**DEVIL ON THE CROSS**

Ngugi Wa Thiong'o

**INTRODUCTION**

Devil on the Cross is set in the postcolonial landscape of 1980s Kenya. Although, at this point, the country had its own legislature and government, the influence of international culture and currency still played a large role in the daily lives of everyday citizens, something that author Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o reviled and saw as a residue of colonial oppression.

**PLOT SUMMARY**

The text opens with a **Gĩcaannd**ĩ player in Ilmorog, a fictional rural outpost in Kenya. He says that he is initially reluctant to tell the story that follows, but a divine intervention and the collective will of the people urges him to do so anyway.

**Jacinta Warĩĩnga** is the main character of this story, and is introduced beginning in the second chapter. Warĩĩnga has recently lost her boyfriend, been fired for rejecting the advances of her boss, and feels completely despondent. She decides to return to her parents in Ilmorog, but suddenly attempts suicide while at a bus stop. Even so, an unknown man saves her before she is able to complete the deed. She tells him her life story—one of being impregnated at a young age as a sugar girl and being forced to abandon all of her childhood dreams and ambitions—and he is moved by her experiences. In response, he offers her an invitation to a party called "**The Devil's Feast,"** a competition in "modern theft and robbery." He tells her that the conditions that caused Warĩĩnga to be exploited will be explained if she goes to the Feast, but Warĩĩnga is uncertain if she wants to go, since the Feast is advertised using demonic language. Coincidentally, however, the Feast is being hosted in Ilmorog, where she is heading to anyway to see her parents.

To get to Ilmorog, she boards a rundown matatũ, driven by a greedy man named **Mwaũra.** While on the matatũ, Warĩĩnga meets a wide array of characters, each of whom tells their life story and describes what is bringing them to Ilmorog. One such person is **Mũturi,** a handyman who is traveling to Ilmorog to look for work after being fired from his last job (he went on strike and asked for a livable wage from, as it turns out, the same person who fired Warĩĩnga).

Also on the bus is **Wangarĩ**, a woman who fought for Kenyan independence during the Mau Mau Uprising but who was arrested for vagrancy while looking for work in Nairobi (she is on her way to Ilmorog to cooperate with the police and point out thieves and robbers, so as to avoid her own charges). Also present is **Gatuĩria**, a well-educated and polite student from the university who studies local music, on his way to Ilmorog to see the Devil's Feast and try to convince himself of the truth of old folktales (which tell of demons and the like that, up until this point, Gatuĩria has never seen). Finally, there is **Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ,** a reticent and wealthy businessman who speaks only to talk about his faith in theft. Theft, Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ claims, is what makes a country developed; the only thing that keeps a country beneath another on the global stage is its relative ineptitude to grab and steal in places where its people have not worked.

The matatũ ride to Ilmorog sees wide-ranging and deep discussions of the nature of good and evil, as well as a discussion of the post-colonial conditions that have empowered local tycoons and compradores. Even though Kenyans fought to earn their independence, and even though the people who are in power at the present moment are nominally Kenyan (e.g., by race, clan), they often serve at the feet of foreign masters and allow themselves to be manipulated by foreign money. In some ways, such conditions are even worse than colonial conditions because they keep the imperialistic truth hidden from the people. The consensus on the matatũ is that the Devil's Feast will host many of the thieves and traitors who enable the post-colonial system of capitalism, so each passenger is curious to go for their own reasons. Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ, however, informs them that the Feast is not in fact hosted by the Devil, but rather by a local association of thieves and robbers; the card that Warĩĩnga received, he says, is a forgery made by ideologue college students.

Upon arriving at the Feast, Warĩĩnga and the others bear witness to a series of barbaric, inhumane, and exploitative proposals by a series of businessmen and tycoons. Each tycoon talks about how they have exploited the people and earned vast fortunes, not just to share information and techniques among thieves but also to impress a delegation of foreigners that is to crown a winner. Their suggestions range from selling bottled air to peasants to selling human organs to the wealthy in order to prolong their lives. Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ takes the stage and recommends that the organization of thieves and robbers drive the foreigners out of Ilmorog so as to take a greater cut of the riches for themselves, but a commotion breaks out, and the emcee and others reject his idea.

Warĩĩnga and Gatuĩria choose to stay as spectators, while Mũturi and Wangarĩ, frightened by what they have heard, choose to lead a revolt of the peasants and call the police to capture those present at the Feast, respectively. Meanwhile, Warĩĩnga and Gatuĩria get lunch, and Warĩĩnga tells Gatuĩria of how her life was ruined when she became the sugar girl of a **Rich Old Man** from Ngorika, which led her to try and take her life several times, only to be rescued each time. Upon returning to the cave, Mwaũra tells Warĩĩnga and Gatuĩria of the other two's plans, and he also tells Warĩĩnga that it was Mũturi who rescued her each time from suicide. Another man takes the stage and begins to talk, but Warĩĩnga flees and falls asleep against a tree. While she is asleep, the Devil comes to her and exposes the truth of the entire colonial and imperial operation, rooted in the shared evil of capitalist exploitation, and invites her to take part in it. She rejects him, and wakes to find Gatuĩria watching over her. He tells her that Wangarĩ brought the police, but was herself captured and detained on the behalf of the wealthy, whom the police really work for. Soon after, Mũturi arrives with a horde of neighborhood laborers, university students, and workers, who walk on the cavern where the Feast is occurring. They stop the festivities and cause all the thieves to run away, but then are violently suppressed by the police and their associated auxiliary forces.

Two years pass. Warĩĩnga and Gatuĩria are to be married, and through extensive and costly preparation, she has satisfied her childhood fantasies of being a mechanical engineer. She has also become proficient in self-defense, followed the ideals of Marxism, and has held on to a pistol that Mũturi gave her at the cave in secret.

Meanwhile, Gatuĩria has completed his musical composition on the history of Kenya and is to present it, along with his new girlfriend, to his father in Nakuru. Warĩĩnga leaves Nairobi with her man to go and meet his parents, but as she does so, she is also despondent because her old boss—with the support of businesspeople from America, Germany, and Japan—has purchased the garage where Warĩĩnga works so that he can wreck it and develop a traveler inn on the site.

Gatuĩria and Warĩĩnga first meet with her parents, and her mother gives the couple her blessing. Afterwards, they go to Nakuru, where Warĩĩnga sees that her boyfriend's family is one of the very tycoon families she has grown to loathe since the Feast—and, in fact, many of the people who spoke at the Feast are present at Gatuĩria's house.

Moreover, she discovers that Gatuĩria's father is in fact the Rich Old Man from Ngorika who impregnated her and then abandoned her as a girl. Warĩĩnga restrains herself at first, but as the father continues to advance on her and even threatens her, she snaps.

She shoots Gatuĩria's dad and a few other visitors from the Feast, claiming that she will stop them from ruining others' lives and continuing the systems of oppression they perpetrate. Gatuĩria is left standing, uncertain whose side to take, and as the novel ends, Warĩĩnga walks away from the house without looking back.

**CHAPTER SUMMARIES**

**Chapter 1**

As the novel begins, our narrator—a village storyteller and Gĩcaanndĩ player from the fictional, rural outpost of Ilmorog, Kenya—tells us that the story to come is considered by many to be part of a shameful history, while others consider it to be a sorrowful reminder of the truth of their people.

Nonetheless, the narrator tells us, he will recount the story for instructional purposes—that is, so that we may learn from the mistakes of its characters. Additionally, he tells us that this story also has religious consequences—that we as an audience should crucify the Devil, not allowing his acolytes to remove him from the cross and rebuild Hell on Earth even after he has been exposed and punished.

Despite the clear importance of the story he has to tell, our narrator informs us that he was hesitant to tell the story, since it is a story that is not for outsiders, one reserved only for the inhabitants of Ilmorog.

However, he also recounts that the mother of Warĩĩnga, one of the central characters in the story, has specifically asked him to tell the story so that all that was hidden can be exposed once again. Still, even after this plea for his story, the narrator refuses to divulge his prophetic tale, but the whole of Ilmorog seems to eventually come to him and ask for this story. Eventually, after being beset by uncertainty, the narrator is visited by the divine, who bears him up to a rooftop and speaks to him about the necessity of telling his story.

Finally consenting, the narrator accepts his responsibility as a storyteller, prepares himself to tell the story by covering himself in ashes, and begins to speak of our protagonist—Jacinta Warĩĩnga—reasoning that "the voice of the people is the voice of God" (3).

**Chapter 2**

The storyteller begins the story with the Devil appearing to Warĩĩnga on a golf course in Ilmorog, but before he can even get into his tale, he stops himself, saying that, in truth, Warĩĩnga's story and misfortunes began long before that visit from the Devil.

He says that Warĩĩnga worked as a secretary for the Champion Construction Company in Nairobi, but eventually, her boss, Boss Kĩhara, tried to proposition her. When she refused, her boss fired her; moreover, her college-aged lover, John Kimwana, broke up with her immediately after under the suspicion that she had not in fact rejected Boss Kĩhara's advances.

Even worse, after her lover and boss both dispensed with her, her landlord kicked her out with the assistance of some rude thugs. As they throw Warĩĩnga out, they toss her a piece of paper, identifying themselves as the "Devil's Angels," a group of "Private Businessmen." Their note also threatens to kill Warĩĩnga if she brings this matter to the attention of the police.

Dejected and defeated, Warĩĩnga opts to leave Nairobi and return home to her parents in Ilmorog. She thinks to herself that perhaps all of her issues are the result of her appearance. Warĩĩnga feels that she is too black, so she applies whitening creams. She thinks her hair texture is too curly, so she straightens and damages it with iron combs. She even hates her teeth, which she feels are not white enough. Even so, the narrator tells us that, in truth, Warĩĩnga is one of the most beautiful Black women alive. When self-possessed, Warĩĩnga can disarm anyone with a look or word, but unfortunately, she is very self-doubtful, often rushing to copy the styles of other people in a way that does not suit her.

