

Orality and the Written Word in the Age of Globalization: The Case of NgugiWaThiong'o's Kikuyu Novels

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Abstract: *NgugiWaThiong'o is one of the foremost post-independence novelists in Africa. His novels include, Weep Not Child (1964), The River Between (1965), A Grain of Wheat (1967), Petals of Blood (1977), Devil on the Cross (1983), Matigari (1987), and The Wizard of the Crow (2007). Since 1978. WaThiong'o vowed that he would create artistic works only in his vernacular language, Kikuyu. Consequently, his last three novels mentioned above and a number of children's stories have all been published in Kikuyu language. Our paper discusses the interface of the oral and the written in his last three novels. The novels were all first published in Kikuyu language before being translated into English. They were originally published as CaitaniMutharaba-ini (1980), Matigari Ma Njirungi (1986), and MurogiWaKagogo (2004). In our analysis, we discuss the influence of indigenous Kikuyu folklore on the narrative strategies and thematic conceptualization of these novels. The paper further discusses how the folkloristic material is used to interrogate and communicate to the reader the new realities of globalization. The paper in effect assesses the extent to which the Kikuyu folkloristic tradition has contributed to the greatness of the works even in their translated forms.*

Keywords: *Orality, Kikuyu Folklore, Globalization, Ngugi's Novels*

1. INTRODUCTION

NgugiWaThiong'o is a foremost African writer; novelist, dramatist, and essayist with a publication history spanning over fifty years. Born in 1938 in Limuru, Ngugi's major works of fiction include, *Weep Not Child* (1964), *The River between* (1965), *A Grain of Wheat* (1967) *Petals of Blood* (1977) *CaitaniMutharaba-ini (Devil on the Cross)* (1980,1983), *Matigari Ma Njirungi(Matigari)* (1986,1987) and *MurogiWaKagogo(Wizard of the Crow)*(2004, 2006). He has authored the plays; *The Black Hermit* (1968), *This Time Tomorrow: Three Plays* (1970), *The Trials of DedanKimathi* (with MichereMugo) (1976) and *I Will Marry When I Want* (with NgugiWaMirii) (1982). He has also published children's books and numerous collections of papers and essays.

In 1977, WaThiong'o together with NgugiWaMirrii and the peasants from his home village of Kamirithu, produced the play *I will Marry when I Want*. The play was conceived as an oral drama, a product of improvisation and experimentation by the peasant actors. The play's content and form was greatly influenced by the actors making it an important form of oral expression that integrates the community and the individual in artistic presentation (Sicherman: 1990:11, (Meyer: 1991: 1-3).).

The play adapted the epic theatre tradition and became very popular with audiences. Consequently as Gikandi has observed, this play achieved a degree of subversion that Ngugi's earlier works in English had not achieved (Gikandi: 2000:188-186). This led to the author's detention in Kamiti Maximum Security Prison where he vowed that he would in future craft all his creative works in Kikuyu language. (WaThiong'o 1981). While in prison he authored *CaitaniMutharaba-ini(Devil on the Cross)* and later while in exile in Britain he penned *Matigari.Wizard of the Crow* was written in the United States where the author has been teaching in several universities.

Our discussion in this paper explores the influence of Kikuyu folklore in the novels authored by WaThiong'o in Kikuyu language. The paper explores how the novelist utilizes oral narrative strategies to foreground the thematic conceptualization of the novels and how these strategies are used to communicate the realities of postcolonialism and globalization.

2. THE ORAL NARRATIVE TRADITION

In his childhood memoir, *Dreams in a Time of War*, Ngugi acknowledges his induction to the world of fiction through the oral narrative performances by his step-mother, Wangari and half-sister Wambia and to some extent by his mother Wanjiku. These stories were told in the ideal traditional setting and have had a life-long grip on the novelist.

