



*Revue internationale de  
langues, littératures et cultures*

**N°17  
2018**

**Université Gaston Berger de Saint-Louis  
B.P. 234, Saint-Louis, Sénégal  
ISSN 0850-5543**

## **SAFARA N° 17/2018**

### **Revue internationale de langues, littératures et cultures**

UFR Lettres et Sciences Humaines, Université Gaston Berger,  
BP 234 Saint Louis, Sénégal  
Tel +221 961 23 56 Fax +221 961 1884  
E-mail : omar.sougou@ugb.edu.sn / mamadou.ba@ugb.edu.sn

#### **Directeur de Publication**

Omar SOUGOU, Université Gaston Berger (UGB)

#### **COMITE SCIENTIFIQUE**

Augustin	AINAMON (Bénin)	Maweja	MBAYA (Sénégal)
Mamadou	CAMARA (Sénégal)	Babacar	MBAYE (USA)
Simon	GIKANDI (USA)	Maki	SAMAKE (Mali)
Pierre	GOMEZ (Gambie)	Ndiawar	SARR (Sénégal)
Mamadou	KANDJI (Sénégal)	Aliko	SONGOLO (USA)
Baydallaye	KANE (Sénégal)	Marième	SY (Sénégal)
Edris	MAKWARD (USA)	Lifongo	VETINDE (USA)
Abdoulaye	BARRY (Sénégal)	Fallou	NGOM (USA)

#### **COMITE DE RÉDACTION**

Rédacteur en Chef : Badara SALL, UGB  
Corédacteur en Chef : Babacar DIENG, UGB  
Relations extérieures : Maurice GNING UGB  
Secrétaire de rédaction : Mamadou BA, UGB

#### **MEMBRES**

Moussa	SOW (UGB)	Ousmane	NGOM (UGB)
Khadidiatou	DIALLO (UGB)	Oumar	FALL (UGB)

© SAFARA, Université Gaston Berger de Saint Louis, 2018  
**ISSN 0851- 4119**

Couverture : Dr. Mamadou BA, UGB Saint-Louis

## Sommaire

1. Claiming Oral Heritage: The Singificance of Oral Devices in Chinua Achebe's *Anthills Of The Savannah* and Flora Nwapa's *Efuru* [ **Djiby ANNE** ]..... 5
2. The Appropriation of Holy Scriptures in *Devil on the Cross* and *Matigari*: an Advocacy of Liberation [ **Christophe Sékène DIOUF** ] ..... 21
3. “Women's ‘Safe Spaces’ and the Codes of Masculinity in Toni Morrison's *Paradise*” [ **Fatoumata KEITA** ] ..... 35
4. Reconstructing Subjecthood: the Role of Memory and Embodied Knowledge in *Enslaved Africans' Emancipating Efforts* and *New World Cultural Reinventions* [ **Papa Malick BA** ] ..... 57
5. Léopold Sédar Senghor : « transfrontalité », transculturalité et panhumanisme d'une œuvre de vertu et d'avenir [ **Dominique SENE** ] ..... 75
6. Die neue Negritude in Deutschland: Geschichte der Black Community in Deutschland im 20. Jahrhundert [ **Djama Ignace ALLABA** ] ..... 95
7. La diversité linguistique dans les marchés sénégalais et l'émergence de langues véhiculaires : quelles dynamiques plurilingues des commerçants de Saint-Maur de Ziguinchor face à la montée en puissance du wolof ? [ **Jean Sibadioumeg DIATTA** ] ..... 107
8. La grammaire des sons de base du wolof standard [ **Oumar FALL** ] ..... 127
9. De l'oral à l'écrit. Les difficultés de la traduction du conte Wolof *Fari mbaami* en Français [ **Yaye Fatou FALL** ] ..... 149
10. Pratiques éducatives parentales et développement cognitif : étude auprès des élèves du cours élémentaire à Lomé au Togo [ **BAWA Ibn Habib** ] ..... 165
11. Les slogans de diabolisation dans le système politico-éducatif du Sénégal, entre néologisme et création de nouvelles significations : approche interprétative [ **Daouda NGOM** ] ..... 185

# The Appropriation of Holy Scriptures in *Devil on the Cross* and *Matigari*: an Advocacy of Liberation

[ Christophe Sékène DIOUF ]

## Abstract

In his commitment to denounce the evil deeds of the colonial enterprise, Ngugi resorts to the biblical language. In this perspective, the Christian Holy Scriptures are used to sustain the legitimacy of struggling for a significant and total liberation. Thus, the main aim of this paper is to discuss how Scriptures are appropriated to fight against exploitation and oppression in *Devil on the Cross* and *Matigari*. The main concern is to give an understanding of the function of the biblical language in aesthetics. It also discusses the alternative weapon that masses have recourse so as to challenge the dominators.