Warĩĩnga finds herself inexplicably at the Kaka Hotel bus stop in Nairobi, and as a bus approaches, her burden of self-pity and sorrow makes her almost step in front of a bus to kill herself. She suddenly hears in her head that this is not her time to die, and this voice also reminds her that she has already tried to kill herself in the past. Warĩĩnga cannot see the speaker of this voice, and she is deeply scared, almost fainting in response.

Just then, however, someone saves Warĩĩnga from falling and props her up against a building, though she is not in any condition to even note who it is that has saved her. Warĩĩnga then faints and, as she does so, is visited by one of her recurring nightmares from her childhood.

Warĩĩnga's nightmare is a grotesque and terrifying vision of the Devil, dressed in a silk suit, being led to a cross by the vindictive peasants of the world, clothed in rags. They crucify the Devil, telling him that they have seen right through all of his trickery and deceit and that they shall never again allow him to build Hell on Earth for them and their descendants.

After three days, however, others dressed in suits and ties come down and remove the Devil from the cross in secret. In exchange, the Devil gives them some of his robes of cunning and deceit. They then walk towards Warĩĩnga as a group, laughing at her.

Warĩĩnga comes from her dream and is still near the Kaka Hotel bus stop. The stranger who has saved her tells her that he has also saved her handbag, which he returns to her, and that he has been waiting by her side for her to wake up. The stranger tells her that he understands why she would be weary of Nairobi and weak enough to faint, and he mentions that the corruption and neocolonial exploitation of the city is enough to make anyone bitter, angry, and sad. He reflects with Warĩĩnga on where such dubious national practices could possibly be leading the future of Kenya, and Warĩĩnga finds that, though she is a bit confused by the man's arcane language, he is expressing a sentiment that she herself has felt. As a demonstration of just how much she agrees with the stranger, she then tells him the story of her life—or, as she says, a life similar to her own.

She begins the story of a random girl in Nairobi, one she names Kareendi. She says that Kareendi became pregnant while still in school and, regardless of who the father was, received no help from him. Kareendi lashed out at her former lover and decided to have the baby herself, placing the burden of raising it on the shoulders of her parents. Kareendi then enrolled in secretarial school to get a job, but she was unable to find a potential boss who was not only interested in sleeping with her. Eventually, she finds Boss Kĩhara, who employs her and appears to be an upstanding, married man who is involved in the church. She begins work for him, and, even better, finds a young lover that Warĩĩnga compares to the character Kamoongonye from a Gĩkũyũ ballad (about a woman who has to choose between Waigoko, a rich old man, and Kamoongonye, a young and passionate lover).

Eventually, however, Kareendi's luck sours when Boss Kĩhara starts to make advances on her. He offers to be her sugar daddy, buying her whatever she wants in exchange for sexual favors, but Kareendi refuses. He even uses the Kamoongonye story in his favor to say that Waigoko's old, hairy chest has been shaved by money. Still, Kareendi refuses and mentions the fact that Boss Kĩhara is a church-man. Kĩhara only responds with a corruption of scripture, saying that the Bible tells us "Ask, and it shall be given you" (19).

After rebuffing her boss again more forcefully and saying she will complain if he does not relent, Kĩhara lets up on Kareendi and says that he was only joking. Even so, when Kareendi is late to work one day, he fires her on the spot and says that her heart is not in her work. When she complains of this to her Kamoongonye, however, he tells her that he suspects she actually did not resist Kĩhara, and is only saying that she resisted now to save face. Kareendi's lover abandons her, and she is back where she started. Everything in her life seems to be inverted, and she does not know how to proceed. Warĩĩnga then closes her story of Kareendi by saying that this situation is that of every woman in Kenya—that, as soon as they are born, they are entirely buried and dead to the world except for their sexual parts.

When Warĩĩnga finishes her story, the stranger tells her that he has been moved immensely. He asks her where she is going, and directs her to the Nyamakĩma bus stop when he finds out that she would like to go to Ilmorog. Just as they are about to part, however, the stranger calls out to Warĩĩnga, handing her a card and telling her that if she would like to learn about the conditions that breed situations like Kareendi's, that she should go to the feast advertised on the card. Warĩĩnga then goes to Nyamakĩma and begins to wait for a matatũ (a type of private bus used widely in Kenya for transport). While she waits, she looks at the card and sees that it is an advert for the "Devil's Feast," a competition in modern theft and robbery allegedly sponsored by the Devil himself, to be held in Ilmorog (25). Warĩĩnga feels both wounded and elated by the prospect of the Devil's Feast, which reminds her of something from one of her dreams. As the chapter ends, Warĩĩnga sits in disbelief and thinks of the strange miracle of the feast.

**Analysis**

In these brief opening chapters, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o sets the stage both thematically and narratively for the novel as a whole. In particular, in these opening chapters, we already begin to see the importance to Ngũgĩ's story of feminism and gender critique, of the search towards indigenous Kenyan and indigenous African frames for self-evaluation and self-possession, dualities of self and the world that surrounds us, of neocolonialism and oppression of Kenyans by other Kenyans, of the divine, and of the power of social and political collectives. Formally and narratively, these themes are evoked most clearly by an investment in nested narratives (i.e., stories within a story), the heavy prevalence of local adages and idioms, repetitions in language, and allusions to the local folklore of the Gĩkũyũ language.

In the novel's opening, for example, Ngũgĩ uses a frame story—that is, he places the story of the Gĩcaanndĩ player as an introduction to the story of Warĩĩnga—in order to show us that we readers are, surprisingly, outsiders to what is to come. We need to pass through the prophetic mouth of the storyteller and into the local lore of Ilmorog if we are to understand the story at all, and importantly, the storyteller informs us that he is reluctant to even allow us this. Already then, we have a sense of community and locale's importance to Ngũgĩ. Moreover, however, based on the fact that it is the pleas of the masses that spur our narrator to divine revelation, we can also see here the importance that Ngũgĩ places in the collective—specifically, a collective of peasants or workers. As a Marxist, it is one of Ngũgĩ's central hopes or goals that the collective of all workers will redeem the corrupted, bourgeois soul of his country, so the fact that our storyteller finds God in the collective of his village is no coincidence. As Ngũgĩ himself tells us through this narrator, "the voice of the people is the voice of God" (3).

This emphasis on the personal and on the human nature of connection through storytelling then serves as a fitting tie-in to the beginning of Chapter 2, where the narrator stalls after a false start to the story of Jacinta Warĩĩnga that constitutes the majority of the novel. Just as the fate of a country can rest in the hands of a collective, so too can the direction of a story rest in the mouth and mind of one person. After this small crack appears in the narrative, however, the narrator wastes no time in acquainting us intimately with Warĩĩnga's innermost thoughts and most personal experiences. Before we even get to know her well, however, we have already been shown the ways in which her womanhood has made her a victim, both as a result of her resilience (in the case of rebuffing Boss Kĩhara) and her vulnerability (in the case of telling John Kimwana about her boss). Just as this comes to the fore, however, Ngũgĩ already shifts our focus to corruption in Kenya and the ways that evil-hearted people worship at the altar of money, rather than God. He even goes so far as to make this confusing corruption explicit by naming the thugs who evict Warĩĩnga the "Devil's Angels." This, too, then introduces the central devices of antithesis and duality in the text. In things like the Devil's Angels, the contrast between Boss Kĩhara and John Kimwana, and the contrast between Blackness and whiteness which follow from Warĩĩnga's examination of her own appearance, we see that Ngũgĩ advances his text in a dialectical fashion, more or less embodying in a literary context the kind of Marxist historical view he takes more broadly. In this novel, opposites attract, repel, and interact in complex ways to produce the real state of affairs for Ngũgĩ's characters, themselves trapped in a dualistic space that straddles reality and fantasy (or dreams).

This coexistence of dreams and reality is then mirrored importantly in the text in two ways.

First, there is Ngũgĩ's description of Warĩĩnga's actual dream, which addresses the ways in which human followers of the Devil seek to reinstate him on Earth even after he has been called out by the masses. Of course, in terms of its meaning, this echoes the ways in which class traitors might stifle the revolution of the masses in a perverted Communist eschatology, but it also literally makes the text bleed between reality and fiction without section breaks, lending the novel and important hybrid character in its form.

Second, this hybrid character of the novel is only strengthened formally by the heavy presence of adages, songs, and parables in the text, each of which breaks down the walls between fiction and other genres and potentially paves Ngũgĩ's way towards creating an indigenous African literature, one distinct from the Western canon that Ngũgĩ has spent a great deal of his life contesting. This hybrid, unorthodox approach to literature is then built out even more in Chapter 2 when Warĩĩnga uses a nested narrative rife with allusions to tell us the story of her/Kareendi's life.

The Kareendi story, as mentioned, references the Kamoongonye story of Gĩkũyũ folklore, another move which foregrounds the local and prioritizes readers who have familiarity with Kenyan culture. Moreover, it repeats a great deal of what we have already been told about Warĩĩnga by our narrator. Indeed, repetition is an important device in the text (often used to establish the duality or twoness so treasured and interesting to Ngũgĩ), and here it almost seems to produce a familiarizing, incantatory effect that leaves us unsurprised when Warĩĩnga says that Kareendi's story is the story of every girl in Kenya. Even we readers have already heard it before, so how can what Warĩĩnga says not be so?

