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'The Maggot Within': The state security apparatus in Ngũgĩ's *Wizard of the Crow*

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In contemporary African nations, the functions performed by the state security apparatus have continued to cause trouble and divisions in the society. The state security apparatus, which is obliged to be non-partisan while carrying out assignments, has been manipulated by those in authority for their own profit. This anomalous attitude of the state security apparatus has been highlighted in fictional works of most African writers, as exemplified by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. This paper therefore investigates the portrayal of the state security apparatus in Ngũgĩ's *Wizard of the Crow*. The focus is how the agents of state security strive to uphold state power and, in doing so, deviate from their other constitutional role of protecting life and property. The paper further explores how the characters representing the state security apparatus in *Wizard of the Crow* promote shady business deals and as well systematize corruption. The overarching argument in this paper is that state security agents serve as instruments of misrule, oppression, deprivation and class control. **Keywords:** State security apparatus, corruption, exploitation, abduction and oppression.

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In his article entitled "Spectacle and subversive laughter in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Wizard of the Crow*", Gichingiri Ndigirigi looks at the antagonistic spectator who "refuses to be awed by state power and who by laughing at the spectacular excess, inscribes a different meaning to the spectacles" (55). Ndigirigi maintains that "the spectacular performance of the state's texts almost invariably elicits derisive laughter that becomes a space of change and renewal. The laughter subverts the intentions of the state [...] It creates a spectacle of stability and inevitability which is then circulated as reality" (56).

Whereas the emphasis of Ndigirigi's article is how the resistant spectator opposes the state's monopoly of meaning and performance with unscripted performances, the concern of this paper is how the agents of state security strive to uphold state power and, in doing so, deviate from their other constitutional role of protecting life and property.

To understand Ngũgĩ's unveiling of the position of the state security apparatus, the knowledge of what Frantz Fanon calls the Manichean nature of the colonial world, and the ideological theory of Louis Althusser, especially the theory of repressive state apparatus cannot be overlooked. Fanon (31–2) states that the colonialist employed the

services of the police and the army to delimit physically the place of the colonized and paints the colonized as a sort of embodiment of evil. Even in the postcolonial African context history repeats itself—as there is “the replacing of a certain ‘species’ of men by another ‘species’ of men” (Fanon 27). These new ‘species’ of men use the state security apparatus to protect their interests. That is why Althusser posits that state power is upheld by repressive state apparatus. He however redefines the Marxist theory of the state, by distinguishing the Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) from the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs). The major difference between the RSA and the ISAs lies in its primary function in society. The RSA consists of the army, police and other security machineries of the state, which primarily operate by external force, and, secondarily, by ideology. The ISAs comprise religious organizations, schools, political parties, the media, the family, cultural activities (literature, arts, sports) and trade unions. These are institutions established by state for the purpose of subtly securing the internal consent of citizens (Althusser 158–9). In other words, the primary function of the ISAs is as the means for the dispersion of ideology, and, secondarily, as a means of political repression. What emerges from Althusser’s theory is that ideology ‘interpellates.’ It makes us feel as if we are free agents and are entitled to choose what we like when in fact imposition plays on us through tricks. For Althusser, capitalism thrives on interpellation, which accounts “for the perpetuation of a social set-up which concentrates wealth and power in the hands of the few” (Barry 165).

Going by Althusser, we contend that, under ideological thrust, literature offers a number of imaginative works to ideology. And in doing so, it recasts our relations to the world. Thus, contemporary African literature has the potential to represent the functions performed by the state security apparatus in the preservation of neo-colonial domination and despotism, and the abrogation of the elemental human rights. In this regards, the novel functions as resistance to the supreme power set-up. It puts into use its novelistic components such as characterization, satire, symbolism, irony and even humour, in an effort to impede and thereby oppose the dominant viewpoint. Through its narration, therefore, the novel seeks to identify and map protocols of domination so as to present them for subversion. This is the reason why Ngũgĩ asserts that “art breaks down barriers between peoples; the state erects them. Art arose out of the human struggle to break free from confinement” (“Enactments” 28).

In modern African literature, the marking of both the African leaders and the security officers with corruption is aptly demonstrated. Ngũgĩ depicts the state security apparatus as belonging not to the clique of “the powerless” but “the powerful that promote and legalize corruption.” This essay is restricted to the examination of the state security apparatus in *Wizard of the Crow* as a guardian and champion of corruption. The overarching discussion will be that the state security agents serve as instruments of misrule, oppression, exploitation and class domination.

Wizard of the Crow is a long satirical narrative, whose major thematic concern is manifestations of neo-colonialism. It is set in the fictional Free Republic of Aburiria, an allegorical representation of a postcolonial country. In this novel, Kamiti and Nyawira are the main characters who oppose the ruling class. Both Kamiti and Nyawira, according to Ngũgĩ, are archetypal figures that stand for a number of things: “Kamiti means of the trees. In English, you might call him Mr. Woods. Nyawira means ‘she is of work.’ She is a worker. They are both real, common names” in Kenya (Olende 1–2). The Ruler is the name given to the president of the Free Republic of Aburiria, a country where freedom stands for captivity and democracy means plutocracy. Even though some characters bear some of the common names answered by real men and women in Kenya, the novel is hugely influenced by the fantasy element. Hence it “could easily be dismissed as the wild imaginings of a ‘disconnected’ author, unrelated to any reality in Kenya” (Ndigirigi 69).