Key words: commitment, aesthetics, language, liberation, Holy Scriptures.

## Résumé

Dans son engagement à dénoncer les exactions de l'entreprise coloniale, Ngugi se sert du langage biblique. Les Saintes Ecritures chrétiennes donnent un cachet nouveau à la lutte pour une libération totale. A cet égard, le but focal de cette étude est d'analyser comment celles-ci sont appropriées et mises au service du combat contre l'exploitation et l'oppression. Cet article s'attache à analyser comment ce langage biblique est utilisé dans l'écriture esthétique des romans *Devil on the Cross* et *Matigari* pour lutter contre l'exploitation et l'oppression. Il examine également l'arsenal auquel font recours les masses pour s'opposer aux dominateurs.

Mots-clés: engagement, esthétique, langage, libération, Saintes Ecritures.

## Introduction

One of the paramount subject matters of Ngugi's literary works remains liberation. The commitment to fight against exploitation and oppression manifests itself through different forms. Literature becomes, for the Kenyan writer, a weapon to denounce subjugation towards the African people in general and Kenyan, in particular. As such, he excerpts elements from Christianity to lay bare the evil deeds

## **Christophe Sékène DIOUF**

perpetrated on his people. To this respect, he “used the pen in the service of truth” (Ngugi, 1983: 69). In *Devil on the Cross* (1982) as well as in *Matigari* (1986) he draws upon biblical tenets to depict the prevailing situations in Kenya during colonialism and neo-colonialism. In addition, such biblical allusions are reinterpreted in accordance with the masses’ will to restore their human dignity. This is suggestive of the functionality of art.

Taking into account all these aspects, it is important to profoundly explore the above quoted novels in order to highlight the function of this biblical language. By so doing, we seek to contribute to a better understanding of its content and aesthetics in accordance with the messages the writer conveys. To deal with such a point, Marxist literary theory is an essential guideline which could help the reader figures out Ngugi’s opposition to the different forces that hamper the blossoming of Kenyan people. It is a source of inspiration for this author who condemns all the hindrances to people’s welfare. It is also basic to have recourse to Post-colonialism in order to shed light on certain concepts such as appropriation, restoration, and liberation that are cornerstones of this study. The biblical language incorporated in these novels is very striking and requires a detailed analysis. What is the necessity to study anew both novels in terms of appropriation? What does the appropriation evoke?

At a starting point, it is worth making explicit the meaning of the basic concepts. The biblical language refers to the diverse elements, signs, symbols, parables, events, stories that are excerpted from the Bible. It is figuratively used in *Devil on the Cross* and *Matigari*. In fact, they bear diverse meanings. On the one hand, one can state that some of them are implicit references whereas, on the other hand, the other ones are accurately incorporated.

Aesthetics allude to the way of using a language in an artistic manner to convey messages. According to *The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, aesthetics is concerned with beauty in the artistic style. In Literature, the style of a writer is fused with aesthetic aspects which are related to content. It is in the light of these clarifications that it is essential to give an overview of the novels outlined.

*Devil on the Cross* shows the brainwashing system undertaken by missionaries. Through it, Ngugi depicts how Churchmen contributed to the colonial policies of exploitation in the African land. He underscores how the subverted biblical elements play a key role in the domination of natives such as Warringa. He exposes the conspiracy linking colonizers and some missionaries. In this novel, striking examples are underlined to pinpoint the ways the Gospel has been exerted in the

interest of “the Holy Trinity of Theft: Grabbing, Extortion and Confiscation” (*Devil on the Cross*, 176). As a matter of fact, Marxism is useful for a better comprehension of relationship between the missionary, the colonized and the dominator. The political power is backed the religious one in terms of psychological oppression. In Marxism term, for instance, the Church represented one of the “Ideological State Apparatuses” (Louis Althusser, 1999: 13) convincing people to be submitted.