Finally, Chapter 2 closes with another element that foregrounds the coexistence of fantasy and reality—the Devil's Feast, which comes to play a significant role in the novel as a whole. Unlike the existence of the Devil in Warĩĩnga's dream, however, the Devil's Feast as an event emphasizes another important feature of Ngũgĩ's narratology—that is, the centrality of materials and materiality.

The Devil exists here not as an abstract concept, but as a real, physical being who sponsors feasts—themselves testaments to the excesses of materialism and consumption. The materialism of Ngũgĩ's text as a whole of course speaks to his Marxist thinking, but note that it also here shows an additional way in which the religious, divine, or abstractly fantastic is made to clash with and encounter the everyday and the real.

**Chapter 3**

The chapter opens with Warĩĩnga waiting at the busy Nyamakĩma matatũ stop. No matatũs bound for Ilmorog come all day, and eventually Warĩĩnga prays for her deliverance to Ilmorog. Just then, an Ilmorog-bound matatũ arrives. This, however, is no ordinary matatũ: it is old, beat up, and bedecked with an array of salacious and eye-catching ads which advertise the safety and consistency of traveling in an old and beat-up minibus. Soon, the owner of this matatũ, Mwaũra, emerges and starts crying out slogans in an attempt to attract more customers. He tells them that the journey to God's kingdom is nothing in his Matatũ Matama Matamu, and so is the journey to the Devil's place. This mention of the Devil piques Warĩĩnga's interests and reminds her of the task she needs to set herself to in Ilmorog—that is, visiting the Devil's Feast.

Attention is then given to the matatũ itself, as well as its driver, Mwaũra. The matatũ is described in grotesque terms, giving everyone a show with its array of sputtering noises and dramatic shaking. Mwaũra, for his part, thinks of the car's age as a mark of its valor: he claims that no one makes matatũs like his anymore, so customers should be assured of its quality. This then leads into a discussion of Mwaũra's character, which is almost entirely focused on the accumulation of money and "worship at the shrine of the god of money" (30). Despite his poor means of conveyance, he is intensely greedy and feels sometimes betrayed by God that he should work so hard only to have money retreat away from him like Tantalus of Greek myth. A story is then relayed about Mwaũra when, after quarreling with a man over 5 shillings, he dispatched the Devil's Angels to have the man hanged in his own home.

Warĩĩnga gets in Mwaũra's vehicle, and as she does so, Mwaũra goes on attracting customers by reciting a lewd joke about Warĩĩnga's beauty. Even so, few passerby take note, and Mwaũra worries that he will not even be able to cover the cost of the gas to get Warĩĩnga to Ilmorog. Just then, another customer wearing blue overalls boards the matatũ. Mwaũra continues to shout slogans, and when the man in the overalls asks Warĩĩnga if she thinks he will ever stop shouting and start to actually drive, Warĩĩnga remarks simply that "a matatũ is the home of gossip, rumor, and idle talk!" (33). Just as Mwaũra gets ready to leave, however, another young man with a suitcase boards the vehicle. Warĩĩnga takes note of his suitcase, which reads simply "Mr. Gatuĩria, African Studies, University of Nairobi" (33). This gives her an uneasy feeling and reminds her of John Kimwana.

Later, at Dagoretti Corner, a mature woman in a kitenge garment boards the matatũ. Additionally, at Sigona bus stop, a man in a suit and tie with dark glasses boards. Mwaũra is worried about taking only 5 passengers all the way to Ilmorog, but he does not want to snub his good fortune and possibly disappoint his few passengers through any scheme he may have to wait for more passengers and earn more money. Steeled in his resolve, Mwaũra continues on the way to Ilmorog, and the narrator reminds us that "traveling is what makes a journey" (34).

Before long, the woman in the kitenge garment stands up and approaches Mwaũra. She tells him that she needs to pour out an issue to him, and assuming that she wants to gossisp, Mwaũra assents. The woman, however, tells Mwaũra that she cannot afford her bus fare. In shock, Mwaũra slams on the brakes and opens the side door, almost flinging the man with the dark glasses out into the mountains. An argument ensues between Mwaũra and the woman over her supposed freeloading, but the woman assures Mwaũra that someone in Ilmorog will pay her fare. She says that she fought for Kenya's independence, and that those in a local outpost like Ilmorog will recognize what she has been through, unlike the corrupt and cold city folk of Nairobi. Eventually, the man in the overalls, Gatuĩria, and Warĩĩnga agree to pay for the woman's fare together. Mwaũra continues to drive, and after a while, the woman, named Wangarĩ, breaks the silence to thank the others. The man in overalls comments that, were he not to help other people, he would turn into a beast—a lesson he learned during the time of the Mau Mau. Save the man with dark glasses, each person then introduces themselves. Gatuĩria introduces himself stammeringly, mixing English and Gĩkũyũ rather clumsily. The man in overalls introduces himself as Mũturi, a laborer and handyman.

Gatuĩria then asks Mũturi his thoughts on Mau Mau, and whether or not he thinks that the foundation for modern Haraambe was laid by the Mau Mau. Mũturi replies only that modern Haraambe is a corruption of the original, and that it represents a national spirit of greed, betrayal, and selling out one's own kind for foreign money. Wangarĩ then picks up this thread, saying that fighting for the Mau Mau was a big honor, reserved only for those who had true love for their country, but that now, Kenya has moved woefully towards a national politic of shady money, renewed loyalty to imperialists, and betrayal of the Mau Mau ideals. She wonders where such craven ways will lead the Kenyan people. Recognizing the sorrow in Wangarĩ's voice, the others (the man with the dark glasses excluded) then ask Wangarĩ about her experiences in Nairobi. Wangarĩ then tells her sorrowful tale.

Wangarĩ borrowed money to start up a farm, but when her cows got sick and died before a vet could arrive, she was in debt and looking for a job to pay back the loan. Realizing that she could not find a job in Ilmorog, she went to the place that she knew all the foreign money had gone to build—Nairobi. She inquired with an Indian man about sweeping up in his shop, but he rejected her. At a hotel filled with white people, a European refused to employ her. At a Black-owned shop, even someone of her own race told her that her only employable skill was spreading her legs. Desperate and dejected, Wangarĩ then roamed the streets and found another hotel. She saw a Black man in the office, and asked him for a job. Ironically, the man told her that it was in fact the same hotel she had inquired at earlier, and that there was no work for her kind there. He then called the police, for which the white owner heartily praised and rewarded the Black man.

In court, Wangarĩ was charged with vagrancy and accused of being a watchman for thieves and robbers. This made Wangarĩ incredulous—how could someone be a vagrant in their own country, after all? A European judge asked Wangarĩ in court if she had anything else to say, and she suddenly spoke with a great deal of courage, saying that thieves have overrun the country and hide in plain sight—or else, as in Ilmorog, they do not even bother to hide. The judge, having heard this, then offered to free Wangarĩ if she could cooperate with the police and show them where all the robbers in Ilmorog congregated. As a result, Wangarĩ is now journeying to Ilmorog to hold up her end of the deal, having been divested of all her money at the court. As Wangarĩ finishes her story, Warĩĩnga wonders if Wangarĩ knows about the Devil's Feast, and she even contemplates showing Wangarĩ the card she was given by the stranger at Kaka before deciding not to.

After Wangarĩ finishes her story, Mwaũra and Mũturi get into a long argument about the proper way to live in modern Kenya. While Mũturi talks about the need for a vanguard to deliver Kenya from its corruption into real freedom and prosperity for the people, Mwaũra simply talks of how easily one can work for both freedom and domestic slavery, if the price is right. When pressed on the horrific consequences of his willingness to work for anyone, Mwaũra says only that God and the Devil can both change one's earthly fortunes, and that one does best to play the two off of each other. When pushed even further by Mũturi about the nature of his beliefs, Mwaũra replies that, if one accepts the soul as a real entity that resides in the heart, a rich and corrupt man need only buy the heart of a poor man on his deathbed and purchase goodness and salvation for himself. Further, Mwaũra says that he would like to open a market for such a thing, a bartering system for human hearts. Mwaũra laughs heartily at this prospect, but no one else joins in. Mũturi and Wangarĩ then start to sing songs about the plight of the poor and the greed of the wealthy, which makes Mwaũra wonder if he has taken in a bunch of religious fanatics.

Mwaũra, slightly incensed, then asks Mũturi again about how he views the nature of the heart. Mũturi replies quite philosophically that the heart is both the material thing which fuels man and also the humane result of his loving work in the world. He adds that, when people work together in a collective, anything can be achieved, even changing the laws of nature. Based on Mũturi's faith in the collective, Mwaũra then posits that there are no good or evil hearts, but rather hearts that exist only as parts of one collective. Mũturi replies that there are good hearts, which seek to build things together for the good of all men, and evil hearts, which seek to mooch off of these good works and destroy them, returning all men to a bestial condition. One's actions determine the character of their heart, which is merely a tool (like a knife or sword) that can be used to do either good or evil. Mũturi finishes by saying that the heart is the lens through which we view ourselves fully in the world, and that good and evil contest each other always in the moments of our actions. Mũturi then submits this argument to Mwaũra, asking which side he is on, and Mwaũra replies, laughing that he is on the road to death, and taking his passengers with him.

Gatuĩria is next to speak, talking in a weird mix of English and Gĩkũyũ. Though he knows that "the slavery of language is the slavery of the mind," he cannot help his stuttering but at least tries to maintain his footing in his native tongue (58). He asks Mwaũra and Mũturi about God and Satan—specifically, whether he believes that they are real, living beings like the passengers of the matatũ. Mwaũra says that he is unsure, and that the only true god is money, but Mũturi says that he believes in an incarnate God and Satan. Gatuĩria explains that he asks because he is curious about the disconnect between Gĩkũyũ folklore (which tells of ogres, monsters, etc.) and the material conditions of the everyday. He is a research fellow at the university who studies Kenyan culture and music, and he understands that only natives can keep the linguistic and cultural traditions of the land alive. He also recognizes that these traditions are dying. At the same time, however, he is unsure of how relevant these traditions are to modern conditions.