Wizard of the Crow starts with the five theories about the Ruler’s catastrophe which comes because of his dictatorial disposition and it ends with the staging of a palace coup that overthrows the Ruler by his latest defence minister, Titus Tajirika (a crook). Tajirika enthrones himself as the Emperor of Aburiria, and renames state House Imperial Palace. For him, things had gone smoothly. “He had taken over the country with a few bullets for the Ruler” (753), using the four bearded police riders, also described as masked spirits. Ironically, the masked spirits whom the Ruler wants to execute end up executing the Ruler. Thus, Tajirika continues to maintain and build on the already-existing totalitarianism. From the onset, to ensure that this system thrives, the Ruler’s regime uses the machineries of the state security as its backing. This, therefore, gives birth to a state security apparatus that defends bad leadership and wallows in corruption.

In *Wizard of the Crow* violence perpetrated by the state security apparatus is one instance of corruption:

Wasn’t it just yesterday that the police were violently breaking up queues? Was it not only the other day that the Ruler himself had threatened to mow down the People’s Assembly with armored cars? Now he was ordering his police to arrest anyone who interfered with the great assembly. (670)

After Aburiria’s independence, the hopes of the Aburirian people that their lives would be bettered through the regime of their own elected president—the Ruler—are dashed. This is expressed in the following song:

The pot I made is broken
Little did I know that freedom
Would bear a viper and a devil. (25)

Of course, the people of Aburiria are abandoned in hunger and unemployment. "Everywhere people were hungry, thirsty, and in rags" (39). They also cannot boast of any hospital that is equipped with medicines. Rather than equipping the national hospital with modern hospital equipment, the leaders travel overseas for reconstructive plastic surgery. Besides, throughout Aburiria there are no good roads and "even the few that used to have tarmac at independence" are "nothing but potholes" (119). Instead of embarking on people-based projects, the Ruler preoccupies himself with the building of a seven-star paradise hotel and a seven-acre prison. The import of this is that while paradise is for the corrupt leaders and their foreign associates, prison is for the peasants and workers who struggle against imperialist order. This apart, the Ruler fixes his thought excessively on how to make great wealth and remain in power. The postcolonial armed forces that are expected to use their weapons to protect the citizens' right to social justice negate their role by doing the biddings of a dictator. For instance, the Ruler's four sons who have risen to the highest ranks in the army are made to occupy key positions in the nation's economy. Of course, they are members of "the board of directors of several parastatals closely linked to foreign companies, particularly those involved in the exploration of oil and the mining of precious metals." They are also in control of "several licensing boards" (9). These play out so that he (the Ruler) will be able to get his own share of "collections" (9), Buri notes. It is only the 'collections' that make him feel at home with his sons, soldiers. Kaniuru also points out the greedy nature of the Ruler when he says that in his (Kaniuru's) brief tenure as Minister of Defence "there was no defence contract, even the tiniest, from which the Ruler did not expect a cut" (712). Although the state security apparatus knows the intrigues of the government executive, it still protects him against indictment. Furthermore, before leaving for America for a global bank loan, the Ruler's instructions to his sons, to watch out for ministers who would not travel with him, "particularly Sikiokuu" (262) and to be sensible of any intrigues among the armed forces, speak volume of the role of the law enforcement agencies as regards upholding class domination. Theirs is to submissively respond to every order by the Aburirian president. The Ruler uses the police to put to sleep anybody found posing a threat to his government. For example, police officer AG boasts of police antics in his dialogue with Wizard of the Crow:

"To kill a man—you know that is a hard thing to do?"

"Not for us, the Ruler's police officers... Any life that threatens the Ruler's power is nothing to us, nothing at all" (114).

By the Ruler's command, security officers eliminate "seven thousand and seven hundred citizens in just seven days for posing a threat to the stability through protests in the major cities demanding social change" (579).

However, where any security officer fails to execute the anti-human policy of the

Ruler, that officer faces dismissal from service or even death sentence. This is demonstrated in the case of AG, Elijah Njoya and Peter Kahiga, and the bearded police officer in central region. For AG, Njoya and Kahiga, they have served the Ruler well against all odds and in different scopes of dreadful and dangerous operations but they are relieved of their job simply because the Limping Witch and Wizard of the Crow mistakenly escape from their hand. For the bearded police rider, he faces a firing squad for failing to disperse queues and not reporting to police headquarters until after a long time.

The Ruler sees himself as a demigod who determines who should die or live, or, even go to paradise or prison in Aburiria. His own wife, Rachael, for daring him to desist from sexual excesses is imprisoned. For the Ruler, absolutism must prevail in Aburiria. To worsen the situation, the Ruler's three ministers—Machokali, Silver Sikiokuu and Big Ben Mambo—fail to represent their people well. Instead they travel to overseas hospitals for egocentric reasons. Machokali travels to a major London hospital for the enlargement of his eyes. Silver Sikiokuu lands in a hospital in Paris for the expansion of his ears. And Big Ben Mambo visits a hospital in Paris and another one in Berlin for the elongation of his tongue—all for the purpose of consolidating corrupt leadership and achieving their selfish political power ambitions. Eyes, ears and tongue symbolize the different organs of government in Aburiria respectively. As the head of the secret police known as M5, Sikiokuu uses his position to perpetrate evil against his fellow citizens. It is under Sikiokuu's security watch that Machokali is declared missing. The government of the Ruler claims that Machokali is "implicated in a plot to overthrow the legal government of the Republic of Aburiria" (606).

