



RESEARCH PAPER

Exploring Resistance in Ngugi's Matigari: A Fanonian Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Matigari, an influential work, by Ngugi wa Thiong'o was brought into the public attention in 1986 which reveals resistance to the dominating system of post-colonialism and neocolonialism. Pursuing Kenyan independence, the novel which is set in Kenya discloses the story of Matigari Ma Njiruungi, who symbolizes the fight against injustice and inequality. Ngugi assesses the fiascos of the governments of post-colonialism to address a corrupt system of inequality by assimilating mythological themes, social criticism and cultural symbols. This novel thoroughly portrays resistance as both an individual and communal struggle firmly established in cultural traditions. The novel examines the persisting existence of oppressive colonial system in distinct ways and points out the critical role of unity in overwhelming the oppressive system. This analysis of the novel concentrates upon symbols, communal unity and language to demonstrate resistance, offering a transparent observation of Ngugi's assessment of neocolonialism and struggle for genuine freedom.

KEYWORDS Matigari, Neocolonialism, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Postcolonialism, Resistance

Introduction

Matigari, Ngugi wa Thiong'o's masterpiece, got its publication in 1986 which represents a crucial work of both neocolonialism and lack of post-colonialism fiascos in government of Kenya. The novel set in the post-independence period of time clearly represents resistance in contrast to oppressive systems that persist in manipulating and marginalizing ordinary people. The character of Matigari Ma Njiruungi is fundamental to this exploration whose experiences symbolize the larger search for justice and freedom.

In Matigari, Ngugi mixes up Kikuyu myths with modern social and political concerns to create a narrative that challenges both colonial and neocolonial systems. The novel portrays resistance as a challenge that is pivotal in bringing a change in society. Protagonist's symbolic actions and Ngugi's interfaces with distinct characters are served in Matigari interrogating the realism of self-governing authorities and to unfold the unrelenting challenges to injustice and exploitation.

Symbols of culture, allegory and language usage are elements of resistance that are practiced in the novel concerned in contradiction of Western cultural control and dissociation of self-recognition. These themes symbolize the real liberation that Ngugi delves into the concept of resistance. In this analysis Matigari's use of allegory, symbolic actions and communal backup are critically examined in order to resist neocolonial injustices so as to achieve historical and cultural identification.

Colonialism

Colonialism holds a high role in the history in which an authority dominates all territories by exercising a political control and sustains oppressive system upon another people. 15th Century era outset a relevant reform in European expansion and exploration into the Asia, America, Oceania and Africa mainly in the societal, cultural and economical change in the coming centuries. Colonialism was primarily exercised by the oppressing dominance by utilizing political powers upon the colonized community in order to show supremacy upon them, launch trade routes and regulate natural resources. For example, colonial oppressive system influenced in forced labor, separating of continent and fiasco of sustained social and political structure in Africa subsequently establishing racial discrimination and sustaining the persecution faced by non-European colonies. Consequences of colonialism era form recognitions of post-colonialism, social and economic injustices and sphere of political background. Ngugi wa Thiong'o's "Matigari" serves the elements of resistance, forming identification and the everlasting influences of manipulation of colonialism era; and points out challenging efforts for equality, governance and decolonization (Kortright, 2011).

Post colonialism

Postcolonial era, in the last years of the 20th century, arose in a grave aspect that unveiled the unending effects of imperial and colonial system. It assesses how colonial system has affected the territories culturally, socially and politically for both colonized and colonizes groups. Theory of postcolonial era in later colonial age delves into dominating aspects and strives for figuring out the complicated aspects of power, cultural unity and identity shaping. Fundamental to this reciprocal is criticism of European-centered aspects and recognition of various perceptions and utterances that were suppressed in colonial dominance. Scholars investigate leitmotifs of cultural combination, nationalism, identification formation and resistance movements pursuing colonial period in their postcolonial literary work. Respaut (2007) states that the literary works such as novels, essays, and poetry function as fundamental tools for these themes to be examined, and serving aspects on the practices and societal defiance face in decolonization procedure and their struggles for securing autonomy. Postcolonial era from theoretical viewpoints experiences constant headway affecting discourses about justice, equality and the tolerating results of colonial period in contemporary regimes.