Every evening...children gathered around
the fireside...and the performance would begin.
Sometimes, particularly on weekend the older
Siblings would bring their friends and it
would become a story telling session for all....
Whenever I think of that phase of my childhood
it is in terms of the stories in Wangari's hut at
night and their re-birth in her daughter's voice
during the day. (17-20)

In the presentation of his Kikuyu novels, the narrator in the story is conceptualized as the traditional oral 'story teller' narrating to an interactive audience. All his Kikuyu novels begin with the traditional Kikuyu tale telling formula, '*Ugaiitha*' (Say *iitha*), to which the audience responds, *iitha!* In the Kikuyu traditional story telling sessions, this formula is addressed to all members of the audience during the storytelling session as *Ugaiitha*. The formula elicits the undivided attention of the audience and creates rapport between the storyteller and the audience. By assenting to the narrator by saying, *iitha*, 'the listeners become important agents in making the story effective (Mwangi 2007:34, Gikandi: 2000:211). In the novels the formula addresses the individual reader/listener who is in direct conversation with the narrator. The reader is conceived as a listener and the formula prepares the reader for the long flight into fantasy. Immediately after the formula, the novelist however indicates that the story he is about to tell is 'a modern story' as is the case in *Devil on the Cross* or as the story to be told in 'the spirit of the dead, the living and the unborn in *The Wizard of the Crow*.' (p.ix).

While the use of the traditional opening formulas situate WaThiong's Kikuyu novels within the Kikuyu oral tradition, the novelist also represents the narrator in the *Devil on the Cross* as an accomplished but a reluctant oral artist. The narrator has to be coaxed and persuaded by Waringa's mother and the 'pleading cries of many voices' (p. 1-2) in order to tell the story. This fits well with the renowned traditional story tellers. Sometimes they had to be goaded, almost beseeched by the audience before they agreed to tell a story. But beyond this, the narrator is also an 'oral poet' ('*Muiniwa Gichandi*') and a prophet of justice whose duty is to reveal what now lies concealed by darkness (p. 2). In the Kikuyu oral tradition, the prophet is one of the five key pillars¹ in shaping the destiny of the society. The narrator has to be persuaded almost forced by the supernatural force and voice to narrate the story of Waringa by the fireplace, the favourite traditional site of oral literature performance

The moment the voice fell silent, I was seized, raised up
and then cast down into the ashes of the fire place.
And I took the ashes and smeared my face and legs with
them and I cried out: I accept, I accept.... (p.2)

¹ The other four pillars in the community were the medicine men, elders, the prosperous and the warriors

Apart from the narrator, a key variable in defining oral literature performance is the audience. The narrator in WaThiongo's Kikuyu novels is keenly aware, especially in *Devil on the Cross* of the audience they are addressing. As Kiiru observes 'the narrator's implied audience is aural... that he is not only addressing, but also inviting to play part in narrating the story (Kiiru: 2005).

3. HYPERBOLE AND ORAL TESTIMONIES

Hyperbole, myth, fantasy and magic are integral elements in oral narrative strategies. The elements are strategically exploited in the novels to interrogate the postcolonial and globalization dimensions in Africa. In *Devil on the Cross*, the novelist employs hyperbole and the device of oral testimonies to accentuate the sterile capitalistic ventures in postcolonial Africa. The story of Jacinta Waringa, 'the heroine of toil,' unfolds in the structure of a journey motif that is common in the folktale tradition. In the first journey Waringa and four other characters are fated together in Mwaura's taxi christened *MatataMatatuMatamubound* for Imorog. As they travel to Imorog they reveal themselves to the reader through the use of testimonies and flashback. Through this technique, we learn about the characters past and their present coincidence. By co-incident they are also bound together by an invitation to the 'devil's feast' in which there will be a competition to select the seven cleverest thieves and robbers from Ilmorog.

The testimony technique is further exploited in the den of thieves where the competition to determine the greatest thief is taking place. The testimonies of the thieves are structured as oral performances steeped in Kikuyu oral traditions as the thieves relieve their capitalistic achievements and make proposals for even greater exploitation and dispossession of the people. As Mwangi observes the novelist allows the characters to use oral literature to emphasize the 'extent to which they will go to justify their greed and abuse of women' (Mwangi: 2007:39). The novelist employs hyperbolic satire and invites the reader and the audience within the competition site to believe and interpret the truth and fantasy of the testimonies.