Characters like Wonderful Tumbo, Arigaigai Gatherer (popularly known as AG), Peter Kahiga, Elijah Njoya and John Kaniuru are core representatives of the state security system in the novel. These security men serve as myrmidons and by doing so, they neglect and abuse their functions and become instruments of materialistic capitalist appeals. Rather than being neutral, they defend the thieves and robbers in Aburiria. The Aburirian masses that form queues as they look for means of survival and use queues of the unemployed and that of the school kids and university students as a way of protest against dictatorship are dispersed violently by the police. The security agents are estranged from the peasant-worker struggles. They serve the interests of only those who are influential in the society. A clear manifestation of the security guards taking side with the rich is seen in the official launch of *Marching to Heaven* (a prototype of the biblical tower of Babel) to the Aburirian people. The *Marching to Heaven* project which Machokali organizes alongside other ministers to serve as a birthday gift to the Ruler is seen by the Aburirian masses as a nation-shattering and an unattainable project. Therefore, Aburirians reject it. The rejection of this project is demonstrated in the drama enacted by a group of women invited to dance for the Ruler and the international guests during the launch of the project.

Unknown to the organizers, the women dancers are all members of the Movement for the Voice of the People, the underground guerillas who see the Marching to Heaven as an unrealistic project in Aburiria. While the women dance, the Ruler as he raises his fly whisk in appreciation and salutation of the women's discipline and what he claims at that time to be their backing to the project, the women stop and facing the Ruler, and with one voice exclaim: "Set Racheal free! Set Racheal free!" (250) The way they show their grievance is quite sarcastic. According to Nyawira, all the women face the people and turn their backs to the platform and swear: "MARCHING TO HEAVEN IS A PILE OF SHIT! MARCHING TO HEAVEN IS A MOUNTAIN OF SHIT!" (250) In this instance the women lift their skirts and expose their buttocks to those on the platform, the oppressors, and stoop as if they are going to mess up the place—a "simulation" of what the Aburirian "female ancestors used to do as a last resort when they had reached a point where they could no longer take shit" (250) from an oppressor. This show of African oral tradition signifies resistance against social injustice. The women keep the Ruler in a state of bewilderment. At this point, it is highlighted in the novel that the police raise their guns, "waiting for the order to fire" (251), and subsequently the women leave the arena.

In this arena, the women whose voices had been suppressed by those of their male folks, especially those in authority, see simulation as reality, and reality here is suggestively linked to urinating, farting, bare butts and the Ruler. The women who use their dance performance to ridicule the president are able to do so because they pretend to be normal, calm and supportive. In this way, the Ruler, instead of being dignified, is greatly humiliated; and, on the contrary, the women are recognized. According to Ndigirigi, "the women's willingness to participate in the festivity honoring the Ruler 'zombifies' the repressive state apparatus" (64).

While Ngũgĩ's advocacy of the women's rights is spelt out, the state security apparatus is still presented as an anti-change agent. It is indicated in the novel that soon after the women disappear from the arena, the Aburirian leaders and foreign guests on the platform begin to experience some misfortunes. While the platform on which they sit starts to sink slowly, some liquid discharges from the platform, gradually forming a muddy pod. The foreign guests are the first to flee to their cars, followed by the Ruler and his ministers. It is revealed that the smell of the muddy pool is that of "a mixture of urine and shit" (252) and Machokali cannot tell for sure what the substance is. The truth here is that the ocean of corruption in which the leaders swim has overflowed to the point that the leaders are to be drowned in the mess. But it is unfortunate that the agents of state security will not allow these heartless and corrupt leaders to suffocate in their own pollution: "Some tellers of the story claim that they did see the Ruler and the ministers sink in the bog and police officers pull them out to safety." (252)

Ngũgĩ uses *Wizard of the Crow* to reveal the image of the state security apparatus that safeguards a corrupt regime and wages war against one of the fundamental

human rights—the right to peaceful assembly and associations. Besides, the novel unmask the lack and non-application of intelligence in the state security institution, which thus leads to the harassment and embarrassment of unimpeachable and faultless citizens of Aburiria. For instance, Nyawira, the secretary of Tajirika, is incriminated for belonging to the Movement for Voice of the People. The state security operatives go to Mars Café where AG, the squadron leader, meets Nyawira and mistakes her for Wizard of the Crow who can change into a male or a female. Given the fact that ironically Nyawira has not been traced at the Mars Café, the security officers decide to go to her work place, Eldares Modern Construction and Real Estate. Instead of Nyawira, Vinjina the wife of Tajirika, in a mistaken identity, is arrested by AG and his minions: “After they arrested her they blindfolded her, and after driving her in circles put her in a dark cell with dim light, and it was in this dark chamber that she was interrogated by people she could not see” (257). This suggests police oppression and deceitfulness. It also indicates aberration on the part of the state security apparatus that allows itself to be manipulated by those in authority. In the case of Vinjina, it is still the Ruler who orders Sikiokuu to release Vinjina because of the bad image her arrest would create before the Global Bank mission.