A renowned author, Ngugi wa Thiong'o has given his immense contribution in discovering postcolonial leitmotifs, African recognition, fight for social justice and importance of language. Period of 1938 Kamiriithu, Kenya marks James Ngugi's birthplace. However, he assumed the appellation of Ngugi wa Thiong'o to increase his bond with Gikuyu language and culture. "Weep Not, Child" (1964) and "A Grain of Wheat" (1967) proved Ngugi's initial accomplishment which examined social aspects in Kenya in colonial governance and intricacies of post-independent era. The period of 1970s points out Ngugi's transformation to Gikuyu from English in order to develop the decolonization of African literature and stressing the cultural recognition throughout Africa. His struggle against neocolonial system proved in his imprisonment under the rule of Daniel arap Moi in 1977 almost twenty years of exile. In spite of the struggles Ngugi persisted energetic in creating prominent literary works that challenge social order, global capitalism, encompassing novels, essays, plays and reminiscences. Ngugi is recognized throughout the world being a literary man, and he has struggled to develop the addition of African languages into education programs while challenging the governance of Western teaching techniques. His everlasting contribution is shown in a

variety of awards and Nobel prizes, illustrating his prominent influence upon literature, worldly discourse, recognition and socio-political change (Butt, 2013).

Novel

The novel *Matigari* performs a vital role in the literature of postcolonial era that portrays the adventure of Matigari Ma Njiruungi who fights for liberty. He comes back to his motherland, Kenya after a long and strenuous fight against the oppressive system of colonialism. Matigari, when returns, observes that justice and freedom have not arose yet by the dominating authority in the rule of colonialism. The novel serves a theme of political symbol and delves into social and political conditions of Kenya marking the new governing body's fiascos to establish reforming values. The theme of the novel is centered on Matigari, a protagonist of resistance and freedom who challenges the oppressive system enforced by the colonial and postcolonial authority. His wife, Mumbi, represents native and social dynamics of resistance, whereas the leaders disclose the fiasco of new rule. The novel delves into the leitmotifs of treachery, exploitation, resistance, social justice and recognition. Moreover, symbolism plays crucial role in the novel, as traditional weapon of Matigari demonstrates the unyielding search for justice and the fig tree represents the society that lacks justice. The period of a former Kenyan president, Daniel arap Moi, remarks oppressive rule in a political and exploitative way. Matigari depicts dissatisfaction bitterly with postcolonial rule and represents social and economic inequality. The significance of Ngugi wa Thiong'o's literary works emerges from its comprehensive assessment of conditions of post-independence and its search for the ways through which power can diminish and undermine revolutionary principles (Karagoz, 2015).

Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Matigari* keeps weighty significance for its quest for resistance, postcolonial challenges and the firm search for establishing justice in society. The novel serves a critical evaluation of nations of the post colonialism, underscoring their tendency to continue or worsen issues inherited from colonial history rather than actively attempting to resolve them (Timm, 1992; Shri, 2020). *Matigari* illustrates resistance literature, exploring the themes of revolt against the oppressive system and search for the social reform. The novel, capturing Kenya's cultural and historical background, examines the social and political environment, and unveils how neocolonialism has impacted its development. It also serves information about African postcolonial recognition and rule. In the novel *Matigari*, Ngugi uses metaphor and allegory to question political thoughts and social traditions by blending narrative complexity. This inculcates readers to examine its themes. Additionally, the combination of the narrative and traditional myth urges the crucial role of cultural heritage in developing resistance and Propelling a combine action against injustices of contemporary times. *Matigari* develops discussions in postcolonial discourse by assessing insufficient ideas of freedom initiating discussions on the distinct effectiveness of resistance. It remarks how literature is a powerful tool for developing social change, remarking its significant role in forming societal dynamics and actions. The themes treachery, justice and resistance in the novel serve significant educational content for discourse in the literary field and political science as well, developing deep thought on the colonial heritage and ongoing struggles for justice and freedom (Tyson, 2006; Afolayan, 2015).

Literature Review

Literature review is overview of the previous works related to the current theme, these works contained on published books, theses, scholarly articles and websites. The

main function of literature review is to get applicable understanding to a specific research theme. (Amin et al., 2023; Maitlo, Abbasi & Ali, 2024).