In the framework of promoting deliverance, *Matigari* deals with the neocolonial era. It is centered in the perpetual struggle of warriors. In addition, it is absorbed in the intertextual Marxism. The main point remains revolution. That’s the reason why this term is undercurrent throughout the novel. It combines biblical and Marxist references. The image of the resurrected savior symbolized by Matigari, is evocative of the advocacy of liberation. The main protagonist is imbued with a mission to chase the exploiter “who-reaps-where-he-never-sowed” (*Matigari*, 97). His role model constitutes Marxists. Likewise, he epitomized the leader who enlightens his community and accepts suffering in the search of truth, peace and justice. His aim is to recover lands stolen by the dominators (Settler Williams, Robert Williams and John Boy) and give them back to their real owners: the peasantry class. He is perpetually stimulating the need for protestation and self-sacrifice.

### **I-The Last Supper: the need for self-sacrifice**

Among the biblical allusions, one can point out the Last Supper Scene in *Matigari*. Through Matigari as a patriotic character, it is essential to underscore the endless fight against “the narrative of oppression and exploitation” (Gilbert Bare Moore, 1998: 76) omnipresent in postcolonial studies. To this respect, Matigari draws his inspiration from the Bible to re-establish social justice. He suggests new ways to restore truth:

I shall never stop struggling for all the products of my sweat. I shed blood and I did not shed it in vain. One day, the land will return to the tiller, and the wealth of our land to those who produce it. Poverty and sorrow shall be banished from our land (*Matigari*, 124).

In *Matigari*, Passover is figuratively used to claim for lands’ ownership. On the one hand, this is to strengthen communion between people and on the hand, to contextualize the everlasting commitment of freedom fighters. It gives impetus to liberation which should be obtained through the masses’ union. Matigari, the

## **Christophe Sékène DIOUF**

fictional character or the imaginary liberator mimics the Last Supper in the following passage:

Matigari took the food, broke it and gave it to them. They started eating. Then he took the bottle of beer, opened it with his teeth, poured a little of it on the floor in libation and gave them to drink and pass around. He told them: I want you to share this last supper with me, to remind us that we shall not be able to eat together again unless our kingdom comes. And he took the bread after breaking it he said: This is my body, which I give to you. Do this unto one another until the Second Coming. He then took the cup, and after blessing it he said: And this cup is a testament of the covenant we entered with one another with our blood. Do this to one another until our kingdom comes, through the will of the people (*Matigari*, 57).

In the Christian Holy Scriptures, the Last Supper refers to the meal Jesus shared with his twelve apostles before the beginning of his passion. It is also called Passover. Thus, Jesus taught his apostles to perpetrate it remembering the value of his sacrifice that is of paramount importance for salvation. This is what the Gospel according to Luke testifies:

I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And when he had taken a cup and given thanks, He said: 'Take this and share it among yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink the fruit of the vine from now until the kingdom of God comes'. And when he had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me' (*Goods News Bible*, 1992: 15-16).

Being aware of the disastrous system of exploitation, Matigari emerges to sweep away the tears, and fears of his society. He endeavors to give back hope to Kenyan oppressed people. He insists on "Justice for the Oppressed" (*Matigari*, 161). Through his speeches, he is depicted as a Jesus-like character: "There is no greater love than this: a man should give his life for somebody else" (*Matigari*, 35). In his conviction, suffering is fundamental for the achievement of his mission. He is imbued with patriotic skills. He is somehow paralleled to Jesus as regards his combat. In this regard Eriks Uskalis observes:

The sharing of food in prison clearly parallels Christ's Last Supper. Matigari is at times seen as a figure of the Second Coming like Christ in the desert, he has the ability to last a long time without food and water. These references are used allegorically and politically; Christian allusions are always placed with a wider social context, and indeed in *Matigari*, actual church leaders mocked and satirized. Language and religious discourse are thus deployed as weapons in hegemonic engagements. This strategy is

linked to the second main reason for the presence of Christian and Biblical references (Uskalis, 2005: 2).

Similarly to Jesus who gathered the apostles before his crucifixion and drew their attention on the sense of the Passover, Matigari shows determination to face all forms of treatments for the sake of his community. That's why his patriotism leads him to prison. It is during this confinement that he tries to contextualize the Passover. The thrust of this part is to put emphasis on two aspects: on the one hand, the communion of the different members of the society into a unique entity which founded the African customs and traditions such as that of Gikuyu. On the other, the individual courage to be at the service of the population no matter what it costs. It is in these combined efforts that courageous people faced intruders in their native lands.