Gatuĩria is wondering about the connections between local folklore and modern conditions because, as a composer and music scholar, he wants to compose a piece which wholly encompasses the national history of Kenya. In order to learn more about the roots of Kenyan culture, Gatuĩria went to an old man, Bahati, in Nakuru. Bahati told Gatuĩria that there is no difference between old stories and new, and that all stories were really about human beings, not the ogres and monsters that Gatuĩria is curious about. He tells Gatuĩria 3 stories: the first about a man who risked his own safety to kill a parasitic ogre on his back; the second about a beautiful woman who fell in love with a foreigner who turned out to be an ogre and ate her limbs; and the third about a kind peasant named Nding'ũri. Gatuĩria spends a great deal of time on this last story in particular.

Nding'ũri was a kind peasant known well for his rich soul, kindness, and commitment to hard work. One day, however, Nding'ũri's possessions and livestock were all destroyed by a pestilence, and he did not know where to turn. Nding'ũri then went to the evil spirits, asking them why he had been forsaken by the good spirits he had once worshipped. An evil spirit then tells Nding'ũri that, in exchange for his soul, he will grant him riches and anything that he could ever want. Nding'ũri assents, and the evil spirit explains that, in taking Nding'ũri's soul, he has also turned him into a cannibal and a witch. Nding'ũri is told by the spirit never to tell others of his soullessness, and he is told that he will never see beauty in humanity ever again—only in property. Nding'ũri becomes very rich at the cost of others' lives, starving those in his village. One day, a group of elders arrives at Nding'ũri's estate and pleas with him to relinquish some of his property in the name of the people, which is equal to the voice of the land and the voice of God. Nding'ũri mistakenly tells them that he will not be moved because he has no soul. Having learned this, the elders then respond by burning Nding'ũri alive in his home.

Gatuĩria closes this story by saying that it was a source of great inspiration for him, but that he still could not reckon with his disbelief of witches, ogres, and the like. He was lost and uncertain on how to proceed with his composition, but miraculously, a piece of paper appeared in his pigeonhole at the college advertising the Devil's Feast. It is the same flyer that was given to Warĩĩnga by the stranger at Kaka. This realization makes Warĩĩnga faint, and the others rush to try and revive her. When she comes to, Warĩĩnga admits that their talk of the Devil has her very upset and worried. When he tries to change the subject, Warĩĩnga asks Mwaũra if he believes that such things could exist, and Mwaũra only replies that he has seen much stranger—as examples, he mentions thieves that robbed him and left him naked with the matatũ and a white foreigner who hired the bus to serve as a private vehicle for local women he would pick up.

Warĩĩnga then asks Mũturi what he would do if the Devil's Feast were real, and he tells her that he would go at once to stop the thieves there from imposing their devilish ways on the world. He mentions that all workers lay paths of resistance for the good of others, and he says that it was such a resistance that actually lead him to go to Ilmorog. After organizing a strike against his boss for better wages, Mũturi was fired and made to go elsewhere looking for work. Warĩĩnga discovers then that Mũturi in fact worked for the same company as she did, under Boss Kĩhara. The others all indicate their curiosity to go to the Devil's Feast, and they put the question to Warĩĩnga of why she is so curious about the feelings of others. She explains that she too was invited, and she does not know how to respond to the invitation. Mwaũra says that he hopes the people who robbed him once will be there so he can get payback, and the matatũ falls silent once more.

Finally, the man with dark glasses, named Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ, breaks the silence. He asks to see the cards that Gatuĩria and Warĩĩnga have in their possession, and then compares them with a third card that he takes from his own suitcase. He then hands his own card over to Gatuĩria and Warĩĩnga to read, and they notice that all references to the Devil or Satan have been removed in Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ's card; otherwise, they are the same. Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ tells them that his card is the authentic one, a real invitation to a competition in modern theft and robbery, and that the other cards are fabrications (likely made by college students) meant to spoil the feat and cause outrage with a legitimate gathering of businesspeople. Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ then goes on to introduce himself. He is a well-educated Kenyan (who even had the chance to attend Harvard), and he works in international business. He is riding in the matatũ only because his car, a Peugeot with fuel injection, stalled at Kikuyu. Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ then states certain things as if they were unequivocal facts: first, that the feast is not a Devil's Feast, but rather an international conference with delegates from France, England, America, and so on in attendance; second, that the university students of Nairobi are conceited and talk down on modern theft and robbery without even understanding them; and third, that equality is a myth rejected by even God himself, who has built heaven and hell with hierarchies.

The other passengers in the matatũ question Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ about his beliefs, but he simply tells them that hierarchies are everywhere in nature, and that the true measure of a country's progress lies in how well it can compete with foreign powers in theft and robbery. Stealing and grabbing money, Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ argues, are the keys to gaining wealth and advancing a society—just look at the West, which was built on the plundering of the rest of the world. Mũturi and Wangarĩ argue with Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ over this, but Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ simply tells them that the Bible itself makes this argument. As he begins to speak further, Mũturi finds a piece of paper at his feet and stows it in his pocket. Meanwhile, Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ begins to regale the passengers of the matatũ with a parable from the Bible, the Parable of the Talents.

**Chapter 4**

Chapter 4 opens with an unknown voice continuing the Parable of the Talents started by Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ. This version, however, is more or less localized to take place in a Kenyan context: the parable tells us that a white ruler, knowing he is about to be shamefully expelled from his conquered domain of Black people, calls his Black servants and loyalists together in support of his cause. He tells them that they will have to assume control vicariously for him, so that the locals can be deceived into thinking that they have earned Black freedom when in reality a white person is the real governmental puppeteer. He gives one his servants 500,000 shillings, another 200,000, and another 100,000. The former uses his shillings to buy rural goods cheap and sell them at a markup, earning a steep profit. The second does something similar, scamming urban workers. The third, however, takes his small fortune and buries it to see if it will multiply without being watered by the sweat of workers. When the lord comes back, he commends the first two servants for their success and asks the third about his fortune. The third servant then calls out the white man, telling him that he is a deceitful imperialist who only reaps what he has not sown, earning money off of the work of others. The ruler, however, does not think the servant so clever: he lambasts him for revealing his true name (i.e., imperialist), sics the other two servants on him, and accuses him of Communist loyalties. He also mentions that, in the case of the two loyal servants, this episode is a good example of how more shall always be given to those who already have. Once the third servant is dispensed with, the lord and his two Black servants, now his true friends who know his business aims, rejoice and offer a prayer for the longevity of profits and foreign exploitation.

When the parable concludes, we learn that we are in fact already present at the Devil's Feast in Ilmorog, and that the person who just told the Parable of the Talents was the master of ceremonies, not Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ. The emcee is then described in terms of his appearance, which is imposing and grotesque (though he is clothed in a silk suit). He says that the competition, though looking for a clear winner at theft and robbery, is not meant to disqualify the other thieves and robbers who are present, and that all people should treat the feast as an opportunity, leaving the feast having learned better how to steal and rob from the less fortunate. He then introduces the leader of the foreign delegation (consisting of Americans, Germans, Japanese, and others) that is present and serving as the sponsors and judges of the competition in modern theft and robbery. This man is an American, but as he mounts the stage, he makes clear that, despite his race or nationality, he and all the others in the cave are united in service of one faith—faith in theft. He explains that 7 winners are to be chosen in the competition, who will serve as disciples to the foreigners, always working in their service but earning untold sums of money themselves in the process. He goes on to reiterate the supremacy of money over everything else, saying that the reason for American civilization's success is because it was built only with regard for wealth, consuming the blood of Native Americans as well as Africans who were brought to the U.S. as slaves. He closes by saying that, if Africans can learn this "Uhuru of theft" themselves, they will help them at all costs to defend it (97).

Our attention now shifts to Warĩĩnga, who is in the audience with the other passengers from the matatũ. She is incredulous at what she has just seen, and she and the others begin to look at the foreign delegation more closely. They all have very red skin, are wearing suits made from their national currencies, and are wearing helmets that have 7 metal, horned-shaped projections coming out of them. What's more, they are all wearing badges that, like a neon advert, flash with the names of the industries they are involved in—insurance, banking, arms, manufacturing, human skins, and even slavery. Most of the matatũ passengers and Mwaũra are sitting at one table, while Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ, who gave them all genuine invitations, is sitting elsewhere. Warĩĩnga then looks around the room, and notices that it is not a cave, but rather the finest and most hollow of homes. There seem to be infinite drinks, scantily clad barmaids in abundance, and a preponderance of sugar girls decorating the arms of the thieves and robbers in attendance.

Just before the tournament officially begins, Wangarĩ thinks to herself that she is very lucky to have been led here, since it will make her mission of exposing thieves and robbers all the more easy. She thinks also of asking Mũturi for help, but eventually decides against it. Mũturi, for his part, interrogates Mwaũra about his connection to the Devil's Angels (since the paper he found on the bus in Chapter 3 was the eviction notice given to Warĩĩnga), and Mwaũra acts as if he has been clearly exposed, fearful that Mũturi knows more than he actually does. Just then, however, the cave/home falls into silence as the tournament begins.