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o

Ngugi wa Thiong'o, born James Thiong'o Ngugi, could be a noticeable Kenyan essayist and scholar. Born in 1938 in Kamiriithu, Kenya, Ngugi has been a vocal advocate for African dialects and social personality in writing. He at first composed in English but afterward chose to compose fundamentally in Gikuyu, his local dialect, to advance decolonization and social restoration in Africa. His works frequently investigate topics of colonialism, neocolonialism, social government, and resistance.

Ngugi's scholarly career is stamped by a significant advancement affected by his encounters and political activism. His early books, such as "Weep Not, Child" (1964) and "The River Between" (1965), set up him as a critical voice in African writing in English. Be that as it may, his choice to type in Gikuyu and his consequent works like "Petals of Blood" (1977) and "Devil on the Cross" (1980) reflected his commitment to decolonizing African writing and recovering social legacy (Afolayan, 2015).

Matigari and Other Novels

Matigari (1986) could be an essential work in Ngugi's scholarly corpus. The novel tells the story of the eponymous legend, Matigari ma Njiruungi, who emerges from the timberland after battling within the freedom battle to discover that the guarantees of autonomy have been deceived. He sets out on a journey to discover truth, equity, and mending for his individuals, challenging the degenerate postcolonial administration (Gurnah, 1991).

Butt (2013) states that not at all like Ngugi's prior books, Matigari is unmistakable for its mix of authenticity and moral story. It evaluates the disappointments of the postcolonial state and investigates subjects of equity, flexibility, and the battle for self-determination. The novel's account style, with its legendary connotations and symbolic components, underscores Ngugi's conviction within the control of narrating as an instrument for social change.

Ngugi's move to compose only in Gikuyu from Matigari onwards marks a thin dismissal of colonial dialects as the essential medium of African writing. This phonetic choice is itself an act of resistance against social government, pointing to engage African dialects and personalities in a worldwide scholarly setting (Cookey, 1979).

Resistance in Matigari

The story of Matigari is essentially one of resistance. Matigari, the protagonist, personifies the unwavering spirit of resistance against injustice and persecution. His pursuit of justice and the truth is a reflection of the post-independence struggles of many Africans who were left demoralized by the broken promises made during the freedom fight.

Craven (2012) states that the book criticizes the neocolonial systems that took the place of direct colonialism in Africa, emphasizing how the majority suffered while wealth and power remained concentrated in the hands of a few number of people. Matigari's quest becomes an allegorical exploration of the challenges confronting any resistance in a postcolonial space, where social and economic autonomy does not always imply political immunity from state violence. Through symbolism and metaphor, Ngugi has a lot more

to say on the subject of resistance. Through his interaction with the various personalities, Matigari exemplifies a lot of societal issues and objectives. His focus on equality and fairness chimes well with bigger movements for human rights, dignity in Africa and the globe.

The novel also provokes readers to reexamine the historical and identity myths imposed by colonial powers. The writings of Ngugi foreground Gikuyu folklore and oral traditions, suggesting that the assertion of indigenous knowledge systems and cultural practices constitute viable spaces for responding to Western domination.

To wrap it up, this is why, *Matigari* by Ngugi wa Thiong'o answering the question why it is a fundamental text for all literature in enlistments of journalism examination of social themes, councils and the society-based narrative full of twists creativity. Using the character of Matigari, Ngugi delves into how complex fighting against neocolonialism and cultural imperialism can be strengthened through a return to African languages and cultures. The publication prompted discussions on postcolonial nation-building challenges, the lasting impact of colonialism and struggles for freedom to this very day in Africa and worldwide.

Material and Methods

"Methodical study of process is known as the research method" (Ahmad et al., 2021, p.194). This study is a qualitative study based on Frantz Fanon's theories applied to the text of Ngugi wa Thiong'o, particularly his novel *Matigari* ending with an exploration of resistance in postcolonial identity. Fanon's ideas, found in "The Wretched of the Earth" (1963) and "Black Skin, White Masks" (1986) especially are important for understanding how this book represents resistance against efforts to liberate themselves through an automatic identity while imposing colonialism.

