

Decolonizing Neoliberalism: A Literary Critique of Western Influence in Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's *Matigari*

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Abstract—This paper analyzes Ngugi wa Thiong'o's novel *Matigari* through the lens of allegory, highlighting the critiques of the neoliberal socio-economic system imposed on many African countries after independence. The paper examines the impact of Western influence on African countries, perpetuating class segregation, gender and labor violence, and socio-economic injustice. The paper argues that *Matigari* can be read as a counter-narrative to the neoliberal system that disempowers the local masses economically, socially, and politically. Moreover, the character of Matigari serves as a catalyst for the revolution, embodying the people's desire for change and their aspirations for a just and equitable society. Matigari's revolutionary actions demonstrate that the people have the power to resist and challenge the oppressive system. The paper also suggests possibilities for further examination of decolonized third world literary texts through this lens of allegory, emphasizing the potential for analyzing other texts that critique oppressive systems and offer hope for revolution and change. Overall, the paper contributes to the ongoing conversation about the impacts of neoliberalism on third world countries and the potential for resistance and change through literature.

Index Terms—Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Matigari*, neoliberalism, African literature, decolonization

I. INTRODUCTION

Decolonization was a complex and multifaceted process that produced a range of literary works reflecting the struggles and aspirations of the formerly colonized peoples. Among these works is Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Matigari*, a novel that portrays the neocolonial crisis in post-independence Kenya and the people's resistance to it. This novel is particularly noteworthy for its depiction of the collective representation of the people, their quest for justice and liberation, and their struggle against the hegemonic ruling party. Maya Jaggi notes that the character of Matigari represents the collective worker in history and that his three allies - a woman named Guthera and a boy named Muriuki - represent the three main pillars of a heteronormative family. The collective theme of the revolution is thus extended to all types of people, including men, women, and children. Through a careful analysis of the novel, this paper argues that Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Matigari* highlights the neocolonial crisis in third world countries, exposes the brutality and corruption of the ruling party, and illustrates the people's struggle for justice and liberation. Drawing on a range of literary and cultural theories, including postcolonial theory, Marxist theory, and feminist theory, this paper sheds light on the ways in which Ngugi's novel challenges dominant discourses and offers alternative visions of society, history, and power. By doing so, it contributes to a deeper understanding of the complexities and contradictions of decolonization, neocolonialism, and resistance in postcolonial Africa and beyond. As the world continues to grapple with issues of inequality, injustice, and domination, *Matigari* remains a powerful reminder of the urgent need to imagine and create a more just and equitable future for all.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review presented here offers a comprehensive overview of the critical literature on Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's novel *Matigari*. This powerful work has been the subject of intense scrutiny by scholars and critics alike, who have sought to understand its place in the wider debates on African literature, postcolonial studies, and Marxist theory. The authors of the articles reviewed here offer a range of perspectives on Ngugi's work, exploring its themes, its political implications, and its literary significance. Through these reviews, we gain a deeper understanding of the complex political and cultural context in which *Matigari* was written, and the ways in which it continues to resonate with contemporary debates on social justice, imperialism, and the role of literature in shaping political consciousness. Taken together, these reviews offer a rich and insightful introduction to the critical literature on Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's work, and a valuable resource for scholars and students interested in African literature and culture, postcolonial studies, and Marxist theory.

Matigari as Myth and History: An Interview (Jaggi & NgugiWa Thiong'o, 1989). Jaggi's interview with Ngugi Wa Thiong'o provides a fascinating insight into the author's intentions and inspirations behind his novel *Matigari*. Ngugi

discusses the role of myth and history in his work, and how he seeks to use literature as a means of cultural and political resistance. He also reflects on his experiences as a writer and political activist, and the challenges he has faced in his efforts to promote African literature and culture. Jaggi's interview is a valuable resource for scholars and students interested in Ngugi's work and the wider debates on African literature and postcolonial studies.

The Neocolonial State and Other Prostheses of the Postcolonial National Body: Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's Project of Revolutionary National Culture (Cheah, 2003). Cheah's essay explores Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's project of revolutionary national culture and the challenges it poses to the neocolonial state and postcolonial national body. Through a close reading of Ngugi's novel *Matigari*, Cheah argues that Ngugi's project seeks to expose the continuation of colonial domination and to develop a revolutionary national culture that is free from neocolonial influences. Cheah's essay is a valuable contribution to the debates on the decolonization of literature and the role of literature in national liberation struggles.