In his essay *Writers in Politics*, Ngugi asserts: "The fighters took the same Christian songs and even the Bible and interpreted them themselves, giving these values and meaning in harmony with the aspiration of their struggle" (Ngugi, 1983: 20). This quotation is illustrative of the way the biblical language is subverted to give value to certain aspects in the struggle for liberation. It underscores that the writer attempts to use some values of Christianity to better underpin is therefore necessary to underscore another analysis by David Cook and Michael Okenimkpe when they argue:

There is no essential contradiction in the parallels that are specifically suggested between Christ and Matigari. During the episode in which Matigari shares his food with the other inmates, the drunk delivers off-the-cuff a para-biblical rendering 'as though he was reading the Bible from the pulpit' which detailed references to the Last Supper and its repercussions dogma (Cook and Okenimkpe, 1997: 148).

From this quotation, we can say that they lay stress on the role played by Matigari as far as commitment to the cause of Kenyan people is concerned. Given that such a character exemplifies a source of liberation from neo-colonial yoke, he is paralleled to Christ in spite of many differences. He epitomizes a savior in the fact that he is determined to fulfill a duty. As a matter of fact, the re-interpretation of the scene of the Last Supper is revealing of the particular aspect of commitment that Ngugi insists on through the character of Matigari. The Last Supper functions as a key biblical event that is applied to the specific context of Kenya. The appeal to religious facts becomes a narrative strategy to strengthen the measures to be taken for justice. The emphasis is put on the regeneration of liberation.



## **Christophe Sékène DIOUF**

Moreover, Gikandi provides us with a deep analysis of the allegorical use of biblical language. As he mentions: “Matigari is positioned between his materiality and figuration, between his realism and allegorism” (Gikandi, 2000, 234). In this respect, it is worth observing that through the Last Supper, one can grasp the value of fighting to emancipate the masses. After examining the undercurrent domination that is going on from colonial to neo-colonial era, the character of Matigari bears in mind that a second battle is required to efficiently back the suffering people.

One major aspect that can be stated through the incorporation of the biblical language is that the author protests against the way the Bible has been used as a powerful weapon used in the service of the colonialist oppressive system. In the words of Ngugi, the messages of the Christian Scriptures should be used to help the dominated people in their quest for deliverance. It is in this perspective that the following quotation is significant:

Matigari is a humanized prophet: not just an individual but the representative of an incisive set of ideas who spells out a way forward for a society stagnating in a pseudo-benign dictatorship compounded of international capitalism and indigenous power hunger (Gikandi, 2000: 234).

This quotation is illustrative of the role attributed to Matigari as a liberator who pursues the struggle against exploitation. He is concerned with restoring justice to his counterparts by carrying the burden of all sorts of sufferings. In his desire to save Kenyan people from the difficult situations, this character realizes that hope and courage to the extent of dying is an important and inexorable fact. For instance, Matigari declares:

I shall never stop struggling for all products of my sweat. I shed blood and I did not shed it in vain. One day the land will return to the tiller, and the wealth of our land to those who produce it. Poverty and sorrow shall be banished from our land (124).

Passover is figuratively reconstructed to show how the biblical language is re-appropriated to invite freedom fighters to challenge colonial discourses. In this framework, biblical elements are given impetus in the colonial as well as neo-colonial realities. Unlike the Minister for Truth and Justice and his wife, John Boy, who boast themselves to be faithful believers? Matigari is convinced that Christian ethics can be deployed to face domination. For Him, the remedy lays in the appropriation of some profound biblical elements. His attachment to this language is reminiscent of post-colonialism theory that seeks to demystify colonial discourses and rehabilitate the truth. As he states:

I would hold his hand, kneel down before him and tell him Lord, let us who were left behind now lead the way. I would then sit on his right-hand, kneel down before him and tell him: look at these white and black parasites. Look! See the Boys and the Williams coming to You /.../ For you were hungry, but they gave you no food? You were thirsty, and they gave you no water, you were naked, but they clothed you not. You were sick, but they never visited you. And when you were in jail, they did not visit you (81).

In short, through the Last Supper Ngugi stresses the main preoccupation which guides warriors: commitment to the fate of their people. The latter have undergone inhuman exploitation. As a result, fighters call for revolt and crucifixion of the neo-colonial burden. As we will study it further, Crucifixion is adapted to recover the events of the past and connect them with the present neo-colonialism.