The first to take the stage is a man in a shabby suit, named Ndaaya wa Kahuria. He is nervous to be on the stage, but he goes on to explain that he is an expert thief, having stolen chickens from many villages and many women's purses. This evokes clear disgust from the audience, who call in the emcee to intervene on the stage. The emcee explains that this is a competition for those who have reached international standards of theft and robbery, and when Ndaaya wa Kahuria voices his belief that robbers are all of one creed and should not be judged on the amount that they steal, the emcee has the guards hustle him out with clubs and violence. The emcee then begins to set out rules for the remaining competitors, chief among which is the international standard that they are working with. When the emcee suggests however that only those who look fat and well-fed should participate, skinnier men who are supposed master thieves object. Finally, a mid-sized man argues that physiological differences between thieves do not matter; all that matters is that they plunder great deals of wealth from others. This earns him great applause, and the final rules are then cemented. These include a name and address requirement, a requirement that each competitor announce the makes and models of all their (and their sugar girls') cars, and that each competitor must explain how to increase ties with foreigners in service of stealing more money. As the emcee sits down, Mwaũra voices his intent to participate in the tournament, leaving both Wangarĩ and Mũturi with bad tastes in their mouths.

The real competition then begins, and an enormously fat man named Gĩtutu wa Gataangũrũ takes the stage. He lists his extensive list of homes and cars, mentions his extensive and absurd English names (which include "Shitland" and "Joint Stock"), and mentions his extensive involvement with the church. Gĩtutu wa Gataangũrũ's life now is very decadent, but he started out as an elder in the local courts, just like his father—a polygamist who had many children and gave them all a good education. Gĩtutu wa Gataangũrũ first started out both in the courts and managing a couple of small shops, but a pep talk from his dying father encouraged him to buy up land that the Mau Mau had fought for, regardless of the fact that his father was on the side of the imperialists. He realized that "Hunger x thirst = famine" when it comes to land, so he wanted to clean up and get into land speculation to capitalize on any future land shortages among the people (114). Gĩtutu wa Gataangũrũ then used his father's old, imperial connections to get in good with a foreign bank, which loaned him money to buy land at a premium. He bought cheap land, divided it into many plots, and sold them at an extreme markup to the common people, turning both a quick and handsome profit. He was able to earn money by doing no work and capitalizing on other's needs, and he was hooked. Another, larger farm then helped him earn his fortune when he decided to incorporate societies (like homeowner's associations) into his land developments. When asked to head these societies, he refused, allowing each to govern themselves and maintaining the illusion of his own generosity. To close his speech with suggestions for the future, Gĩtutu wa Gataangũrũ then suggests increasing thirst for land among the peasants to the point where they can sell soil in tins and pots. He also suggests trapping air and selling it to the poor at a premium, perhaps even importing it. This way, if people are threatening to rise up against the tycoons, they can simply shut off the air supply.

The next person to take the stage is a man named Kĩhaahu wa Gatheeca, who is tall and slim (but every bit as grotesque as Gĩtutu wa Gataangũrũ). Kĩhaahu wa Gatheeca begins in much the same way, saying that Kĩhaahu wa Gatheeca's tricks are all amateurish and listing his accomplishments and possessions. He then goes on to say that, as for his sugar girls, he prefers the wives of others, or perhaps even successful women to be more safe than with schoolgirls. As for his business, Kĩhaahu wa Gatheeca began in education. Starting as a teacher, Kĩhaahu wa Gatheeca realized that he too could work less and earn more if he adopted the tactics common among neocolonial thieves and robbers. He opened his own nursery school, advertising with Swahili language, Blackness, and cheap pricing. When this did not work, Kĩhaahu wa Gatheeca turned matters over in his head and realized that, in local business, successful Kenyans would only hire Europeans or foreigners to manage their affairs. As a result, Kĩhaahu wa Gatheeca changed his marketing strategy to focus on English, high prices, and the lie that his school originally excluded local Kenyans. He also bought mannequins and made them up to look like white people, then motorized them so that, when prospective parents came by to drop off their children, they would see "white children" at play through the window. Finally, he would pay a white woman to serve as the principal of his schools to complete the scheme, earning a great deal of money with little to no work.

After his schooling schemes, Kĩhaahu wa Gatheeca entered land speculation and politics. By using hired guns and buying votes, Kĩhaahu wa Gatheeca was able to earn a seat on the County Council, after which he was able to even more efficiently and coercively force people into land speculation schemes. He cooperated with Italian foreigners and other foreign banks in order to exploit peasants, and he continued to grow his wealth by working with foreign institutions. In order to maintain the appearance of nicety, however, Kĩhaahu wa Gatheeca made a series of large Haraambe donations, for which the people praised his name and made him even more famous. Kĩhaahu wa Gatheeca then closes by affirming the power of money, saying that democracy is a Communist fantasy, and that he hopes in the future to be even more cruel with people's need for housing. If Kĩhaahu wa Gatheeca had his way, he says, he would build small shelters, like bird's nests, in which the poor could rest their heads and nothing else—all the while thanking him that they even have any shelter to call their own.

A section entitled "The Rebuttal" then begins, in which Gĩtutu wa Gataangũrũ responds to the accusations leveled at him by Kĩhaahu wa Gatheeca. He says that his armed thugs are stronger, that his plans are better, and that Kĩhaahu wa Gatheeca's plan would result in outbursts of Communism in the street. After Gĩtutu wa Gataangũrũ leaves the stage, another man, named Ithe Wa Mbooi, says that Kĩhaahu wa Gatheeca ought to be ashamed of himself, since he steals not from the poor, but from those who are comparatively well off—in other words, his fellow thieves. Ithe Wa Mbooi mentions that he and his wife have personally been scammed by his schemes, and that he shall never again help to make Kĩhaahu wa Gatheeca any richer, only sending his children to real international schools from now on. As Ithe Wa Mbooi sits down, yet another man stands up, saying that Kĩhaahu wa Gatheeca ought to be expelled on account of how much he boasts about stealing other people's wives, especially those of successful people.

Kĩhaahu wa Gatheeca asks for the emcee to defend him, and he defensively and superficially rejects all of the charges leveled against him. He says that Gĩtutu wa Gataangũrũ's plan would cause a Communist revolt, and, in response to others' claim that he preys on his own kind, he invokes the local idiom that "there is still which can easily drill through steel" (138). Just as this speech begins to cause another fight, however, the emcee intervenes, saying that everyone ought to behave themselves in front of the foreign guests, otherwise they risk the foreign delegation leaving them behind with no assistance in future thefts. He breaks the competition for lunch, and as he does so, he announces that there will also be a fashion parade for all the sugar girls in the building, in order to develop Kenyan "culture" (139).

The competition so far has sickened Gatuĩria and Warĩĩnga, and they leave together. Meanwhile, Mũturi again confronts Mwaũra about the piece of paper he found on his bus, which worries Mwaũra. Just as Mwaũra begins to worry about both Mũturi and Wangarĩ, as well as their true motives for coming to the Devil's Feast, he is able to dispel the situation with humor and leaves with the two of them to get something to eat.

**Analysis**

Together, these two chapters constitute almost half of the content of Devil on the Cross. Rather than see them as an early slog to get through, however, it is best for readers to view these chapters as incredibly meaty rising action that colors in much of the thematic and narrative outlining begun in the first two chapters. It is here that we undertake the first of the novel's two journeys—that is the journey from Nairobi to Ilmorog (to be contrasted with the later journey from Nairobi to Nakuru via Ilmorog)—and it is here that we are introduced to each of the main characters of the story—each with their own minor, twin narrative that runs parallel to the main narrative of the text. It is also here that we are exposed to the first two main competitors for the crown of the Devil's Feast—each of whom takes their own, opposing approach to theft—and that Ngũgĩ's satire becomes even more pointed. In both instances, however, note that Ngũgĩ is continuing his dialectical logic: there are two journeys, after all, which lead to the same inexorable result; competitors who split the crowd at the Devil's Feast into two factions; two sides to each character being developed (in particular, the ever shady Mwaũra); and, it would seem, two Kenyas that have emerged in the wake of Mau Mau. Ngũgĩ guides each of us through these twin and alternate realties with precision, at each point laying evidence and data which convinces us of a terrible truth—that, despite the absurdity and dialogic opposition of the options before us and our characters, they all somehow coexist in this world, which we are then tasked with delivering from such evils.

The first key element to excavate in these chapters is that of class, which Ngũgĩ builds up as having a direct link to work done with one's own hands and heart. Each of the passengers on the matatũ neatly fits into a class category based on this distinction: Mwaũra, the driver of a beat-down and cheap minibus, is in an ambivalent class state but moves towards sympathizing with the wealthier (after all, his work is not too physically intensive); Mũturi, the handyman, is a paragon of worker's ability and the strong work ethic which sustains the lower class through struggle; Wangarĩ, too, is a hard worker who has farmed, fought for her country, and will jeopardize her own safety to stop robbery and theft, yet she is beset by socioeconomic difficulty; Gatuĩria, the student who aspires to connect with his roots yet stumbles, is in an ambivalent position that leans towards the wealthy; Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ is clearly a wealthy capitalist who does none of his own work and believes that exploitation of others is its own kind of sport; and lastly, we have Warĩĩnga, a girl whose aspirations of being an honest and upright engineer were ruined by the Old Man from Ngorika. She remains in an ambivalent class position at the beginning of the novel, but as we will see, makes a stunning trajectory towards physical labor and Communist sensibilities as a result of what she sees at the Devil's Feast. In addition to these passengers on the matatũ, however, Ngũgĩ also sets down clear class indicators for other, more minor characters. In Gatuĩria's stories, for example, the wealthy are the corrupt of the earth, whose impatience with the hardships of real work and righteousness lead them to worship false idols and gods. In the caves of the Devil's Feast, Gĩtutu wa Gataangũrũ is so fat and so atrophied all over so as to not even really have hands. While Ngũgĩ clearly lapses here into the realm of satire and fantasy, his point is all the more strong: wealth accumulation ought to be for the collective good and done by real people's own, personal labor. Anything else distracts from the unity of our communities and leaves us spiritually bankrupt.