"A Brief History of Neoliberalism – David Harvey" (Ginsburg, 2006). Ginsburg's article provides a brief overview of David Harvey's book on neoliberalism and its effects on global capitalism. Ginsburg summarizes Harvey's argument that neoliberalism is a political project aimed at the reorganization of capitalist society and the restoration of the power of economic elites. He also discusses the various ways in which neoliberal policies have contributed to the exacerbation of inequality, the erosion of social protections, and the intensification of economic globalization. Ginsburg's article is a useful introduction to the debates on neoliberalism and its impact on contemporary societies.

Neoliberalism and Allegory (Joseph, 2012). Joseph's article explores the relationship between neoliberalism and allegory in contemporary literature and culture. She argues that the allegorical mode has become an important means of critiquing neoliberalism and its effects on society, particularly in the context of globalization and the financial crisis. Joseph analyzes a range of literary and cultural texts, including films and television shows, to demonstrate how the allegorical mode can be used to expose the contradictions and injustices of neoliberalism. Her article is a valuable contribution to the ongoing debates on the role of literature and culture in shaping political consciousness.

Addei, Osei, and Annin's (2013) article "Ngugi and Post-Colonial Africa: History, Politics and Morality in *Petals of Blood* and *Matigari*" explores the themes of history, politics, and morality in two of Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's most celebrated novels. The authors focus on the ways in which Ngugi's work critiques neocolonialism and the continuing effects of colonialism on post-colonial Africa. Through a close reading of *Petals of Blood* and *Matigari*, Addei, Osei, and Annin argue that Ngugi's writing challenges traditional forms of literary representation, and uses the novel as a platform for social and political critique. The authors also analyze Ngugi's emphasis on the moral dimensions of the struggle for African liberation, and how this emphasis shapes his representation of individual characters and their struggles. Addei, Osei, and Annin's article is an important contribution to the critical literature on Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, and provides a valuable analysis of his work in the context of post-colonial Africa.

Mwetulundila (2016) provides a Marxist analysis of Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's novel *Matigari*. Drawing on Marxist theory, the author explores the themes of class struggle, exploitation, and imperialism in the novel. Mwetulundila argues that *Matigari* is a powerful critique of the neocolonial state and the capitalist system that underpins it. The author pays particular attention to the character of Matigari, who is portrayed as a revolutionary figure fighting against the forces of oppression and exploitation. By examining the novel through a Marxist lens, Mwetulundila sheds light on the complex political and economic realities of postcolonial Africa, and the challenges of building a truly equitable and just society. Overall, Mwetulundila's analysis offers a valuable contribution to the ongoing debates on Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's work, Marxist theory, and the struggle for social justice in Africa.

Matigari is a rich and complex work that has been the subject of extensive critical analysis. The articles reviewed in this literature review have offered unique perspectives on Ngugi's work, from postcolonialism to Marxism. However, this review has highlighted the theme of debt ideology in *Matigari*, which has not been explored extensively in the existing critical discourse. This theme is of particular importance in the context of contemporary global economic systems, and a deeper understanding of neoliberal ideology in *Matigari* can offer insights into the ways in which debt shapes contemporary societies.

III. METHOD

In his 1987 novel *Matigari*, Kenyan author and intellectual Ngugi presents a narrative that serves as a prescient critique of neoliberalism. Through an unfixed time and space and the use of allegory, Ngugi creates a narrative that symbolizes the decolonized time and space of the Third World, with essential symbols of ruling regimes, neoliberal socio-economic systems, class division and struggle, droughts, and exploitation of natural resources and labor. By leaving the narrative unfixed, Ngugi provides readers with the opportunity to draw allegorical meanings that can be applied to any country with similar experiences.