Another instance of embarrassment of the ordinary people by the police is expressed in the experience of Professor Materu (a Professor of History at the University of Aburiria). The Professor is messed about “for writing about the independence of Aburiria and failing to mention that the Ruler had been a freedom fighter” (483). Because “in Aburiria justice ends in the pockets of the highest bidder” (430), Professor Materu serves “ten of ten and half years of hard labor in the country’s maximum-security prison” (483). This incident echoes the infamous Kamiti Maximum Security Prison in Kenya which Ngũgĩ describes as “one of the largest prisons in post-colonial Africa” (*Detained* 3). Pointing out how coercive this prison is, Ngũgĩ says: “Maximum security: the idea used to fill me with terror whenever I met it in fiction” (*Detained*, 3–4).

In *Wizard of the Crow*, the belligerent stance of the state security apparatus is quite indicative. It indicates class consciousness and class fight. This manifests itself when AG says that the security forces belong to the Ruler and the Ruler uses them to hunt down those who “reject the rule of the viper and the ogre” (748). For the people of Aburiria, it is coercion instead of freedom. Aburiria turns out to be a society where promotion of officers is measured under the platform of oppression. The populace that is claimed to be free is denied access to enjoying the produce of the labour of their hands. The Ruler and his ministers being egocentric and plutomaniac employ every cruel measure against the masses to protect and propagate their absolute power positions. The cries of the people do not touch those in authority. That is why Germaine Necker de Stael (1766–1817) popularly called Madame de Stael says “power influences not deeds and speech but almost the thoughts of the sycophants who surround powerful men” (Adams 449). This is made manifest in the words of

AG: "We, the police, were trained to endure hardship, and I was not surprised that most of us were awake and mindful of our calling, guardians of the Ruler" (502). The Ruler who is described as a "snake" is always unleashing policemen, soldiers and intelligence agents on the Movement for the Voice of the People, a group that campaigns for its rights but taken to be a political antagonist. For this Movement and its supporters, the Ruler has only one message for them: "his security forces would hunt them down" (697). In other words, Ngũgĩ's state security apparatus as portrayed in *Wizard of the Crow* serves as a tool used to torture the people.

A magical character, Kamiti (he is the Wizard of the Crow as the title indicates) from Kiambu village holds a BA and an MBA degrees plus "an extra elective, *herbology*, the study of medicinal properties of plants" (57) from an Indian University. He is threatened (like Wangari in *Devil on the Cross*) by security guards while searching for a job: "Once security guards had even set dogs on him" (51) like Guthera in *Matigari* (30) as if looking for a job is a crime. The rate of corruption in the state security system has gone so high that the people can no longer co-operate easily with security officials. For instance, during a long walk as he looks for a job, Kamiti collapses at the foot of a mountain of garbage in Eldares due to hunger and thirst. Unconsciously, Kamiti sees himself in form of a bird, flying in the air. However, when the garbage collectors come across his empty body on the garbage they become afraid of contacting the police because "it would take the cops a whole day to come" (39). In addition to this, "there was always the possibility that they might be accused of murder and end up in prison or have their heads chopped off or lose a lot of money to bribe their way out" (39). These statements show that the security agents are corrupt in the sense that they do not serve their nation dutifully. They prefer doing wrong to doing right.

Ngũgĩ portrays the agents of the state security as sycophants whose allegiance is to commanding officer. For the security operatives, it is more fitting to work for one dictator or a few autocrats than to work for the larger society. In Aburiria, for instance, where unemployment is rampant, the joblessness of Kamiti makes him lose his girlfriend Wariara; a high school diploma holder who is also jobless. His inability to secure a job in Eldares also restricts him from going to see his poor parents in Kiambu village who toiled for his schooling abroad. However, to eke out a living, Kamiti; a representation of deserted human race, resolves to transform "himself from a respectable-looking job hunter to a dire seeker of alms" (71). Decisively he stations himself at the gate of paradise hotel to beg alms. But, for the fact that Machokali, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, organizes a welcome dinner for the Global Bank delegates in the paradise hotel, Kamiti is chased away from the gate by the police who are there "to protect the visitors from any intrusion by hoodlum beggars" (73). What an irony in qualifying the common men with hoodlums! It is delineated in the novel that when a group of beggars among who is Kamiti start to shout slogans beyond