The first testimony in the competition is that of NdayaWaKahuria whose name can be translated to 'Long Son of Grabber', grabber being in the diminutive. His name befits his physical description by the author and his profile as a chicken thief and a pick pocket. But this is 'a competition of thieves and robbers who have attained international status' (p.93), NdayaWaKahuria is thrown off the podium and evicted from the feast. His participation nevertheless forces the organizers to re-think the regulations governing who can participate and they come with seven rules. The number seven echoes seven rules or laws of the 'Hyena Kingdom', a modern folkloric representation of the greed, corruption and ineptness of the modern middle class in Kenya. The laws are folkloric and may vary from one person to another depending of the context and occasion but their referential base is the motif of the character of the greedy hyena common in Kikuyu folktales.

The second competitor, GitutuWaGitanguru, perhaps has the longest English name on earth; 'RottenboroughGroundfleshShitland Narrow Isthmus Joint Stocks Brown.' (p.97). Gitutu in Kikuyu language alludes refers the big rodent which defecates on the same place creating heaps of waste next to its lair. Gitanguru is derived from the word Ndanguru describing a proud person with a 'don't care attitude'. He has become wealthy because he learnt that to be cunning is more rewarding than hard work. Armed with this 'wisdom' and letters of recommendation from his father he amasses wealth by buying land from white settlers departing from the country after it gains independence. He sub-divides the land into small plots and sells it to the landless and makes huge profits. He now has a vision of the time when the rich would buy all land in the country, pack it and start selling it in tins and pots to the peasants.

The third competitor, KihahuWaGatheeca also has an English Name; Gabriel, Bloodwell Stuart Jones. He learns early not to behave like the foolish girl in the Kikuyu folktale who picks pears with her eyes closed. In the folktale, a group of girls climb the pear tree and agree to pick the fruits with their eyes closed. All the girls close their eyes except one. When they descend she finds that all the fruits she picked were not ripe. She climbs up the trees again to pick the ripe fruits as the other girls go home. Meanwhile, the owner of the tree who is an ogre returns and captures the girl.

KihahuWaGathecha decides to 'open his eyes' by 'throwing away the pieces of chalk' and opening a private school, He engages an old European lady as the Principal. African names and languages are banned in this school and surely, children of the rich flock into the school assuring WaGathechea earns his millions. He uses his wealth to establish housing development companies and to climb the political ladder. He proposes that in order for the rich to make more money, they should develop houses the size of a bird's nest and rent them out on the basis of 'one man one nest' (p.117).

NditikaWaNguunji who gives the fourth testimony is a smuggler and a black marketer. He is guided by a simple philosophy; grab, extort and confiscate. If you find anything belonging to the masses, take it because 'if you do not look after yourself, who will?'(p.180). However his wealth alienates him from himself because it does not substantially differentiate him from the poor. Like the poor people he has one Mouth, one stomach and one penis. He proposes that an organs' spare part factory where the rich can replace their ageing organs should be established. This fantasy almost becomes a reality with the establishment of such a factory in the *Wizard of Crow*, where the character, Tajirika, is able to purchase and fit white body parts in an attempt to find a lasting cure of his 'white ace' affliction (*Wizard of the Crow* p.741-742).

Devil on the Cross departs considerably from the realistic mode that we find in Ngugi's earlier English novels. The novel adopts the hyperbole of a folktale and relies heavily on Kikuyu oral literary strategies to unfold the story of the postcolonial nation. The novel as Kiiru (2005) notes, extensively exploits stylistic devices associated with Kikuyu oral narratives. It exploits the devices of repetition, allusions, speech making and integrates the use of various oral literature genres including proverbs, songs and folktales.