## **II-Crucifixion: The patriotic unity of masses against exploitation**

In a symbolic way, Crucifixion parodies the resistance of Mau-Mau freedom fighters to British invaders. It evinces the persisting opposition of warriors to the colonial power. Furthermore, it would be useful to go back to the authentic meaning of Crucifixion in the Christian Holy Scriptures. In the Bible, it refers to the death of Jesus on the Cross. As the Gospel according to Mark teaches: “they crucified Jesus, and divided up His garments among themselves, casting lots for them to decide what each man should take. It was the third hour when they crucified Him” (*Goods News Bible*, 1992: 105). For Christians, Crucifixion is a means of salvation from damnation. In Christian theology, this death has been a mission from God to be accomplished so as to liberate mankind from the sins of Adam and Eve who disobeyed Him since the creation of the world.

Drawing upon this Crucifixion, Ngugi ironically regards Mau Mau resistance to British invaders as the crucifixion of the Devil. From a historical background, one can learn that from 1932 to 1956 Mau Mau fighters engaged in a guerilla campaign against the British colonizers but also their Kenyan acolytes. The substitution of Christ to the Devil is a means for Ngugi to restore the image of Mau Mau and praise their courage. *Devil on the Cross* lays stress on the heroism of freedom fighters. Crucifixion is presented as result of the revolution undertaken by Kenyan patriots during colonialism. This is named the decolonization process. It is made explicit by Ogude:

It is no wonder, then, that the major trope in *Devil on the Cross* should be the neo-colonial dependency, which the Devil on the Cross as the

## Christophe Sékène DIOUF

structuring symbol. This is best illustrated in Warring'a's nightmare in which the white colonialist Devil is crucified by the masses, apparent reference to political independence, only to be rescued by the local comprador (Ogude, 1999: 57).

The land question constitutes the main issue pushing Mau Mau to organize armed struggle against the British colonial forces. The final outcome which is Kenyan independence is what Ngugi symbolizes through the crucifixion of the Devil. Beyond this reference, Ngugi believes that fighters must also crucify the new oppressors and exploiters of the neo-colonial system. In an ironical depiction, the Devil is presented as follows:

At night Wariinga would have a recurrent nightmare. Instead of Jesus on the Cross, she would see the Devil, with skin as white as that of a very fat European she once saw near the Rift Valley Sports Club, being crucified by people in tattered clothes (*Matigari*, 139).

In *Devil on the Cross*, the shift from colonization to independence is underlined through Warring'a's nightmare and most visibly in the allegorical title of the novel. In its depiction, the crucifixion sheds light on the heroism of Kenyan resistance to land expropriation. Another main feature that needs to be pointed out is that, Ngugi establishes a link between past and present. As he pinpoints:

History is ever reminding the Present of any society: even you shall come to pass away. Tomorrow will be the Present; and the Present will be yesterday. But it is precisely because history is the result of struggle and tells of change that is perceived as a threat by all ruling strata in all the oppressive exploitive systems. Tyrants and their tyrannical systems are terrified at the sound of the wheels of history. Kenya, under British colonialism and now under neo-colonialism, is a good example (Ngugi, 1993: 96-97).

The intrinsic relation between past and present is, in other words, the connection between colonialism and neo-colonialism. To this respect, a positive renovation of the nation is put forward. It is therefore essential to rally together and eradicate the new form of servitude. The biblical language is constructed to recover history. Allegorically, crucifixion serves as a counter-narrative to colonialist discourses. In this order of analysis, Ngugi pleads Kenyan anti-colonial resistance and infuses masses with pride and courage so that they dare lead the combat against neo-colonialism. A case in point here is Warring'a's awareness in *Devil on the Cross*. After meditating her nightmare, this woman decides to fight against sexual abuse. In her yearning for self-definition, she refuses to remain a mere object manipulated by

hedonist men. She experiences a psychological and revolutionary transformation. She becomes conscious that the fight led by Mau-Mau is far from being ended up.