the decorum of begging: "Marching to Heaven is Marching to Hell, Your Strings of Loans Are Chains of Slavery. Your Loans Are the Cause of Begging. We Beggars Beg the End of Begging. The March to Heaven Is Led by Dangerous Snakes", the security forces, mindless of the fact that it is the bad socio-economic conditions of people that have forced them into begging, come to attack the crowd of beggars "with their riot gear-clubs, shields, and guns" (74, 75). They attack the crowd of beggars because, according to AG, "they had been sent to make sure that the visitors from the Global Bank would not be harassed by the crowd of beggars" (96). In the words of AG: "we received orders from on high to silence and disperse them" (96). The deduction here is that the security agents are used, on the one hand, to impress foreign visitors, and on the other hand, to depress the aborigines of Aburiria. Later on, Kamiti resorts to sorcery, becoming the enigmatic Wizard of the Crow. Yet as a famous wizard he is persecuted to the point of being shot with a gun by Kaniuru. As long as the Ruler's regime is concerned, power belongs to the politicians, and not to the people whom Kamiti and Nyawira represent. That is why the State House celebrates the death of the Wizard and Nyawira his counterpart without knowing that they are still alive, staying "in their forest hiding place, where Kamiti" is recovering from his gunshot wound and coma" (721). For sure, the security operatives believe that the Ruler is the country of Aburiria and the country of Aburiria is the Ruler hence by them the masses should remain alienated. Thus, alienation is used here to reflect an action through which, or a situation in which a group that forms the majority becomes a stranger in its own native land.

In *Wizard of the Crow* the use of the state security machinery as a tool of subjugation does not begin with the Ruler but started with the colonial masters. It is depicted in the novel that during the period of colonialism the Kamiti's grandfather; Kamiti wa Kienjeku, was shot dead by colonial Aburiria security agents because as a holy seer, he was seen "working with forces fighting the British in the war of independence. He lived with the fighters in the mountains, teaching them how to be at peace with one another, settling conflicts, leading units into battle, and cleansing them of evil after their engagement with the enemy [...] the British shot him dead one day, but his body was never found" (294).

In *Wizard of the Crow* the independent Aburiria law enforcement forces are not only after the ordinary people (even though the ordinary people suffer most) but also are used sometimes by politicians to mow down their fellow politicians. There is a demonstration of power tussles in *Wizard of the Crow*. Individuals who politically consider themselves superior and want to retain their superiority over others are seen using the security agents to bring their fellow contestants down to achieve their own selfish aims. In this case, abduction/kidnapping in the name of arrest is what emerges. For example, Kaniuru organizes for the abduction of Titus Tajirika. He "thinks he can build success on the ruins of other people's lives" (304-5).

It is important to point out that in the world of the novel, security officers disguise themselves to carry out some illegal assignments successfully. Abduction, which is a criminal offence and indeed a corrupt practice is undertaken by the police in disguise. This is true because: "Political disappearances had become commonplace as powers that be proclaimed ignorance and innocence even though relatives and friends swore that they had seen their loved ones hauled off in police cars" (302). Besides, "stories of people abducted by the police in broad daylight, tortured, and left in the wild as food for hyenas, were many" (427). In the case of Tajirika, it is a clear police kidnapping. He is taken to a senior police officer, Superintendent Peter Kahiga who interrogates him. Tajirika in his attempts to answer the questions of Kahiga, is given a slap in the face: "He had not expected the blow, and so when it came, a full and forceful slap across his face, Tajirika saw a thousand stars in the darkness of his mind" (329). The officers accuse Tajirika of plotting with Machokali to overthrow the government of the Ruler. At this point they drag him from the circle of light into the darkness: "They tortured him day and night, with needles and whips, drowning, and electric shocks. Each act of torture was accompanied by a fusillade of questions about the impending coup d' état he and Machokali had planned, but he refused to acquiesce screaming only what he had already told them." (333)

Although he begs the security men not to torture him, his pleas of innocence fall on deaf ears. This torture "went on day and night [...] until Tajirika finally collapsed, unconscious" (334). This is a mark of repression by the police. The way Tajirika is afflicted, in his own words, "even the donkeys of Santamaria market are treated with less cruelty" (335). This is to say that in Aburirian society as long as the state security apparatus is concerned animals are more important than human beings, especially those that are not influential. If it were to be in a civilized country where security institution functions well, this matter would have been handled with intelligence. However, the police have moved out from keeping peace and order to meting out oppression on the people. It is highlighted in the novel that as Tajirika regains consciousness he explains to Superintendent Njoya who pretends and claims not to be aware of the evil he (Tajirika) has suffered in the hands of his (Njoya's) colleagues: "My nails hurt. My knees are aflame from the beating." (335) This shows that the state security apparatus by its very nature is fierce and bloodthirsty. It also shows that the security force as an institution specializes in falsely accusing the innocent. Furthermore, when Tajirika is taken to Sikiokuu, the Minister of Defence, he does not spare him. He relocks him in a cell with a bucket toilet. The narrator of the novel informs us that often the cell guards leave the pail to overflow "with shit and urine, the stench becoming his daily and nightly companion" (376). This punishment is in itself dehumanizing. It marks corruption in the Aburirian security system.