This paper argues that a debt ideology reading of *Matigari* is necessary to understand the significance of Ngugi's work in the context of decolonized nations. Debt ideology is a framework that explains how financial debt operates as a tool of power and domination, shaping political and economic relations between nations and groups. By examining *Matigari* through a debt ideology lens, this paper explores how Ngugi's work exposes the ways in which neoliberalism creates debt as a means of control and how debt can be a powerful tool for resistance and liberation.

To achieve this goal, this paper will first provide a close reading of *Matigari* to analyze its use of allegory and symbolism to critique neoliberalism. It will then examine the role of debt in the novel and explore how it is used as a tool of control and exploitation. Finally, it will use a debt ideology lens to interpret *Matigari* as a work of resistance, analyzing the ways in which the novel suggests that debt can be used as a means of liberation and empowerment. By examining *Matigari* through this lens, this paper aims to contribute to a better understanding of the ways in which neoliberalism operates in the Third World and the potential for resistance and liberation through debt.

IV. NGUGI'S *MATIGARI*

Matigari, 1987, has garnered critical attention for its unique style and content. The novel is set in a non-fixed time and place, allowing for various allegorical interpretations. Ngugi's opening statement, "this story is imaginary...has no fixed time...has no fixed space...Reader/listener: may you place the action in the space of your choice...Once upon a time, in a country with no name," serves as a framework for the reader to interact with the story and provides a space for multiple readings (Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, 1987, p. ix). The narrative is privileged to have the possibilities to be read as a work of fiction, and allegorically as a historical document that condemns the aftermath of the corrupted era of colonization.

Matigari addresses many essential symbols of decolonized nations, including apartheid-ruling regimes, neoliberal socio-economic systems, class division and struggle, droughts, and the exploitation of natural resources and labor. The novel offers a counter-narrative to the neoliberal socio-economic system, which disempowers the local masses economically, socially, and politically. As a result, *Matigari* has become a significant point of discussion in academic circles, particularly for scholars interested in postcolonial studies, African literature, and Marxist literary theory.

Since its publication, *Matigari* has been the subject of numerous studies and critical analyses. Some scholars have examined the novel through Marxist literary theory, exploring how the novel's content can be used to critique capitalism and imperialism. Others have focused on the novel's role in African literature and postcolonial studies, analyzing how Ngugi's work challenges colonialist narratives and provides alternative perspectives on African history and culture. Despite the diversity of perspectives and analyses, scholars have consistently praised Ngugi's ability to craft a narrative that can be read in multiple ways, making it a valuable contribution to the literary canon.

Matigari has made a significant impact on the literary world and serves as a reminder of the importance of literature in reflecting the struggles and experiences of the oppressed. Ngugi's work has provided a unique space for critical dialogue and is a testament to the power of literature to inspire change and promote social justice.

A. *The Critique of Neoliberalism in Matigari*

Ngugi's *Matigari* is a powerful literary work that critiques the neoliberal socio-economic system imposed on many African countries after independence, perpetuating class segregation and struggle, gender and labor violence, and socio-economic injustice. The ruling system protects and works for the interests of the private sectors and Western nations, privileging them over the indigenous people. The National Radio statement in the novel exemplifies the impact of Western influence on African countries and the oppressive neoliberal socio-economic system that they impose. The statement goes:

we have just received news that Britain and the European Community have given this country a loan of several million pounds for the development of the administration of instant justice. The loan will be used to buy handcuffs, hand and leg chains, uniforms for prison warders, electric fences to help the prisons and ropes for the hanging of those who have been sentenced to death. All materials must be bought from British factories or from other EEC countries. (Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, 1987, p. 132)

The loan is conditional, requiring all materials to be bought from British factories or other EEC countries, ensuring that the Western nations continue to benefit from the African countries' resources and labor. This condition reinforces the neocolonial relationship between Western nations and African countries, where the former continue to exploit the latter for their own benefit.

The National Radio statement underscores the novel's political undertones and critiques the oppressive system that many African countries faced after gaining independence. It also highlights the influence and control of the Western nations in African countries, which they exert through the support of corrupt regimes. The quote aligns with Fredric Jameson's argument, stating that "all third world texts be read as allegorical because of that world's specific entry into capitalism without western cultural markers such as the private-public divide. Without that divide, all characters appear as stand-ins for collective, social phenomena" (Joseph, 2012, p. 68). Ngugi's *Matigari* can be read allegorically, as a counter-narrative to the neoliberal socio-economic system that disempowers the local masses economically, socially, and politically.