From another angle of analysis, we can assert that the crucifixion of the Devil underscores a Marxist vision, the revolt of the proletariat to seize power from the bourgeoisie class. The use of violence seems to be an efficient plan to succeed in the struggle for liberation. To overthrow the colonizers and pay honor to their communities, warriors opted for armed struggle and devote themselves in order to dismantle the colonial regime. In addition, Crucifixion plays a didactic role. It awakens the masses to keep on struggling until they win. Likewise; it contests any sorts of mistreatments. In this respect, M. Keith Booker's assertion is worth considering:

*Devil on the Cross* draws upon the long heritage of courageous Kenyan resistance to colonial domination. For instance, positive reference to the Mau Mau provides examples of the kind of collective actions that is again needed to oppose oppression in Kenya (Booker, 1998: 172).

In *Devil on the Cross*, the crucifixion also demonstrates the required sacrifice that unites patriots. The great devotion to the cause of the country is at the core of the incorporation of the biblical language in Ngugi's novels. It echoes the liberating mission entrusted to men and women who have in common the sense of belonging to the same nation. In fact, the essence of crucifixion reveals how it is compulsory that self-sacrifice marks out the path towards liberation. The main focus is that people are exhorted to unify forces in order to assume their predicament. To purge the country from the conspiracy between native agents and foreign handmaidens, it is vital to crucify the devil that permeates all the domains. Despite that dominators have been crucified on the altar of Mau Mau, the author empowers the unity of the masses. In short, it appears that Passion can result in Redemption.

### **III-The contextualization of the salutary sacrifice: biblical allusions**

The struggle for liberation is a milestone in the history of African people. It has required sacrifice and sufferings. Thus, it is these situations of martyrdom that the Kenyan writer lays stress upon through the biblical elements: passion and redemption. It is significant to point out that these biblical allusions are closely linked. According to the Christian Gospel, the Passion of Jesus brings about redemption or salvation. In Ephesians, the Apostle Saint Paul testifies: "In Jesus we

## **Christophe Sékène DIOUF**

have redemption through His Blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the richness of His grace” (*Good News Bible*, 1992: 124)

In this section, the essence of passion and redemption will be further examined in terms of basic values backing patriotism resulting in liberation. Matigari’s courage, his sense of humanism and his will to reshape society from injustices, are considerably signs of a man who arises as a savior. In his views, the writer considers that the redemption of the nation in post-independent era demands sacrifices from men and women who are devoted to their communities. Ngugi defines sacrifice as a paramount effort to really redeem society.

In *Matigari*, the challenge is to save people from exploitation and find new ways for the sake of liberation. In the light of King Jr’s statement, it is crucial to bear in mind that freedom fighters are aware that sacrifice must guide their actions. A case in point is Kihika who observes in *A Grain of Wheat*:

All oppressed people have a cross to bear. In Kenya we want death which will change things, that is to say, we want true sacrifice. I die for you, you die for me, and we become a sacrifice for one another. So I can say that, Karanja, are Christ. I am Christ. Everybody who takes the oath of unity to change things in Kenya is a Christ. Christ then is not one person. All those who take up the cross of liberating Kenya are true Christs for us Kenyan people (Ngugi, 1975: 99).

To bring back justice and drive away the oppressors, Kenyan patriots suffered. This assertion sheds light on the role assigned to passion and redemption in Ngugi’s fiction. Ngugi calls for sacrifice i.e bearing a cross as Christ did to build a world of peace and justice. The plight of Matigari is analogous to those who fought for emancipation of mankind. However, beyond this aspect, we can underline that artistically, the writer handles literary techniques to sustain his messages. The pitfalls of colonialism and neo-colonialism in Kenya and to a large extent in Africa, have inevitably urged Ngugi to adjust his literary production to a language that can align diverse elements with the struggle for the improvement of the masses’ living conditions. In other words, he incorporates the biblical language and contextualizes it in the socio-economic and political issues of post independent Kenya. The main interest lies in the emphatic and figurative representation of facts that highlight the commitment for liberation.

Furthermore, the will of the protagonist to go through oppression and save his people reveals that the redemption of the nation depends on the devotion of courageous men. The latter are determined to alter situations. For a positive change

of the community, passion is necessary. It is from this angle that we perceive Marigari's plight as an allegory based on the biblical language of Passion and Redemption. Victory implies sufferings. It remains a priority. That's the reason why Matigari uses words that sound deeply religious all along his quest for truth and justice. To exemplify, he declares to the children:

The God who is prophesized is in you, in me and in other humans. He has always been there inside us since the beginning of time. Imperialism has tried to kill that God within us? But one day that God will return from the dead. Yes, one day, that God within us will come alive and liberate us who believe in Him (*Matigari*, 56).