The state security agents also torture Vinjinia, the wife of Tajirika. Soon after Vinjinia's release from the police custody, she witnesses the abduction of her husband,

Tajirika. As she remembers that Wonderful Tumbo is “a family friend” (302) and he heads Santamaria Police Station, she goes to Santamaria Police Station for inquiry about the missing of Tajirika. But, as Tumbo sees her in front coming from a distance he leaves “through the back door” (302). This is betrayal. Of course, this wicked action of Tumbo which, perhaps, creates a mental torture in Vinjina shows that the officers even though they appear to be in good relationships do so based on what they get at a particular moment. This is an act of corruption. An illustration of this is expressed in the following excerpt:

Tajirika considered officer Tumbo a good friend. The friendship was rooted in deeds of mutual benefits. Every now and then Tajirika would make sure that he extended to the officer what he called best wishes wrapped up in Buri notes and stuffed in an envelope. Sometimes the envelope bore wishes for a Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year for the officer and the entire station. [...] It was of course understood that in exchange the police would see to Tajirika’s interests. (226)

From what transpires between Tumbo and Vinjina, one can easily contend that oftentimes help does not come from where it is expected. Kamiti who was once ridiculed by Vinjina’s husband in a fake job interview at his Company now turns out to be the only source of help for Vinjina—suggesting the enthronement of the downtrodden to power. Previously it was Tajirika who dished out instructions which the job seeker obeyed but presently it is Kamiti, the Wizard, and his partner, Nyawira, whose instructions are obeyed by a company’s boss’ wife. Vinjina who once thought that “nothing was wrong with Aburiria” (431) but later discovers that social injustice and gender violence play out in the Ruler’s Aburiria attends the inauguration ceremony of Commission of Inquiry into the Queuing Mania as instructed by the acting Wizard of the Crow (Nyawira). Surprisingly she sees a group of women dancers in the traditional costumes that she had taken to the acting Wizard of the Crow while seeking for her help. She boldly and insistently asks Sikiokuu of her husband. But, it is unfortunate that Kaniuru assumes her crazy and gestures “to some policemen to take the woman away” (308). As she tries to protest in the presence of the unknown uniformed women dancers led by Nyawira who is not recognized by Sikiokuu and co-minister, they manhandle her, only to stop when they sense that her disturbance and the sarcastic and revolting song/dance display of the women might get out of hand because the Ruler and Machokali who are in America for a loan have not returned. The deduction here is that women are pivotal in the reconstruction of Aburiria.” In Nyawira, *Wizard of the Crow* makes the main revolutionary a woman, and has the Movement for the Voice of the People directly addresses the place of women in the nation. Domestic abuse, sex work, domestic labor, and many other issues relevant to women become the grounds on which the Ruler’s regime is challenged” (Dalleo 151). This apart, the guidance of Wizard of the Crow is so significant that it makes

the government acknowledge its evil work—that “Tajirika, Nyawira’s employer, was in the hands of the security forces” (309).

From every manifestation, in the novel, Kahiga, Njoya and Kaniuru perpetrate atrocities against the Aburirian people. They are well-known for their betrayal, plotting and framing up of people as well as extrajudicial killings in the Red River inhabited by crocodiles. Their evil deeds do not live after them but live before them. That is why Tajirika revengefully puts them to sleep shortly after he mounted the throne of power in Aburiria:

One night Kaniuru was invited to the Imperial Palace for dinner as revered artist. [...] Later the same night, Njoya and Kahiga, happy in their anticipation of sweet revenge, took Kaniuru to the Red River. What they did not know was that [...] the four masked spirits were waiting for them at the same riverside. They joined the Ruler in the belly of the crocodiles of the Red River... (755)

The lesson from this is that whatever seed one sow today is what one reaps tomorrow. Besides, those that serve the people in the present time should beware of orchestrating violence before it rebounds on them in the future, after their service might have elapsed.

In *Wizard of the Crow* recognizing the state security apparatus with bribery is not out of sight. It is revealed in the book that the president of the Free Republic of Aburiria (the Ruler) with his legal wife, Rachael, gave birth to four boys who later became soldiers. “Their main task” is “to sniff out anti-government plots in the three branches of the armed forces, as well as to receive bribes.” (9) This apart, the soldiers delight so much in taking alcohol and drugs—a revelation of corruption of the state security apparatus in its stark complexity in Aburiria. The soldiers are representatives of the three branches of the armed forces: the first son, Reuben Kucera is a three-star general in the army; the second, Samwel Moya is a two-star general in the air force; the third, Dickson Soi is a one-star general in the navy; and the fourth, Richard Runyenje is an army captain. These boys are not as such brilliant in school and because of that their father, the Ruler, withdraws them and enlist them in the army. The implication of the step taken by the Ruler here is that most of the state security officers in African societies are school dropouts and as such are expected to behave like brutes. In the case of these soldiers,

The Ruler was rather disappointed for he had hoped that at least one of his sons with Rachael might inherit the throne, establishing a mighty dynasty, and he often scolded them for their lack of ambition and appetite for power. Yet on the days when they brought him their collections, there was the celebratory atmosphere of a family reunion (9).

These soldiers’ engagement with “what they know best: alcohol, drugs, and bribes” (9) is symptomatic of the stuporous conditions of the state security forces.