Moreover, the character of Matigari serves as a catalyst for the revolution. He embodies the people's desire for change and their aspirations for a just and equitable society. *Matigari's* revolutionary actions give hope to the oppressed and demonstrate that the people have the power to resist and challenge the oppressive system. Ngugi's portrayal of the masses as a volcano that only needs a trigger to erupt against injustice shows the potential for change and revolution in African countries.

Ngugi's *Matigari* is a powerful critique of the neoliberal socio-economic system imposed on many African countries after independence. The novel highlights the corrupt ruling systems that serve the interests of the Western nations and the private sector, while neglecting the needs and aspirations of the indigenous people. The National Radio statement exemplifies the impact of Western influence on African countries and underscores the need to resist and challenge the oppressive system. Matigari's character serves as a symbol of hope and demonstrates the people's potential for change and revolution.

B. *Matigari* the Character Symbolism

In Ngugi wa Thiong'o's novel *Matigari*, the titular character is a powerful symbol of resistance against an unjust socio-economic system that has disempowered the people of his country. As the narrator observes, "*Matigari* is seen as a symbol; he is even called Jesus the savior" (Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, 1987, p. 9). Matigari's name itself is significant, meaning "the patriot who survived the bullets". He is portrayed as a heroic figure who has fought against the imperial colonizer in the forest, and returns to claim what is rightfully his.

The narrator in *Matigari* describes the protagonist as a "wild and fearless person" who emerges from the forest after years of war against the colonizer (Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, 1987, p. 9). This depiction of Matigari highlights his unwavering bravery and tenacity in the face of oppression, drawing a parallel to the historical context of the Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya. The use of the forest as a base by the guerrilla fighters during the rebellion is reminiscent of Matigari's emergence from the forest, representing the resilience and determination of his people to resist oppression and fight for their rights. In fact, Matigari is compared to a volcano that only needs a trigger to erupt against injustice, emphasizing his readiness to take action and fight for justice.

Matigari's unwavering determination to challenge the oppressive system that has subjugated his people for decades sets him apart as a unique character. He symbolizes the collective will of the people to resist the injustices imposed by their rulers and break free from the chains of oppression. Matigari's desire to claim what is rightfully his and to liberate his people from socio-economic and racial boundaries is reflective of his passion for change. As Ngugi wa Thiong'o writes, "Matigari is back to claim what is 'his.' He states that he is back to claim his house, factories, and farms he had built with his bare hands. The possessive pronoun 'his' is a collective representation of all the people of his country" (Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, 1987, p. 11). This highlights the fact that Matigari is not just fighting for his own benefit, but for the common good of the entire community. The use of the possessive pronoun in this context represents the communal nature of African societies, where the concept of individual ownership is subservient to the collective welfare of the community.

Matigari's return from the forest after years of fighting against the colonizer is symbolic of the resilience and determination of his people to resist oppression and assert their rights. His struggle for justice is similar to that of the Land and Freedom Party in Kenya, which advocated for the redistribution of land from wealthy white settlers to the indigenous population. Matigari's mission goes beyond the mere reclamation of what is rightfully his; it is about reclaiming the dignity and freedom of his people. His bravery and tenacity inspire others to join him in the fight against oppression. Matigari's story serves as a beacon of hope for all those who have been oppressed for too long, and his legacy continues to inspire generations of activists and freedom fighters across the world.

In addition to his role as a symbol of resistance, *Matigari* is also a unique and distinctive allegorical figure. His return "has flipped the country upside down in two days" (Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, 1987, p. 10). This reflects the power of collective action and the ability of oppressed people to effect change when they work together towards a common goal. Matigari's self-image is also significant; he represents the people's awareness and courage to claim what is rightfully theirs.