Speaking of the spiritual, Ngũgĩ's indictment of the Christian religion in these two chapters is also stunning and clear. Each of the people who speaks in the Devil's Feast emphasizes their participation in the church—most likely done, as some speakers even admit, to give off the illusion of charity and goodwill while simultaneously plundering the fortunes of Kenya's lower class. Additionally, between Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, the Parable of the Talents comes to play a central role in the text. With the original coming from the Gospels, the story relayed at the beginning of Chapter 4 is actually not so different from the real parable: essentially the only difference is that the story here has been localized into a Kenyan context, with shillings instead of talents and the story's central lord being a white man in control of Black people. What one might think to be a perversion of scripture is very ironically almost a direct lifting from Biblical language. Biblical scholars have debated the intended meaning of the true parable, but here, Ngũgĩ tells us that the message is clear: this, along with other stories in the Bible, are to be used to convince the wealthy and corrupt that they have a God-given right to wreak even more havoc on the poor, serving any master if it means that they can be enriched by even a cent more. This is a very real and dark consequence of the Parable, and this coincides with another central point in these two chapters: that is, in order to grasp the full force that religion has in our world, we must necessarily consider God and the Devil to be material, real figures. Framed by Gatuĩria's discussion of his own music piece, we see here that the material incarnation of Satan and God is important to both Ngũgĩ and his characters because it conditions us to see the material realities of both evil and good in this world. Were we to think of the Bible as just an arcane and irrelevant story, we lose sight of the fact that we ourselves are responsible for shaping the world that we want, one free of evils.

This discussion of good and evil then lends itself to a key point explored in Chapter 3: the nature of good and evil, as perceived by Ngũgĩ's characters. Whereas Mwaũra believes that a soul cannot be inherently good or evil—or rather, that a soul is defined only by its quest to survive in service of any master—Mũturi makes an incredibly profound and existential claim about human nature and human spirituality. Mũturi claims that the heart is the material basis for all of mankind's actions—it both allows us to do good and allows us to do evil. In this sense, it is a tool like a knife or sword, constantly and instantaneously wavering between being used for good and evil. What happens when the heart does good, however, is that it is able to come together with others in a collective and bring about a more just world, which in turn sustains the original, material heart with goodness. In this way, then, Mũturi opens us to the very Ngũgĩ-an truth that there are two hearts: one material, and one abstract. Separately, there are another two hearts: one used for good and the other used parasitically for evil causes. This understanding of good and evil then frames and justifies many of the actions that are to come in the novel, as we will see.

In sum, what Ngũgĩ establishes in these long chapters is a tripartite axis of values, within which we are meant to understand and interpret postcolonial Kenya as being in dire straits. The three pillars of this axis are clear: one based in class; one religious; and one based in nationality. This lattermost point is key—it is, after all, allegiance to foreign lords and causes that runs throughout the Parable of the Talents, the rules of the Devil's Feast, and even in the language of the characters (note that many of the characters, who use loan words, are not like Gatuĩria and use foreign language in a supercilious effort to appear classy). When Kenya suffers, it is because foreign lords have come and used religion to create a class-segregated society, within which many locals are happy to be traitors and worship at the feet of such foreigners for money. If something happens in the book with a tie to foreignness, religion, or wealth, it is a pretty safe assumption to say that something evil is afoot. Moreover, in the antithesis to these three extremes, we understand that Ngũgĩ does see a path forward to justice, but it is built in Marxist and Communist ideals: a local revolution of peasants who work to dispel the slavery of the mind created by religions which tell them that suffering in this world is justified in service of producing a better afterlife. Here, one already sees this idea being espoused by Ngũgĩ, but it takes clearer form later, when the Devil visits Warĩĩnga on a golf course. Until this point, however, one does well to continue to note the coexistence of opposites—the real and the grotesquely unreal, the satirical and the polemic, and the just and unjust. Moreover, readers would also do well to trace the ways in which characters' core values—their class loyalties, nationalist zeals, etc.—change over time. Why do they experience such changes, and what do these changes say about each character's sense of justice?

**Chapter 5**

Warĩĩnga and Gatuĩria leave the cave during the competition's lunch break. As if in a dream, they begin to chant patriotic verses together in response to the treacherous and avaricious behavior they just witnessed in the cave. After they come to from these incantations, Warĩĩnga suggests that she and Gatuĩria head to Njeruca to eat. When he fails to understand exactly what Njeruca is like, however, Warĩĩnga goes off on an instructional digression about the class segregation of Ilmorog. Ilmorog is split into multiple sections: on the outskirts of town are where the peasants live, but also where the banks and shops are; in the wealthier of the two residential areas, the Golden Heights (where they just were), opulence rules and foreign extravagances are the norm; finally, in the poorer of the two residential areas, Njeruca (New Jerusalem), filth is everywhere and people cannot even remove dead animals and human waste from the streets.

Warĩĩnga and Gatuĩria eventually arrive at a butchery and sit in the back room to eat. Gatuĩria mentions that he could not believe his eyes in the cave, listening to and watching his own people talk about theft and robbery in such ways, and Warĩĩnga asks him if he has found the devils that he is looking for. Gatuĩria says that he believes his composition should be inspired by patriotic love rather than hate for these thieves, but Warĩĩnga reminds Gatuĩria that one cannot clearly and fully love anything if they do not also know what they hate. This talk of hatred then reminds Gatuĩria of his own upbringing. Gatuĩria tells Warĩĩnga that he was born to a business tycoon father in Nakuru who wanted him to follow in his footsteps, but when Gatuĩria sympathized more with his father's exploited workers than his own father, he was sent to America to study abroad and get the finishing skills necessary to be a tycoon himself. Once there, however, Gatuĩria saw that American slavery as it existed in the past was exactly what peasants in neocolonial Kenya had to contend with. He decided to specialize in music, but upon returning home and telling this to his father, his father scorned him and told him that he had been ashamed in front of his peers—and especially, in front of his church. Ever since, Gatuĩria has avoided going home to confront his father. After he finishes this story, Warĩĩnga then reminds Gatuĩria that she herself is from Nakuru, and she asks who his father is. Out of shame, Gatuĩria will not tell her. Shortly after, Warĩĩnga begins to discuss with Gatuĩria about the amount of women that such tycoons, thieves, and robbers in the cave have ruined through their "sugar" relationships. She then reveals that she was once in such a relationship, and that it almost drove her to commit suicide. She then commences to tell Gatuĩria the story of her young life.

Warĩĩnga was born in 1953, during the days of the Emergency and the Mau Mau Uprising. Her parents were both detained for political reasons by the time that she was two, so she went to go live with her aunt in Nakuru. Her uncle worked for the railroads, and later he was on the Nakuru town council. As a young girl, Warĩĩnga had a good education and enjoyed going to church most of all, despite grotesque imagery of the Devil that inspired her recurring nightmare of the Devil on the cross. Warĩĩnga's parents were freed in 1960, after which they moved back to Ilmorog, leaving Warĩĩnga in Nakuru in the hopes that, through a good education, she could free her parents from poverty. Warĩĩnga excelled in school, particularly in math, and she dreamed of one day going to the university and becoming one of very few female engineers. Warĩĩnga's youth, marked by her obedience and devotion to her school and church, then reached a turning point when she saw death for the first time one afternoon, in the form of a man who had thrown himself in front of a train and become completely obliterated by the train's force.

By the time of Warĩĩnga's early adolescence, she had developed into a shapely and attractive girl. Noticing this, her uncle—the type of man who served at the feet of white, foreign lords and worked domestically on their behalf—made an arrangement for Warĩĩnga to advance his own social and financial standing. Having gained real estate assistance and financial assistance from a wealthy old man from Ngorika, Warĩĩnga's uncle wanted to return the favor by giving him Warĩĩnga as a sugar girl. Though Warĩĩnga hardly noticed at first, the Rich Old Man was soon insinuated into her life—picking her up from school, driving her to and from parties, and so on. He started to give her money, and they began to have sex. This changed Warĩĩnga's life: she now began to feel that an effortless life of wealth and luxury lay at her feet, if only she would be with the Rich Old Man. The Old Man even told Warĩĩnga he would divorce his wife for her. Warĩĩnga started to loathe school and began to travel with the Rich Old Man even more: often, they would travel to Hot Springs and play a game called "The Hunter and the Hunted." The Rich Old Man would chase her with a pistol while she ran away, and fire a shot of victory into the sky when she was finally caught. One time, they switched roles, and Warĩĩnga was exhilarated by the feeling of power given to her by the gun. When she finally caught up with the Old Man, she fired the victory shot and almost hit him, instead hitting and killing an antelope. She apologized, and they never switched roles again, with the Old Man saying that he "wouldn't miss" Warĩĩnga if he was really aiming for her (163).

Eventually, Warĩĩnga became pregnant with the Rich Old Man's baby, but she was not worried because she had faith that the Old Man would marry her according to tradition. He did not initially voice a complaint when she told him of her condition, but the next day, he accused her of sleeping around and told her that he did not believe the child was his. He abandoned her on that day and never spoke to her again. Warĩĩnga was at a loss, not telling anyone about her private sorrow, but she tried to do what she could to help herself. She asked girls at school about ways of aborting a pregnancy (but spoke of it as if it were only a rumor), thought of going to a back-door abortion doctor (which failed when she saw a neighbor outside and got too embarrassed to proceed), and even thought of asking a nurse she knew for help (but words failed her when she tried to talk of her condition). When Warĩĩnga walked home from this last encounter, she almost walked into a tree, an accident which reminded her of the possibility that she could kill herself by throwing herself into a crater. Eventually, she attempted suicide by drowning herself in the Nakuru High School swimming pool. Just as she snuck in and was about to throw herself in, the nighttime security guard saw her and asked her what she was doing there. She got him to go away, but this confrontation made her realize that even suicide was hard and not something one can just commit willy-nilly. Finally, however, Warĩĩnga remembers the encounter with the man who had been obliterated by the train.

