acquire riches. For instance, Mwaura, typically, declares: 'as for me, I would sell my own my mother if I thought she would fetch a good price' (p. 197). He further 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' (p. 53). Typical of his violent nature, Mwaura is the one who organises the murder of Mwireri for a fee.

Gakono, a police superintendent, is another character type whose name Ngugi employs to satirise the ineffective police service or any other law enforcing agent. In view of this, Ndigirigi (2015) explains that '*Gakono*, a diminutive derived from the Swahili word *mkono* for hand refers to a disabled or withered hand and connotes that of the beggar' (p. 198). For instance, when he and his men appear on the scene to arrest these thieves and robbers gathered in the cave, Gakono ends up 'offering apologies and begging for forgiveness in a trembling voice' (p. 202) to the master of ceremonies much to Wangari's shock. Ngugi, humorously, demonstrates how Gakono mumbles a string of a hundred and forty unpunctuated words of apologies. This is the trembling of the desperate beggar in the presence of his provider – the hand that feeds him. Ngugi exposes how the Gakonos or the police of today are essentially withered, disabled, and unable to bring about any

change in the status quo. This also reveals how the comprador bourgeoisie use the police to protect their exploitative hold on African countries. Thus, the police and the politicians as well as the middle class are the targets of satire in post-independent Africa.

Through the character of Kimeendeeri, that is, his caricature and semantically potent name exposes how oral performances or the arts and religion which are part of the superstructure are used to hide and glorify the wicked nature of capitalism, and how the law is used to defend the system of eating (capitalism).

Dialecticism, finally comes to the fore when Muturi (maker of that which heals the tears) and Wangari who are dialectical opposites lead the peasants, workers and students against the Devil's angels in the cave.

Conclusion

Political satire has attempted to expose the negative political and socio-economic realities orchestrated by greed, selfishness and sadistic violence throughout time both in pre-independent and post-independent African societies. In view of this, typicality has proven to be crucial in exposing and thereafter connecting these realities between the two periods of time on the basis of the colonised African and the comprador bourgeois, since both character types are victims of a colonised mind. Both the colonial local elites and today's African bourgeoisie groups have three things in common: they imitate the cunning ways of the colonialists or imperialists, they maintain their links with the colonialists or imperialists and they adopt the same language and rhetoric of capitalist economics and finance. Therefore, the socio-economic and political doldrums of Africa are historical and the past still haunts us.

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