Matigari's character is a powerful symbol of resistance against an unjust socio-economic system. His wild and fearless nature, combined with his ability to go against the grain, make him a unique and distinctive allegorical figure. To fully understand the symbolism of *Matigari*, it is important to consider the historical context of the novel and the author's own experiences and background. Ngugiwa Thiong'o is a Kenyan writer and political activist who has long been involved in the struggle for decolonization and the fight against authoritarian regimes in Africa. The Land and Freedom Party, which fought for the redistribution of land and the end of British colonial rule, was a major influence on Ngugi's writing. The Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya, as well as other anti-colonial movements around the world, also shaped his understanding of the struggle against imperialism and oppression.

Moreover, Matigari's character can be seen as a representation of the resilience and determination of the African people in the face of colonialism and its aftermath. His name, which means "the patriot who survived the bullets," emphasizes his status as a hero who has survived the violence and oppression of the past and is now ready to fight for justice and freedom (Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, 1987, p. 20). Matigari's return from the forest can also be interpreted as a symbolic representation of the resurgence of African nationalism and pride. His assertion that he is back to claim what is "his" speaks to a collective desire for self-determination and the reclamation of African identity and resources.

In addition, Matigari's character can be compared to other revolutionary figures in history, such as Che Guevara and Mao Zedong. Like these figures, Matigari is willing to risk his life for the cause of justice and liberation. To fully understand the symbolism of Matigari, it is therefore important to consider not only the specific historical context of the novel, but also the broader historical and political context of Africa and the world. Ngugiwa Thiong'o's use of allegory

and symbolism in the novel serves to highlight the ongoing struggles of the African people for social, economic, and political justice, and to inspire readers to join in the fight for a better future.

It is clear that *Matigari* represents the collective struggle of the African people against oppressive and corrupt systems. His character embodies the spirit of resistance and the determination to fight for a better future. As such, *Matigari* serves as an important symbol of hope and inspiration for readers, reminding them of the ongoing struggles for justice and liberation around the world.

C. Narrative and Counter Narrative in *Matigari*

The narrative form of *Matigari* functions as a counter-narrative to the neoliberal socio-economic system. Ngugiwa Thiong'o's use of allegory and symbolism in the novel serves to highlight the ongoing struggles of the African people for social, economic, and political justice, and to inspire readers to join in the fight for a better future. As Ngugi states in the preface to his translation of the novel, "intelligence reports suggested that a man named Matigari was roaming the country making subversive demands, and there were orders for his immediate arrest. Subsequently realizing its mistake, the government banned *Matigari* in February 1987" (Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, 1987, viii). This statement illustrates how Ngugi's novel was seen as a threat to the Kenyan government, and how it was banned as a result.

Moreover, Ngugi's counter-narrative calls for a peaceful revolution against the betrayal of neocolonial regimes and neoliberal socio-economic systems. *Matigari*, as a self-image of the people, provides a model for peaceful resistance against oppression. When he returns from the forest, he buries his weapons of war and instead wears a belt of peace. He states that he is back to reclaim his house, which was taken by "Settler Williams and his servant John Boy," and to seek "Truth and Justice" (Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, 1987, p. 62). This how-to manual shows the people the right way to revolt, which is to wear the belt of peace and to peacefully demand what is rightfully theirs.

Ngugi's use of allegory and symbolism in *Matigari* is a powerful critique of the neocolonial system and its exploitation of African people. According to Cheah, "Ngugi intends his literature to be a practical exemplar of his theoretical writings, the literary works that follow his fuller understanding of nationalist Bildung seek to fulfill two tasks: First, they must depict the cruel reality of neocolonial Kenya in a stylistically cogent manner that will shock their implied reader, the Kenyan people" (Cheah, 2003, p. 363). This statement highlights how Ngugi's literature seeks to expose the harsh realities of neocolonialism and inspire readers to take action against it.

Additionally, Ngugi's use of local expressions in the novel is a self-reflexive tool that calls the Kenyan reader's attention to what is implied. The unfixed time and place of the novel, as Nguginotes in the preface, makes it a literature of all times and places. However, it also contradicts the usage of local language in the novel. These local expressions implemented by Ngugi are self-reflexive tools that call attention to the implied reader, the Kenyan people, and their role in the fight against neocolonialism and oppression.