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical framework is a structure that support a theory, in its function is not merely comprises the theory but also to provide chronicle justification about the theory employed by the researcher to investigate research problem (Rao et al., 2023; Sadaf et al., 2024). The strategy is premised upon Fanon's theories coping with the psychologically impact of colonialism and its violence, and the ways through which individuals struggle to liberate themselves. The theory offered by Fanon states that the colonization discourages and makes inferior to those who have been captured. This sentiment may show itself in many ways, as an aspiration to consume the colonizer society and deny their existence. This framework will help to understand how *Matigari* describes his life in a Kenya after colonial subjugation and the fights of its protagonist against this new kind of colonization (Rasal, 2021).

Textual Analysis

A detailed examination of *Matigari* is then performed in order to establish where and how this narrative fits with Fanon. An in-depth look at areas such as character change, symbolism and themes shows the way colonialism impacted on individual views of reality, as well societal mythologies. For example, Fanon's theory on the act of demonstrating against injustice and how one cannot help but feel human again can be used to theorize about *Matigari* as he goes out into society trying to beat unfair systems in order for justice (Sinha, 2011).

Results and Discussion

Matigari by Ngugi wa Thiong'o is an important text in examining neocolonialism and the tactics used to fight against its post-independence for Kenya. That important book published in 1986 represented the betrayal that Africans were meted even after acquiring independence. They are forever burdened with the evils of injustice and corruption rather than held aloft by freedom and development. The book effectively reflects the new norms of colonial repression and force that crushed everyone who had labored with anticipation for liberation. The narrative almost pushes its message by much needed subjects, symbolism and character development.

Matigari discovers that new nations are still exercising political, cultural and economic oppression of its subjects in the manner done by colonialists. The story takes place in 1980, a time when an extensive group of people started to understand and denounce colonialism. This was freedom Kenyans celebrated and looked forward to a society in justice. But their dreams were short-lived: they soon found themselves stuck with the same corrupt factional rule that had prevailed in colonial times. Ngugi portrays a pathetic state of Kenya owing to the broken promises of freedom. It shows a country in which newly-minted, freedom-loving and torchbearers have settled into nothing more than symbolic corruption.

The protagonist and central character, Matigari Ma Njiruungi, is symbolic of the way in which Ngugi berates postcolonial rulers for their failure to commit themselves wholeheartedly to reform concept of development. When Matigari finally returns home after a protracted absence, he finds the new leadership to be selfish and corrupt. Africans endure the worst representation when it comes to their leaders in history even of treachery. His history notes the sorrow felt by so many who struggled for liberty only to become chained again under fresh forms of tyranny. It is easy to see that this also corresponds with the economic divide produced by these new colonial powers, and as such they have clearly broken their word. The book points to the contrast between this and everyday people deprived of freedom in colonial rule. Ngugi shows how a culture is alienated, emphasizes new colonial rule has gained little ground, and emphasizes how the words of independence have been broken on (Young, 2001).

The battle of Matigari is a synthesized creation that forms part and parcels of the hard struggle against injustice. His adventures tell of his trials and defiance to right injustices, a search for justice and freedom. He is met with resistance and bloodshed in his first attempts to challenge the authority, showing how oppressive rule must be broken by all. This image is to remind us of the actual hurdles that pose every entity and people who fight tried breaking away dominant frameworks. Matigari's fight shows resistance to justice and a hope for the light at the end of it all.

Matigari acts mainly through cooperation. This battle for change is only beginning, but with the help of local people who understand his grief for their beloved homeland, Matigari grows more ultimately powerful. It shows how important it is to come together and act as one against injustice, on the power of collective behavior impacting such reforms. This book brings many different people together to work with and support each other so they can take up the cause of injustice. And it says that joining forces to fight cruelty is a serious matter. This work of community as depicted in the spirit of Matigari represents a very key character on their sense towards justice (Young, 2001).

Matigari is full of direct allusions to the postcolonial struggle. One distinguished example is the narrative of the anonymous shelterless child's father, who died in the fight against oppressive systems of colonial rule. The child discloses to Matigari, "I have no father," the boy said, "I hear he was killed fighting for independence" (p. 15).

Moreover, the novel represents the patriots who establish the challenging forces of armed forces. The patriots are illustrated as the ones "who went to the forest to fight for freedom... to keep the fire of freedom burning" (p. 20).

Armed resistance opposite to colonial power is illustrated by Matigari's individual struggle against the settler William. The story presents their unyielding quest for each other. "through groves, caves, rivers, ditches, plains, everywhere" (p. 20).