Another striking example of bribery offence in *Wizard of the Crow* is the one committed by the police officer, Constable AG. While on the road to control the traffic, AG instead of tracking down those who break the laws of the land by smuggling prohibited goods into the country collects bribes and saves them. To avoid being sacked from his job, AG preys particularly on drivers who have no links with the *nouveaux riches*. In his own testimony:

I targeted big carriers because most of them carried contraband and would rather pay bribe in thousands rather than have their goods inspected. To a police officer they were a blessing, unless bad luck crossed your path and you harassed a carrier belonging to the big men including the biggest of all: even if they were packed to the max with illegal goods, by stopping such a carrier you might end up losing your job. One had to be careful soliciting grease for one's palms until one was sure of the carrier's real owner. But I was good at sensing when to be zealous and when not be. By one o'clock I had more than two thousand, two hundred and fifty Buris in my pocket. Cash. True! *Haki Ya Mungu!* By one o'clock my pockets were bulging with banknotes. (116-7)

What emerges from this is that in Aburiria both the rich and the law enforcement agents make a parade of their corruption and are not ready to leave off. Smuggling of illegal goods into the country is never a crime when it is done by the rich. But it becomes a very big crime once it is committed by an ordinary person. On their part, security agents take an undue advantage of the helplessness of the common people to take bribes from them. At the end both the giver and the receiver, and even the big-time smugglers are not indicted because corruption has become a normal way of life in Aburiria. Is it not highly uncivil and disgraceful to see the Minister of State, Silver Sikiokuu who heads the "secret police machine known as M5" (14) ardently believe in bribery as a way of life for a people? For Sikiokuu, "over the years he had extorted bribes in the millions and did not see anything wrong with that." (566) Thus, Sikiokuu reveals the nature of the police to *Wizard of the Crow* as he ironically claims that the police are psychologically sound. He buttresses his claims by saying that "they know when one is serious and when one is not"; that they know words have literal and connotative imports; that "the habit of taking bribes has taught them the language of parables." Instead of a policeman to say, "give me a bribe, he says, it is very cold today, even if it is as hot as hell." And one also indirectly offers a bribe by saying, "Why don't you take this, Buri note for tea?" (406)

The deduction of this is that in Aburiria people are not ignorant of the fact that bribery is effected by the police through coded words. This echoes Fanon's (138) assertion that "Scandals are numerous, ministers grow rich, their wives doll themselves up, the members of parliament feather their nests and there is not a soul down to the simple policeman [...] who does not join in the procession of corruption." By portraying the law enforcement agents as being in the mode of championing cor-

ruption along with the rich in his work, Ngũgĩ seems to concur with Fanon.

Ngũgĩ's ideological stance draws from Fanon's theory of violence. In this theory Fanon (29) opines that "the agents of government speak the language of pure force. The intermediary does not lighten the oppression nor seek to hide the domination, he shows them up and puts them into practice [...] he is a bringer of violence into the home and into the mind of the native." This is reflected in *Wizard of the Crow*. In this novel, state security agents do not hear or obey any other language than the language of coercion; hence they serve as instruments of misrule, oppression, divestment and hegemony. Instead of promoting peace, the security agents promote conflict.

In *Wizard of the Crow* corruption in Aburiria is a delightful passport for public office. Characters like Kaniuru and Kahiga who also represent the state security apparatus are ever promoted for their undue measure against the Aburirian people. Kaniuru takes bribes from people who are looking for business contracts in the name of becoming the deputy chairman of Marching to Heaven and tells malicious lies against the citizenry. For his venal and wicked role, he is elevated by being made a member and head of "Research Regarding Youth and Women's Conformity with National Ideals" (557), a special unit of "Directorate of Security Services, DSS." (557)

Ngũgĩ uses Kaniuru to expose the fact that the agents of state power cannot be detached from money laundering. In the novel for example, Kaniuru, a well-known machinery of the state security, arranges with Jane Kanyori who works in Aburirian Bank of Commerce and Industry to forge the signatures of Sikiokuu so that he will be able to perfect in laundering all the briber money from the Marching to Heaven: "Kanyori had given him a bank card in the name of Sikiokuu, enabling Kaniuru to withdraw the money he had deposited in Sikiokuu's account and redeposit the money in his own at other banks." (536)

In addition to this, Kaniuru engages with Jane Kanyori for his sexual gratification and later avoids her. On her own part, Jane refuses to accept the way of Kaniuru as she lashes him with blackmail and terrorizes to reveal his secret corrupt deals if he fails to wed her the next day:

I have vowed that if any male so much as touches me even with his smallest finger, I would scream so loud that all the secrets that I have locked in my heart would reach all the way to the State House. [...] Oh, so you think that silence is the name of a woman? It is not my name. [...] We shall marry and file for divorce at the same time. But remember that divorce comes with a property settlement. A minister's wife must be kept in the lifestyle she has become accustomed to. [...] Oh, my war hero. And you were given and actually accepted a medal for killing a defenceless woman? Your first love? Oh, I know (712).

This is beyond what Kaniuru can easily contain and escape. He has no option than to unwillingly marry Jane.

In the novel Ngũgĩ uses Kaniuru to demonstrate another form of law enforcement corruption. The state security apparatus is also into blackmail. Kaniuru enriches himself because of his new influential position. Looking at his social and economic status, Kaniuru decides to show himself to Matthew Wangahu, the rich father of Nyawira who disowns Nyawira because she obliges to marry Kaniuru, the former poor teacher. However, later Kaniuru and Nyawira discontinue their union. Now that Nyawira is wanted for being a member of the Movement for the Voice of the People, Kaniuru uses blackmail in his strives to get Wangahu's co-operation to betray his daughter:

Nyawira is in trouble. I am the only person who can help her. You are in more trouble. Your wealth is in danger. Only you can decide what you want to do about it. There are ways out. Give me some shares in your business. Through joint ownership, my name shall shield your wealth and property. Or hand over Nyawira. (289)

This is a clear case of blackmail but Kaniuru fails at where Wangahu is because he (Wangahu) already knows him as a master schemer.