Matigari is a powerful work of literature that serves as a counter-narrative to the neoliberal socio-economic system and neocolonialism. Ngugiwa Thiong'o's use of allegory and symbolism, along with his intentional narrative and self-reflexive tools, serve to expose the harsh realities of neocolonialism and inspire readers to take action against it. Through *Matigari*'s actions and behaviors, the novel provides a how-to manual for peaceful resistance against oppression and a model for a better future.

D. Collective Representation of *Matigari*

In Ngugi wa Thiong'o's novel, *Matigari*, the character of Matigari represents the collective worker in history, as Maya Jaggi argues in her interview with Ngugi. Jaggi highlights that *Matigari*'s character lays down his arms and returns to claim his collective inheritance, reflecting the collective image seen in the three leaders of *Matigari*'s revolution, *Matigari* himself, Guthera, and Muriuki. This trio represents the three main pillars of a heteronormative family, a man, a woman, and a child, emphasizing the collective theme of the revolution and its inclusivity for all types of people. The revolution is not only for men, like Kuriro, who suffers inequality and brutality in the work zones and ends up with a sentence to death just because he stands and calls for a raise in wages, but also for women, like Guthera, who suffers gender abuse by the policemen to feed her family, and for children like Muriuku, who search the junkyard every day for leftover food and live in a car graveyard.

The drowning of *Matigari* and Guthera in the river while the boy Muriuku successfully crosses the river and digs out the buried AK 47, the cartridge, and the pistol, signals the next generation's responsibility to take over and resist the unjust. As Cheah notes, it is the mark of survival, the nation's survival after colonialism, and the promise of its survival beyond neocolonialism. *Matigari* would return from the forest to reverse the betrayal of independence. This collective sense of being unjustly treated by and indebted to the hegemonic ruling party is one of many factors that pushed *Matigari* to resist and revolt against the KKK regime.

The Minister of Truth and Justice's call for a national meeting to make a settlement with the people about the arresting of striking factory labors and the killing of Marxist university students plus other unjust incidents in the country is another factor that ignites the revolution. However, the Minister talks down to the people during the meeting, patronizing them and privileging the whites. He asserts that any country's welfare and stability depend on three kinds of people: the wealthy, like these capitalists; the soldiers, like our security forces; and thirdly, leaders, that is people like me. This statement highlights the ruling party's view of the people as mere tools, without any agency or say in the country's governance.

The Ministry further declares that people should be thankful to be alive in this country, implying that the ruling party has provided them with this life. This idea of indebtedness to the ruling party is a heavy load that the poor have carried for years, and it has become a motive for the revolution. As Ngugi writes, “The revolution is a people's struggle against the conditions that put them in debt, against the indebtedness that is the most powerful weapon of the ruling class” (Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, 1987, p. 121). The neocolonial crisis in third-world countries is manifested in the way the ruling class exploits the poor and keeps them in a state of indebtedness.

In conclusion, *Matigari's* collective representation emphasizes the inclusivity and diversity of the revolution's leaders and participants. The drowning of *Matigari* and Guthera and the passing on of *Matigari's* weapons to Muriuku signifies the next generation's responsibility to carry on the struggle against the ruling class's exploitative and oppressive policies. The ruling party's patronizing language and their assertion of the people's indebtedness to them is a heavy load that the poor carry and is one of the factors that ignite the revolution. The novel highlights the neocolonial crisis in third-world countries and the people's struggle against the conditions that put them in debt.

E. *The Allegorical Potential of Matigari as a Critique of Neoliberalism*

The allegorical reading of Ngugi's *Matigari* highlights multiple motifs and examples that make it a historical document calling for an up-rise against the neocolonial crisis in third worlds. As Cheah notes, “The novel's fable-like quality suggests that the Kenyan postcolonial experience is exemplary of the general crisis of contemporary Africa” (Cheah, 2003, p. 350). These qualities allow *Matigari* to function as a counter-narrative to the unjust neoliberal socio-economic systems around the globe.

Building my arguments on the allegorical reading of the novel, I argue that *Matigari* can be viewed as a counter-narrative to the contemporary socio-economic systems. Neoliberal systems have taken various forms and have different implications on the individuals according to the geo-political settings they take place in. Ngugi's *Matigari* serves as a prescient narrative/form because it was written during the emergence of neoliberalism into the world. It serves to prophesize the destruction this newer form of colonialism can cause and calls for resisting it. It illustrates the neoliberal ideology and its implications on the ground.