Besides physical fights, the novel also highlights the sociopolitical resistance through Matigari's discourse. For example, Matigari states that the tailor emphasizes upon getting his clothes, the farmer, his land, the labourer expects earning of his labour and the builder wishes his house retrieved. He orders, "Get out of my house. You have hands of your own, you cruel and greedy one. Go build your own!" (p. 21-22). These declarations strongly criticize the unjust and cruel practices of colonial rule that have deprived the innocent of their basic needs including lands, homes, and liberty.

Matigari's challenge to police, who keep on the colonial influence by harassing Guthera, creates another crucial resistance act. He defies both the policemen and authority of their actions. Nevertheless, the resistance is depicted as uncommon in the society portrayed in the novel. No one opposes the brazen behaviour, shameful act of harassment and tyranny of policemen when they set their dog free towards innocent Guthera, in spite of being several witnesses in the restaurant except Matigari.

Matigari, the major character, symbolizes resistance. Despite wearing a belt indicating peace, he gets incensed whenever he perceives the act of tyranny or injustice before him. He believes that "Of what use is a man if he cannot protect his children?" (p. 30). Matigari is of the opinion that resistance is vital for sustaining human life. His speech, to the silent audience, is an influencing way of inculcating enthusiasm among local people for resistance when Guthera is being victimized by the policemen. Through Matigari, the text questions both Kenyan and the decolonized worldwide, where the colonial practices have destroyed the recent culture. Matigari inquires, "What is going on here? Are you going to let our children be made to eat shit while you stand around nodding in approval? How can you stand there watching the beauty of our land being trodden down by these beasts?" (p. 30-31). By raising these questions Matigari tries to fill spirit among the decolonized group to awake and resist against the inhuman and unjust system of colonialism. His queries focus upon the re-examination of all establishments and eradication of all corrupt practices of colonialism (Asmat, Hayat, & Qasim, 2012).

Ngugi builds his leitmotifs of neocolonialism and resistance through symbols and narratives. The obstacles and tribulations faced by the protagonist underscore a longer plight for which people fight against to overcome injustices. A story of this title, Matigari which means "the person who seeks for justice" or perhaps better, since the Swahili word is neutral in gender and can mean both survivor of oppression and freedom fighter, focuses on his promise to guard social justice. Symbolism is also used by Ngugi to examine resistance, specifically insurgencies in government's post-colonial and the re-exploitation still occurring. The story of Matigari is an examination into the postcolonial state with its struggle for justice embedded within larger issues of corruption and deceit. Ngugi weaves in traditional Kenyan myths and storytelling to contribute towards

Matigari's cultural struggle provides a historical narrative through which one can connect the dots around how countries got here without undermining contemporary challenges with deeply rooted socio-cultural values. Ngugi uses traditional narratives to depict the relationship between cultural tradition and defiance against oppressive colonial system in order underline that this kind of memory still has some resilience in resisting current-day forms of colonial exploitation. Narratives develop a cultural background through myths and stories which explain the fight against resistance. They reveal the stakeholders not only of timeless values, but also time-tested practices in justice (Borocz& Sarkar, 2012).

The use of folklore hones in the need to resist for survival, as resistance is integral to protect and restore cultural recognition. Through text of letters and symbols, Ngugi critiques the neocolonialist idea and resistance. It allows a more nuanced understanding and appreciation of his intricate socio-political ideas. The story acts as a strong narrative to demonstrate the sacred relationship between what we fight for today and how it was also embedded in history.

Conclusion

To conclude, Matigari serves a detailed analysis of the resistance and neocolonialism, focusing on the social and political aspects of post-independence Kenya. The novel offers a picture of imperial disillusionment. It also evokes the most memorable moments of the journey by reference to these symbols and cultural excerpts with respect to its protagonist. Therefore, the novel acts as a complete examination of what postcolonial societies must face until now. Ngugi has depicted the struggle and the resistance for real freedom. It shows how political concept can be assessed and criticized by applying literature. Moreover, Matigari reveals the themes of power, social justice and resistance in the form offering some invaluable theories on oppressive systems as well as the overall fight for a better world full of justice. This makes it significant in postcolonial literature. Through analyzing the subjects thoroughly, the novel, Matigari by Ngugi wa Thiong'o, highlights the persistent struggle against oppressive colonial dominance and portrays the strong the influence of the quest for freedom and justice.

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