4. MATIGARI AS AN ORAL NARRATIVE

Orality in *Matigari* is even more explicit. *Matigari* as an oral narrative is patterned after the story of 'Ndiro' frequently narrated to WaThiong'o by his mother during his early childhood (WaThiong'o:2010:18-19) The novelist also acknowledges this in the preface to the English translation where he indicates that the novel is 'partly based on an oral story about a man seeking a cure for an illness' (p.ix), The novelist concedes that he adopted the conventions of the traditional oral narrative as a stylistic innovation in order to overcome the limitations of the traditional novel technique. By adopting the oral narrative technique, the author realized that he could break with traditional linear timelines and still be able to connect the present with the past and the future. Further the oral narrative technique is not arbitrary as it 'follows the structure of the mind. It is a technique that enabled the artist to express multiple symbolic dimensions (Sanders and Lindfors: 2007:268).

When the novel opens *Matigari* is coming back home in search of peace and rest after many years of struggle with colonialism. 'He hoped that the last of the colonial problem had disappeared with the descent of settler Williams into hell' (p.2). To conclude the sacrificial ritual of that struggle, Matigari seeks *amugumo* (fig tree) where he buries his weapons and emerges out of the forest girded in a 'belt of peace' to go back to his house and rebuild his home (p.2-3).

But Matigari is in for a shock. The house that he has wrestled from settler Williams is now occupied by the son of the former colonialist, Williams Junior and the son of his servant, John Boy Junior. The significance of the house lies in its symbolic representation of the postcolonial nation in Africa. The fight for independence that Matigari has been involved in for many years was to restore the colony to its rightful owners. But now that Matigari cannot reclaim to the house he would rather destroy it and build a new one on a new foundation. This raises the question on the future of the post colony in the age of neo-colonialism and globalization.

This contradiction stylistically leads us to the oral narrative of Ndiro. Like the sick man seeking Ndiro, Matigari has to search for an answer to this postcolonial contradiction. The preamble to the search is precipitated by the many 'little' narratives or what Balogun refers to as 'ring compositions' (Balogun: 1995:150-152) of the characters Matigari comes into contact with. The first ones are Muriuki and Guthera. Guthera uses allusive narration to reveal her story to Matigari. She presents the story in the third person voice, giving it the traditional setting of an oral narrative;

Long ago, there was a virgin.
Her mother had died at childbirth.
This girl and her sisters and brothers
were brought up by their father.
He was a Christian-.... (p.33-37)

By using this traditional oral narrative strategy, Guthera is able to relieve very painful incidents in a detached manner and without emotionally overburdening herself or the reader. Her narrative, that of Muriuki and the arrest of Matigari as he seeks to reclaim his House from William Junior and Boy junior heighten the contradiction of the postcolonial problematic. The situation is further compounded by the 'little narratives' from the other inmates Matigari finds in the cells. There is the student who has been arrested for asking the Provincial Commissioner why he was wearing a colonial uniform and the teacher who was arrested for teaching 'marxism' and 'communism' in the school. The peasant farmer is arrested for selling his own milk without a license and the worker is nabbed as he flees from his striking colleagues (p.52- 65). Matigari is at a loss as to what is true and what is just.

In part two of the novel Matigari moves from one place to another and from one person to another in search of truth and justice, Like the sick man in search of Ndiro he meets many different people. But unlike the sick man who is directed to Ndiro, the people he encounters enhance his dilemma. The student with whom he had shared a cell has changed his position. He has realized that the ruler, His Excellency Ole Excellence, means business after fellow students were killed and five others jailed. He directs him to the teacher who is also afraid. He in turn directs Matigari to the priest (p.89- 100). The priest advises him to 'render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto God what is God's. The priest directs him to the Minister of Truth. The Minister confirms to him the inverted results of the struggle for independence. The truth of the matter is that those who obeyed the colonial laws, the loyalists are the ones who brought independence they are the ones in power and will continue to be in power (p.104). For demanding truth and justice Matigari is committed to a mental hospital.