In *Wizard of the Crow* the law enforcement corruption manifests itself again in form of commercial exploitation. Ngũgĩ uses *Wizard of the Crow* to bring to the forefront security officers whose interest is the business of profiteering rather than ensuring peace and order in the society. For example, at Paradise where foreigners from the Global Bank (GB) meet, as the state security operatives attack the unfortunate people of Aburiria—the beggars, Kamiti and Nyawira are being pursued by three police officers only because they are seen carrying bags which they (the policemen) think contain some money, “Buri notes” (75), the national currency whose name means ‘worthless’ in Gikuyu, but ironically contain rags picked from the garbage. For these officers, it would rather be better to dupe the people of their money than to protect their life and property: “For the police had convinced themselves that the bags were full of Buri notes the two had been collecting all day and night; their six eyes more on the bags than on the beggars themselves” (75). Due to the fact that the state security apparatus depicted in *Wizard of the Crow* has characterized itself with rottenness, it is on that note indicated that “the scent of money made the three police officers deaf to all calls to return to their ranks” (75). The attitude of the officers here illustrates that the state security apparatus in *Wizard of the Crow* is unmindful of hapless Aburirian people. Again, the attitude of the officers indicates that the state security apparatus is as useless as the Aburirian Buri notes. However, in the case of Kamiti and Nyawira, if not that at a point when they run into Santalucia they trick one of the officers (AG) who continues to chase them with a notice on the cardboard, “WARNING! THIS PROPERTY BELONGS TO A WIZARD WHOSE POWER BRINGS DOWN HAWKS AND CROWS FROM THE SKY. TOUCH THIS HOUSE AT YOUR PERIL. SGD. WIZARD OF THE CROW” (77), they would have inescapably been swindled. In other words, Kamiti and Nyawira

are saved from police exploitation and even oppression by the magic of Kamiti—the bundle of make-believe witchcraft (made up of cardboard, a bone, some rags, a string, a lizard and a frog) which he hangs on the roof outside. As he discontinues from the chase, the police officer throws more light on his own rotten nature by muttering to himself this: “I knew they were not thieves; they were devils, djinns of the prairie, sent by the Wizard of the Crow to trick me to death. Woe unto me! I am now bewitched. Actually, I am a dead man walking!” (77) In fact, the police officer by describing himself as “a dead man walking” shows that he is corrupt and inhuman.

Ngũgĩ portrays the state security system as being into ‘sexploitation’. The state security apparatus sets itself apart for the sexual exploitation of women. In effect the security agents are libidinous and irresponsible. For example, when Jane Kanyori who thinks Kaniuru is the fit for marriage visits Kaniuru in the evening, he takes her only as his sexual gratifier. On that note he concludes that “after their romp in bed tonight he would call off their relationship.” (710) Report also has it that “the two-star general once left part of his army uniform in a bar while pursuing a whore.” (262) This concupiscent lifestyle is not just with the security officials alone but, also, with many men in Aburiria. In this country, a man measures his maleness either by the number of times he has beaten his wife or by the number of women he has slept with. A woman is seen as a reproductive machine. Her lot is to “bear children and bring them up, and be abused by her man” (83). Tajirika, for instance, believes in wife-beating. The likes of Sikiokuu and the Ruler believe that all women’s thighs are theirs. Especially for the Ruler, nobody can stop him from having his way around women’s thighs. But Ngũgĩ seems to disagree with this lecherous habit when he writes: “A woman is not a service station.” (91)

The Aburirian people are going through tough times. Rather than providing security for the masses, the worker of state security goes about philandering. To worsen the situation, the president of the Free Republic of Aburiria does not react against it even though he has severally received reports on the very case. But how can the president (the Ruler) react when he, as the father of the nation of Aburiria and also the biological father of the two-star general, Samwel Moya, has not lived any other life before the children than a life of immorality? King Solomon (in Prov. 22.6) says: “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” The way of the president, the Ruler, has been to sleep around with women, even with schoolgirls who are “often invited to the State House to make his bed, where he, like the aging white man of the popular saying, fed on spring chicken.” (6) Consequently, Samwel, the two-star general cannot depart from that which he has learnt from the father; and the father too cannot have the effrontery to call Samwel, a corruption of the name Samuel, to order. Ngũgĩ here brings to light a male-dominated society where a man (whether a civilian or a security officer) neither exercises self-control nor regards caution when it comes to womanizing.

From the foregoing discussion, the state security apparatus depicted in *Wizard of the Crow* is characterized by a number of corrupt practices: oppression, bribery, money laundering, blackmail, eco-exploitation and sexploitation. As far as Ngũgĩ is concerned these are dangerous cankers in the society. There is no way a nation can civilize when its security system is rotten. African nations, especially Kenya has remained backward and underdeveloped because of the security agents' protection of despotism and hold unto corruption. As a novelist, Ngũgĩ has shown that literature is a social weapon which can be used to figure out and proffer solutions to some of the ills of society. Through *Wizard of the Crow* Ngũgĩ successfully draws attention to the contradictions in the society and other related experiences and challenges.

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