Matigari's significance lies in its potential to be read allegorically as a historical document that denounces the aftermath of the corrupt colonization era. According to Fredric Jameson, “all third world texts should be read as allegorical because of that world's specific entry into capitalism without western cultural markers such as the private-public divide. Without that divide, Jameson asserts, all characters appear as stand-ins for collective, social phenomena” (Joseph, 2012, p. 68). Therefore, *Matigari* can be read allegorically as a counter-narrative to the neoliberal socio-economic system that disempowers the local masses economically, socially, and politically.

Through *Matigari*, Ngugi presents a unique form of literature that allows for various interpretations and has the potential to serve as a critique of neoliberalism. Ngugi's decision to leave the time and space of the narrative unfixed provides readers with the opportunity to draw allegorical meanings that can be applied to any country with similar experiences. Thus, this paper argues that a debt ideology reading of *Matigari* is necessary to understand the significance of Ngugi's work in the context of decolonized nations.

The analysis of Ngugi's *Matigari* as a counter-narrative to neoliberalism can be applied to other decolonized third world literary texts. By using debt ideology as a lens for analysis, we can reveal the underlying structures and power dynamics that shape these narratives. This approach can also illuminate the ways in which these texts serve as critiques of colonialism and its afterlife, highlighting the ongoing struggles for liberation and decolonization in the Global South.

For instance, in the works of authors such as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Arundhati Roy, and Salman Rushdie, we can see similar themes and motifs that speak to the impact of neoliberalism on decolonized societies. By analyzing these works through the lens of debt ideology, we can better understand the complex relationships between power, economics, and culture in the postcolonial world. This approach can also help us to identify the ways in which these writers use their art to challenge dominant narratives and provide new ways of seeing and understanding the world.

Overall, this analysis of Ngugi's *Matigari* demonstrates the importance of examining decolonized third world literary texts through a debt ideology lens. Through this approach, we can reveal the underlying structures and power dynamics that shape these narratives, as well as the ways in which these texts function as critiques of colonialism and its afterlife. By expanding this analysis to other works of decolonized literature, we can deepen our understanding of the ongoing struggles for liberation and decolonization in the Global South, and the crucial role that literature plays in these movements.

V. CONCLUSION

Ngugi's novel *Matigari* serves as a critical text for understanding the effects of neoliberalism on decolonized nations. Through the allegorical reading of the novel, we can draw out several motifs and themes that illustrate the devastating impact of neoliberalism on the social, political, and economic structures of the third world.

First, the unfixed time and space of the narrative allows readers to view the story as a symbol of the decolonized time and space of the third world. The narrative/form that Ngugi creates is privileged to be read as a fiction and, allegorically, as a historical document that denounces the aftermath of the corrupt colonization era. *Matigari* can be read allegorically

as a counter-narrative to the neoliberal socio-economic system that disempowers the local masses economically, socially, and politically.

Second, the novel highlights the impact of neoliberalism on natural resources and labor. The novel showcases how the exploitative practices of multinational corporations and corrupt government officials lead to the depletion of resources and the exploitation of labor. The allegorical nature of the novel allows readers to apply these themes to similar situations in other countries.

Third, the novel exposes the violent nature of neoliberalism, both in the use of state-sponsored violence to quell dissent and in the ways that neoliberal policies lead to social inequality and suffering.

Overall, this analysis of *Matigari* demonstrates the importance of using the lens of neoliberalism to analyze decolonized third world literary texts. This approach allows us to draw out the themes and motifs that speak to the experiences of marginalized communities in the third world. Furthermore, it opens up new possibilities for future analyses of other decolonized third world texts, which can be examined through this same lens to provide insights into the impact of neoliberalism on these communities.

Matigari is a significant text that provides a nuanced critique of neoliberalism and its effects on decolonized nations. It is a text that deserves further examination and discussion, particularly in the context of ongoing struggles for social justice and decolonization. By examining *Matigari* through the lens of neoliberalism, we can gain a better understanding of the impact of this ideology on the global South and work towards creating a more equitable and just world.

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