She resolves the next day to kill herself similarly before a train. She wants nothing more than for her name and identity to be wiped from the earth. The next day, she is waiting at the same crossing where she saw the other man killed. She makes eye contact with the night watchman from the high school, but he eventually walks off. The train then appears, and its song beats in time with Warĩĩnga's heart and appears to mimic a song from her youth. Just as she is about to die, an unknown man rescues her and pulls here aside. She wakes up in bed with her aunt next to her, and realizing that her aunt pities and feels for her, tells her all about the Rich Old Man from Ngorika.

**Chapter 6**

As Chapter 6 begins, Gatuĩria and Warĩĩnga return to the cave and meet up with Mwaũra, but Mũturi and Wangarĩ are nowhere to be found. Mwaũra says that the three of them should run away at once, and he explains that Mũturi and Wangarĩ are raving fanatics. When Gatuĩria and Warĩĩnga then press him as to why he is saying this, Mwaũra finally relents and tells them of what happened when they were all at lunch. It seems Mwaũra, Mũturi, and Wangarĩ also went to Njeruca themselves for roast meat during the intermission of the Devil's Feast. While there, Mũturi tells a story about how he was once a night watchman at a school—the very same one who saved Warĩĩnga—and how he was also the one who saved Warĩĩnga from committing suicide at the railroad tracks. He then told Mwaũra that thieves are worse than witches, and when Mwaũra disagreed, he told Mwaũra and Wangarĩ a story as evidence. He says that in a faraway village, there was once a witch and a cunning thief, and that when the village elders invited the witch to curse the thief, the witch found that all of his tools and spells had been stolen by the thief. In embarrassment, he was then forced to move to a new village.

In response to Mũturi's tale—after which he criticizes the white man—Wangarĩ criticizes local compradors who assists them in their looting. She then argues that a thief is no worse than a witch, since they are equal in taking both what makes life worth living as well as life itself. After they finish eating, Wangarĩ then excuses herself to go to the police station and reveal the location of the Devil's Feast to the superintendent, fulfilling the conditions of her earlier arraignment and also her own desire to make sure all theft is punished and purged from the land. As she does so (much to Mwaũra's protestation), Mũturi also involves himself and says that he will rouse the local peasants and bring them to the Devil's Feast as well. He fears that Wangarĩ will not receive help from the police, and he also wants to make sure that the exploited have a chance to reassert themselves and demonstrate their power before the local thieves and tycoons. It was after this that the three parted company, and Mwaũra returned to the cave to warn Gatuĩria and Warĩĩnga, suggesting that they all leave at once. Gatuĩria and Warĩĩnga, however, want to observe what happens as a result of Mũturi and Wangarĩ's plan, and they go back into the cave. In private, Mwaũra tells Gatuĩria that he wants to enter the competition, and Gatuĩria tells Mwaũra that he should do whatever he wants to, which pleases him. Meanwhile, on stage, Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ is pleading his own case for the competition.

Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ introduces himself in much the same way as others, but when he mentions his preferences in sugar girls, he mentions that he specifically looks for foreign women to get with. He mentions also that he only has two children, since he believes in family planning and that people should only have children insofar as their means allow it. He mentions his educational pedigree, but an audience member interrupts, saying that this brag is not material enough. He then asks what kind of car Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ drives. Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ looks to the chairman to confirm that he in fact does drive a Peugeot, but the chairman claims that he does not recognize Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ without his car, and thus cannot confirm his words (even though they know each other outside of the competition). Here, Mwaũra stands up and testifies on Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ's behalf, along with another audience member. Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ is then allowed to continue, but Mwaũra remains standing. Mwaũra talks about his own history of theft and robbery, but he is quickly shut down by others and told to keep his idle gossip to himself.

Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ continues by talking about his respect for thieving and his belief that all developed and "modern" countries have reached this stage because they have gone through periods of exploiting others. He then breaks theft down into two different kinds: domestic (in which people steal from their own citizens) and foreign (where people have already exploited their own people and go on to exploit others around the world). Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ then says that he only believes in domestic robbery—in people robbing from their own kinds—because he does not believe locals need be subservient to foreigners. Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ explains that he has studied capitalism, and that they should not allow their "slaves" (i.e., workers and peasants) to produce wealth for foreigners; rather, the compradores and other traitors should take command of this wealth themselves (188). He says that he learned of the need to keep wealth inside a country while working for a variety of foreign companies, all of which relied on him to earn locals' trust but never allowed him into their inner circles where decisions were made.

After realizing that foreigners only employed Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ for his Blackness, he started a variety of manufacturing business. Each one, however, resulted in him being shut out of the market by cheaper foreign competition, or else foreigners would refuse to sell him the machinery used in their own factories. Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ then understood that foreigners would never relinquish their hold on Kenya's wealth voluntarily. In response, he suggests that local iron ore can be combined with local metalworking know-how in order to make machine tools and, in turn, a variety of weapons and other products. He suggests making industry completely domestic and shutting out all of the foreigners, using the resultant technological advancements and independence to rob one's own countrymen and turn an even better profit. He then concludes his speech and plan with a latin prayer, "Per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen" ["Unto the ages of ages. Amen"] (193).

**Chapter 7**

We flash to Gatuĩria's point of view. Gatuĩria feels as if what he has just seen and heard is all part of a dream; only Warĩĩnga's warm touch and physical presence near him convinces him that it was not all a dream. We are then told that Gatuĩria even now remembers the chaos that broke out after Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ finished speaking, and that even though a small group ululated in support of him, a larger group was very incensed by his words. We then leave Gatuĩria's point of view and watch these events unfold in real time.

After Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ finishes speaking, the leader of the foreign delegation speaks out. He says that, as a collection of the finest thieves in the world, they thought that Kenyans too understood that the only God is the God of money, and that theft was a creed that united people across borders and national divisions. He says that, if they really agree with Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ and want to scramble for iron ore as part of a harebrained scheme, they can, but that they will be leaving at once and crowning no winner for the Feast's competition. The cave's atmosphere grows cold, but the emcee saves the day by viciously condemning Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ and reminding the foreign guests of the Parable of the Talents. He then tells them that they, the local Kenyans, are the slaves of the Parable, and that they have become the foreigners' friends by sharing the same business aims and duping their own people to accumulate wealth. Thereafter, he condemns Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ again and says that his fate will be decided at the Feast that very day. The foreign guests accept this apology, and the thieves and robbers in attendance applaud thunderously.

We are now back in Gatuĩria's point of view. He is terrified for Warĩĩnga and turns her story over and over again in his mind. What's more, he also has completely lost all inspiration for his music in the face of such vicious greed and terrifying thieves. He looks at them and sees the ravenous hunger in their eyes, and wonders if perhaps the old man Bahati had been telling the truth about man-eating ogres and monsters. He thinks of fleeing with Warĩĩnga, but he realizes that he must stay, for fear that if he leaves, he will have to listen to stories about how the Feast ended in the future.

Another man, Nditika wa Ngũũnji, takes the stage. He is dressed in a suit, the tails of which resemble the flies that are found in latrines or trash heaps. He brags about his cars, his children's education, and so on, and claims that everything came from the theft and robbery of the people. Nditika wa Ngũũnji earned most of his money from smuggling and playing the black market with foreigners (with whom he says he has a lucrative relationship, contrary to Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ's speech), but that he also has earned money from working village people on farms, then selling their own food back to them at a profit. He also plays the stock market, cornering certain markets as soon as prices are introduced (or even before by corruptly buying stock information). After mentioning how much money he has earned from these practices, he once again talks down on Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ, saying that he probably has better chances than Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ of picking up foreign women on account of his BMW (Be My Woman) and wealth.

As for his plan to increase wealth and foreign dependence, Nditika wa Ngũũnji says his idea came to him after learning about transplants in the human body. He says that it struck him one night that he, like a poor person, only had one stomach, one heart, one penis, and so on. He then realized that, if one could buy body parts, they could show off their status even more clearly and live forever, while the poor are left to suffer and die. He suggests making a factory for human body parts in the country, so that the rich men can have two hearts, two stomachs, and so on. Nditika wa Ngũũnji's then says that, after explaining this to his wife, she was very pleased with the idea and also relished in the fact that she might have two vaginas. This angered Nditika wa Ngũũnji, who then struck her into compliance with his desire that only men get additional genitals. He then closes his speech with a repeated decree that his plan would make the wealthy immortal, and he calls himself the winner.

**Analysis**

In many ways, Chapters 5-7 are a succinct recapitulation and development of the passages that come before it. For example, in this section of the text, we are exposed to more speeches at the Devil's Feast, witness more aspects of Warĩĩnga's past, and learn the latter parts of Mũturi and Wangarĩ's own plans for the feast. One should not think, however, that all these chapters do is repeat or reiterate what comes before. Importantly, one does well to note that here, each of the passengers from the matatũ (with the exception of Gatuĩria) no longer acts as a mere observer; rather, each character begins to be implicated in some way in the Devil's Feast, or else becomes implicated in a different way in the events which preceded these chapters. As mentioned, Gatuĩria is the only exception to this general movement of the text towards its climax: the implications of this, as well, are discussed below.