In adopting the story of Ndiro, The novelist casts Matigari both as the sick man and also as Ndiro (the cure). While seeking the truth and justice, he parallels the sick man in search of Ndiro's cure;

Tell me where lives the old man Ndiro
Who when he shakes, his foot, jingles
And the bells ring out his name:
Ndiro and again Ndiro (p.71)

But his constitution and actions as he engages the postcolonial situation cast him as the medicine man with the solutions to the postcolonial predicaments. The people of Trampville confirm his mythical standing by composing for him:

Show me the way to a man
Whose name is Matigari
Ma Njirungi
Who stamps his feet with
The rhythm of bells
And the bullets jingle
And the bullets jingle (p.71, 125)

By casting Matigari as the seeker of truth and the truth itself, the story seeks to emancipate Matigari from the romance of the nation and national independence. Matigari must realize that the truth and justice he is seeking is embodied in himself. While in detention at the mental hospital Matigari realizes that 'in the pursuit of truth and justice one had to be armed with

armed words' (p.131). His decision is reinforced by a recall of the oral narrative of 'Wagaciiri.' This is the story of the smith who leaves behind his pregnant wife and went far away to the forges. When he returns, he finds an ogre had acted as his wife's midwife and was now starving her. This marks Matigari's turning point. He poses: 'did he send the ogre peace greetings? Did he not first sharpen his spear? He removed the belt of peace he had worn earlier and tramped it on the ground (p. 31)

Part three of the novel entitled; 'the Pure and the Resurrected' translates into the characters Guthera and Muriuki in Kikuyu. In this section, we notice a profound change of the position taken by Matigari. He realizes that the struggle for freedom, truth and justice is not yet over in his country. Independence is just a continuation of colonialism under a new guise dominated by a new class of 'eating chiefs'. He may have to go back to the *mugumo* (fig) tree and unearth his weapons. He abandons the idea of going back to his house and decides to destroy it. He reasons that it is better to build a new house. After escaping from the mental hospital Matigari sets the house on fire and escapes pursued by the police. Eventually Matigari and Guthera with bullet injuries escape into the river and drift downstream embracing each other in an indeterminate ending of their story.

The narrator, early in the novel begins to mythologize Matigari by juxtaposing fantasy and realism in the novel. From the moment he saves Guthera from the policeman (p.60), Matigari starts acquiring his magical status. The worker reporting the episode to the arrested co-worker begins the social mythologizing:

Can you believe this he is a dwarf of as man.
A dwarf? What did I say? when this dwarf stood up,
wearing a feathered hat and a leopard-skin coat
over his shoulder, he was transformed into a giant (p.60)

His mythical status is confirmed in the police cell when the doors of jail open as if responding to the invisible power of Matigari and the angel Gabriel has come to unlock the door in what the other inmates wonder in awe:

This must be a dream. Or perhaps a miracle
Being let out of prison by an invisible person?
Yet even as they headed towards the main
Road most of them were wondering: who was
Matigari Ma Njirungi, a person who could make
Prison Walls open? (p. 65-66)

As the narrator ends part one of the novel, Matigari has already become a legend, a dream and a mystery. Rumour even hold that he is Jesus Christ (p.84) He ceases to be a mere fictional figure and turns into an authoritative mythical figure who we follow and agree with as a matter of faith. As a legend the narrator is building a character that becomes part of the communal consciousness. As the novel comes to an end, Muriuki retrieves the weapons Matigari had hidden under the *Mugumo* tree. But the question that remains in the country was, 'who was Matigari Ma Njirungi? 'was he a man or a woman was he young or old, is he a person or a spirit, Was he dead or was he alive? (P 170, 174). In the end we conceive Matigari in this story as an allegory of a confounded nation where the struggle to regain its lost national consciousness may never end.