The imperative for liberation is at the core of Matigari's role. This character is the image of the redeemer. Through Him, liberation from neo-colonialism is associated with an awareness to accomplish a valuable task. He is pictured as a liberator leading his people to the promised land of a new Kenya. As he affirms: "The Lord will bring the New Jerusalem here on earth" (99). Such an expression is illustrative of the importance to fight for workers and peasants' rights. Matigari adds that: "One can die only once, and it is better to die in pursuit of what is right" (156). This quotation shows how the concept of passion is rooted in the character of Matigari. The undercurrent use of the terms "Truth" and "Justice" is explicit of Matigari's preoccupation. It underpins his commitment:

Extensive use of biblical narratives /.../ is related to what we may call Mau Mau aesthetics. /.../ A general Kenyan audience, especially a rural and illiterate one, would be intimately familiar with it and with its typological interpretation or a ready identification of events from their own lives with the words and deeds of Christ, the apostles, and the Old Testament Prophets. The biblical language /.../ is changed into a recognizable idiom/.../. Planting revolutionary message in the soil of popular religious practice was extremely effective (Lovesay, 2000: 64-65).

In Ngugi's novels, the biblical language is re-interpreted to empower liberation. The figure of the redeemer stresses the urgency of saving workers and peasants from neo-colonial exploitation. Matigari represents the necessary sacrifice that prominently contributes to the deliverance of the community. Liberation calls for a sacrifice from national heroes who feel the need to be invested with a mission. In this perspective, the use of biblical messages is of great importance. Matigari does not accept that his people remain in bondage after long periods of fighting. For him, resistance must be pursued as long as Kenyan people suffer.

## **Conclusion**

The Function of Holy Scriptures in Ngugi's Aesthetics studied in *Devil on the Cross* and *Matigari* underscores the main issues of exploitation and oppression which blight the emancipation of masses. In the overall exploration, it has been identified that Ngugi combines content with stylistic aesthetics to point out the connections between colonialism and neo-colonialism. He calls for awareness from the oppressed people to unite and positively act.

The biblical language is literary contextualized to provide a deep grasp of basic facts. The prevailing situations evoked in this paper become subject matters in African literary productions. The Christian narrative is used as a means to valorize nationalist characters. Isn't it a way to root an emancipatory vision in the management of the common heritage in Africa?

## **REFERENCES**

- Booker, Keith M. *The African Novel in English*. Oxford: Heinemann, 1998.
- *Good News Bible*. New York: American Bible Society, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, 1992.
- Cook, David and Okenimkpe, Michael. *Ngugi wa Thiong'o: An Exploration of His Writings*. London: Heinemann, 1997.
- *Good News Bible*. New York : American Bible Society. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1992.
- Gikandi, Simon. *Ngugi wa Thiong'o*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Lovesay, Oliver. *Ngugi wa Thiong'o*. New York: Twayne Publishers, 2000.
- Ngara, Emmanuel. *Stylistic Criticism and African Literature*. London: Heinemann, 1983.
- Ngugi wa Thiong'o. *A Grain of Wheat*. London: Heinemann, 1975.
- Ngugi wa Thiong'o. *Barrel of a Pen: Resistance to Oppression in Neo-colonial Kenya*. Trenton, New Jersey: African World Press, 1983.
- Ngugi wa Thiong'o. *Devil on the Cross*. London: Heinemann, 1982.

- Ngugi wa Thiong'o. *Matigari*. London; Heinemann, 1986.
- Ngugi wa Thiong'o. *Moving the Center: The Struggle for Cultural Freedom*. London: Heinemann, 1993.
- Ngugi wa Thiong'o. *Writers in Politics*. London: Heinemann, 1983.
- Ogude, James. *Ngugi's novels and African History*. London: Pluto Press, 1999.
- Reddy, Indrasena K. *The Novels of Ngugi and Achebe : A study in the Dialectics of Commitment*. New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1994.
- *The Jerusalem Bible*. Paris: Editions Cerf/Verbum Bible, 1973.
- Uskalis, Eriks. Allegory and the retrieval of history : Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *The River Between* and *Matigari*. *The Free Library*. [http://: jstor.www.Thefreelibrary.com](http://jstor.www.Thefreelibrary.com), (visited on July 2016).