5. WIZARD OF THE CROW, THE MODERN SORCERER

Wizard of the Crow compared to *Matigari* presents a more advanced oral narrative. While it opens with the traditional oral narrative formula, *Ugai i tha*, the narrator requests the audience to clean up their ears so that they can hear this (new) narrative in the spirit of those who are gone, those who are alive and future generations (xi). This is a novel with many features of orality making it an intersection between the oral and the written (Osanji: 2010)

In this novel, is the story of Aburiria, an imaginary African country under the timeless dictatorship of the leader, 'the eternal ruler of the free republic of aburiria, 'whose reign has no beginning and no end' (p. 17, 6). The rulers main quest is to build the towers, 'Marching to Heaven', to fulfill his dreams of sharing residence with God. When the novel opens we learn that 'His Excellency the ruler is suffering from a mysterious disease and there are many theories as to its cause. The first theory was that the illness was caused by ruler's anger for being denied airtime during a visit to Washington. The second theory was that the illness was caused by a curse from 'the he-goat that cried tears like a human being when it was singled out for sacrifice. The disease could also have been his long reign or by a curse from Rachael's tears, his wife who he had consigned into eternal exile in a mansion on seven acres for daring to voice concern over his sexual exploits on school girls. The fifth theory was that the illness could have been caused by the evil spirits he kept in his temple 'who had now turned their backs on him and withdrew their protective services' (p.10).

In *Wizard of the Crow*, the orality is sustained by the narrator who relies on rumours and many unreliable tales from others and especially from the policeman, Arigaigai Gatherere. Indeed it is in the tales of Gatherere, narrated in first person that we have the juxtaposition of realism and fantasy that creates and sustains the Wizard of the Crow as a modern sorcerer. The Wizard of the Crow eventually becomes the dominant character through who the entire novel unfolds.

The persona of the Wizard of the Crow is created after the 'beggars' disrupted the dinner in honour of visiting mission from the global bank. Arigaigai Gatherere chases Nyawira and Kamiti, who are disguised as a beggars right up to Nyawira's abode in the slums of Santa Lucia. To shield themselves from arrest Kamiti falls back to an old trick of the mystic of the wizard that he had learnt and practices as game when they were children (p 84-85). He erects the cardboard with a bundle of rags and bones and a dead frog and a lizard with the caution;

WARNING! THIS PROPERTY BELONGS TO A WIZARD
WHOSE POWER BRINGS DOWN CROWS AND HAWKS
FROM THE SKY. TOUCH THIS HOUSE AT YOUR OWN PERIL.
SGN. WIZARD OF THE CROW (77).

This trick works on Arigaigai Gatherere. He takes to his heels believing that the two beggars he followed were indeed 'djinnns of the prairie sent by the Wizard of the Crow to trick him to his death'. He flees from the scene but on reflection he views the encounter as a sign that pointed to 'he who could solve his problems' and sure enough the magical Wizard of the Crow is born. (p.77). During his subsequent visits, he becomes the first client of The Wizard of the Crow and the wizard treats him of his obsession with his enemies. In the mirror of the Wizard, he is able to see his enemies and through a scratch with a knife on the mirror, the enemy is vanquished as indicated in a road accident. And now that his enemies were no more he waited to see whether his life would take a different course. This too comes to pass when he is appointed a security agent in the office of the ruler (p.113- 119, 128) for his ability as the only policeman who could chase the djinnns in the prairies who are apparently responsible for distributing seditious leaflets against the projects of the ruler. From then on, all types of people start trooping to the abode of the Wizard of the Crow to have their problems solved. Kamiti's make-belief antics and the fantastic narrative vision of Arigaigai Gatherere have turned him into a respected wizard, 'Sir Wizard' and Nyawira's novel has become the 'Shrine of the Wizard of the Crow' (p.132, 133).

The ailment that afflicts Titus Tajirika becomes the first major test of the divination powers of Kamiti as the Wizard of the Crow. Once Tajirika is appointed the chairman of 'the marching to heaven project' he amasses bribes from would be contractors and at the end of the first day he contracts a mysterious disease after gazing at himself in the mirror. He keeps on scratching his face and can only bark 'If', and 'if only' (p. 172). The Wizard of the Crow diagnoses him as being possessed by 'the Daemons of whiteness' and suffering from a severe case of 'white-ache' (P. 180- 181). He proceeds to treat him by inoculating him with a dose of whiteness. He must lose his African identity, become a willing slave, then as white, occupy the lowest ranks either as a punk, prostitute or at best he and his wife assume the identity of an old ex-colonial couple. This

position shocks Tajirika and his wife Vinjinia out of the clutch of the disease of whiteness (Waita: 2013).

When the leader of Aburiria is struck by a strange illness during the American trip, Constable ArigagaiGathere insists that only the Wizard of the Crow could divine the illness of the ruler. Right from the time it struck, he knew it was no ordinary illness. Only the Wizard of the Crow who could wrestle it to the ground. Using the story of 'The Elephant and the Thorn', Gathere urges the minister for foreign affairs, Marcus Machokali, not ignore his advice to bring the Wizard of the Crow to New York the way the elephant ignored the tiny thorn in his feet and eventually died of the infection cause by the thorn (p. 473-477). When finally the Wizard of the Crow arrives, he diagnoses the ruler's disease as the affliction that points towards the end of his rule. His rule can no longer serve the interest of the global market and his bloated pregnancy must lead to the birth (still birth?) of 'BABY D. Baby Democracy.' (Wizard of the Crow, p.698)

The Kikuyu title of the novel, *MurogiWaKagogo*, literary translates to mean the 'one with the ability to poison the crow'. In traditional Kikuyu setting, this metaphor would refer to person who has executed an extra ordinary feat comparable to poisoning the crow which is resistant to all threats to its life and apparently lives forever. But author translates *murogi* as 'the wizard' which is more consistent with the narrative strategy of this tale which emerges as a game, a play with words and situations to create a magically realistic characters. The Novelist incorporating magic realism, fantasy and dream to explore the critical issues relating to identity, politics and globalization in Africa.

In this novel then, both Kamiti and Nyawira are the Wizard of the Crow representing the indomitable human spirit that can never die. ArigagaiGathere is the story teller who narrates the ballad of 'the famous Wizard of the Crow who could change himself to anything' (p.766). The Wizard of the Crow then emerges a clever postcolonial diviner with the ability to interrogate and possibly treat the ailments of the postcolonial and emerging globalization on aburiria. *Wizard of the Crow* is as a creation of a new myth of the wizard who can perceive oppressive cycles of postcolonialism now manifested in globalization. He is the wizard who represents the people and can create a new consciousness that can overcome the stalemate of African politics in the age of globalization. But the title can further be read as a proverb whose metaphor the reader should seek to decipher and in the process understand the condition of the post colony in the era of globalization.

Theorality of the Wizard of the Crow is enhanced by the experimentation with Kikuyu language. The novel is not crafted with 'pure' Kikuyu that we find in *Devil on the Cross* and *Matigari*. The Kikuyu used in this novel sounds more contemporary which includes adoption of English words and terms into Kikuyu orthography. The narrative language especially that of ArigagaiGathere is interspersed with Kiswahili jargon. In the process the novel attempts to enrich the Kikuyu language giving it the ability to transcend any limitations in expressing the realities of globalization.

6. CONCLUSION

In this paper we have attempted to highlight the use of orality in the Kikuyu novels of NgugiWaThiong'o. Our discussion demonstrates a collapse of the dichotomy between oral and written discourse. The analysis confirms the notion that orality 'is not the opposite of literacy, it is permanent and destined to produce writing.' (Middleton: 2009). Orality plays a central role in the literary creation and conception of the Kikuyu novels. The oral strategies have enabled the novelist to transcend the limitations of the traditional realistic novel and create works that provide deep insights to the African postcolonial status in the age of globalization. WaThiong'o's greatness as a novelist has been confirmed by the last three novels written in Kikuyu. The literary achievement has been possible due to the author's ability to appropriate traditional Kikuyu oral narrative strategies and the extensive use of Kikuyu oral literature in the literary discourse.

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