To begin with Warĩĩnga, note over the course of Chapter 5 the way in which we get new color and shading to fill in the bare-bones story of her life that we have heard before. We hear now an explicit confirmation that the father of her child is the Rich Old Man from Ngorika; moreover, we learn here for the first time that her uncle was the one who more or less sold her body to the Rich Old Man. This idea of betrayal within the family unit, of course, is a clear parallel to the fact that her uncle is one of the compradore-type traitors who works behind the scenes for foreign masters. Additionally, while Warĩĩnga's tale before seemed to be exclusively one of victimization and exploitation in a sugar relationship, we see here that Warĩĩnga was both complicit and taken advantage of at the same time, the dynamics of which were very complex. Yes, she was literally preyed upon and hunted by the Rich Old Man, but she too was drawn to his wealth as a potential pathway out of poverty and an escape from the humdrum life she lived before. She gave up her dream of being an engineer to cavort with the Rich Old Man, but at the same time, she did it not of her own volition but because of the consequences of her condition. How could someone in Warĩĩnga's position resist such an advance? Finally, in these chapters, we get more detail on her past of suicidal ideation. Where in the past, we were told simply that Warĩĩnga had tried to take her own life, here we are shown the intense, psychological feelings of desperation and self-rejection that drove her to attempt suicide twice. In sum, while Warĩĩnga is here presented as a woman with a unique history of tragedy and sadness, we also see the ways in which she was perhaps complicit herself in her own downfall—even copying her suicide tactics from others—and was implicated in the larger sugar-girl relationship structure that she later decries.

Something similar can be said of Wangarĩ in these chapters. Wangarĩ knows that thieves and robbers are just as much a pain as witches, but she is unable to confront the fact that the police and the apparatuses of the State work almost exclusively for such thieves and robbers. Was she herself, after all, not arrested unfairly for being a vagrant in her own country? Still, here Wangarĩ plans to go to Superintendent Gakono of the Ilmorog police and help the thieves receive what she sees as their just desserts. Ultimately and ironically, this will lead to her own arrest. In a somewhat paradoxical way, then, Wangarĩ's hatred for thieves and robbers, as well as her plan to do away with them, ultimately leads her to be captured by the envoys and servants of those very thieves and robbers. In this way, too, Wangarĩ is implicated in the larger network of thieves and robbers by unwittingly supporting their paramilitary, mercenary wing.

Mũturi, for his part, is implicated strongly in Warĩĩnga's past—namely, as the man who saved her from suicide not once, but twice. This revelation is as strange to Warĩĩnga as it is to readers, but note here that Mũturi is painted as a kind of savior figure, a role that opens the text to Ngũgĩ's own Marxist thesis and viewpoint. Of course it is a worker who has saved Warĩĩnga, and of course, this same worker plans to lead a revolt of the people against the tycoons who have exploited them for so long. This implication with the Devil's Feast—although diametrically opposed to it—then lays the groundwork for something that the Devil will tell Warĩĩnga in Chapter 8. While tycoons tell the peasants and workers that there are only two worlds—the world of the oppressed (such as the one occupied by Wangarĩ and Warĩĩnga) and the world of the oppressor (such as the one occupied by Mwaũra and Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ)—there is in fact a third world of revolutionary action that remains hidden. This is the prospect that Mũturi represents, and we can see it as early on as these chapter from the various roles he assumes in the larger arc of everyone else's stories.

As mentioned, on the ideologically and experientially opposite side of Wangarĩ and Warĩĩnga is Mwaũra. Here, we see more of the same from our inglorious and vain matatũ driver: he says that thieves are better than witches, tries to stop Mũturi and Wangarĩ, tries to flee with Gatuĩria and Warĩĩnga, and finally even attempts to enter the competition itself. Here, then, the primary takeaway is that Mwaũra, despite everything, is someone who cannot grow out of his old and corrupt ways. He is trapped in his belief that he will still make it big someday, and such beliefs drive him to be opportunistic and selfish (note that we do not fully comprehend the extent of this behavior, past or present, in Mwaũra until Chapter 8).

Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ is also developed into a controversial and complex figure in these chapters. Whereas we are conditioned from early on in the text (based on clothing, demeanor, language, etc.) to group Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ in with all of the other thieves and robbers in the text, we see here, stunningly, that he sticks out like a sore thumb in such a crowd. This, however, is not on account of his appearance or language, but rather his ideology. First, his pride in his education falls flat amidst the hollow materialism of the guests in attendance at the Devil's Feast. Second, his claim that theft should be kept domestic and away from foreign profiteers enrages most of the people in attendance at the feast and drives them to eventually condemn him to death (as we will see in later chapters). He even has to be denounced by the emcee of the entire event (who he evidently knows well) in front of the other thieves, just so that the feast will continue. Here, then, Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ is not revealed to be the archetypal tycoon, but rather a perfect example of how easily compradores will turn on each other, especially if they sense that someone is not loyal to the right master. A notable irony within this situation is that the emcee uses the Parable of the Talents—once spoken by Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ himself—as a rhetorical tool for asserting Kenyan servitude to the foreign powers—something that Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ would have stood firmly against.

Finally, we arrive at the figure of Gatuĩria. Though he is present for all the events of these three chapters, he is not developed as thoroughly as the other characters. This is not an accident; rather, it is a very intentional choice by Ngũgĩ to leave Gatuĩria's character unresolved and tense as the text builds. Note that we are given Gatuĩria's point of view twice, but in neither instance are we given any indication that he staunchly disagrees with or rejects the events of the Devil's Feast (even to Mwaũra, he claims to be a passive observer of the Feast, though its events terrify him), nor are we told that he explicitly condones or agrees with such events. He is simply someone whose loyalties remain unclear. This fits in with his role as a student or educated person in postcolonial Kenya (who can either be revolutionary, like the students who made the demonic fliers, or complicit, like Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ), but note that it also provides a clear foreshadowing of Gatuĩria's ultimate fate, which will be discussed in Chapter 12's analysis.

**Chapter 8**

Warĩĩnga can no longer bear the scenes playing out at the Devil's Feast, so she excuses herself and goes outside, claiming that she has to use the bathroom. Instead, however, she slips through a set of hedges and wanders on to a golf course, all the while thinking about her tragic past, the ways in which Mũturi rescued her, and her new resolve to never attempt suicide again while thieves and robbers are around trying to oppress the land and its people. She sees the plight of Njeruca in her mind's eye, then begins to wonder about what will happen when the resistance and police show up at the cave. Warĩĩnga then grows tired, leans against a tree, and drowsily thinks to herself that there are two worlds (the world of the oppressor and the oppressed). Just then, however, a strange voice comes to her and informs her that "there is a third, revolutionary world" (208).

Warĩĩnga is startled by the voice, and she looks around to find its origin, but sees no one. The text then lapses into a play-like dialogue, with each speaker clearly marked. Warĩĩnga asks the voice who it is, and the voice responds that it is a spirit who plants the tree of knowledge. Following this revelation, Warĩĩnga identifies the spirit correctly as the Tempter, Satan. Warĩĩnga asks the Devil what he is doing tormenting her, and the Devil in return asks her what she is doing by keeping the company of such corrupt people. The Devil also suggests that Ilmorog is not Warĩĩnga's real home, since she did not run to defend it like Mũturi or Wangarĩ. The Devil then attacks Warĩĩnga's education, saying that though she has been through school, she is unable to see the needs of the oppressed and unable to see past the worlds of the oppressed and oppressor. Warĩĩnga brings up that this resembles language used by Mũturi in the matatũ earlier, and the Devil responds that Mũturi knows better than anyone about this dynamic, having been robbed all his life of his sweat, blood, and dignity. He also says that the robbers in the cave know better than anyone that this is the source of their wealth—worker's sweat and blood, which they steal so that they themselves do not have to do any work.

As an example of this principle, the Devil tells Warĩĩnga about the person who is currently speaking in the cave while she is absent, Kĩmeendeeri wa Kanyuanjii. Kĩmeendeeri wa Kanyuanjii was a vicious warlord and farmer during the Emergency who has since worked with foreigners in exports and financial institutions. His plan that he is currently revealing to the thieves and robbers assembled clearly shows that he understands that the exploitation of workers' blood, sweat, and brains has lead to the wealth of the tycoon class. His plan? To make a research farm, fenced off with barbed wire, where workers toil all day, with electric machines affixed to their bodies to harvest blood, sweat, and brains. These resources will then be exported to foreign countries using direct pipelines. Warĩĩnga asks the Devil how it is possible that workers will allow their lives and souls to be taken from them in such a cruel manner, and the Devil replies in turn that they will not even notice their exploitation.

With regard to how Kĩmeendeeri wa Kanyuanjii will keep people in the dark, the Devil says that he will only show them the world of the oppressor and that of the oppressed, so that they think they have no chance of overthrowing the system entirely. Moreover, he will build mosques and churches on the farm, where the workers are told that their exploitation is ordained by God, and that by suffering in this world (and not harming or taking from another to get their way), they will gain righteousness and wealth in the afterlife. Kĩmeendeeri wa Kanyuanjii will also build schools that teach the systems of exploitation as the only way forward and the only way that has ever been, build halls that show propaganda films glorifying the wealthy and their culture, and publish newspapers that denigrate any resistance that builds up in the farm. In this way, Kĩmeendeeri wa Kanyuanjii will erect a system of propaganda that reinforces his system at every point and keeps the workers in the dark. What's more, he will also build courts and jails to house those who go against the laws he has set out for his workers.

Warĩĩnga is disgusted, but the Devil reminds her that the devouring of human flesh and blood is the teaching of her own church, and he brings up the Sacrament of the eucharist as a prime example of how Warĩĩnga herself has been indoctrinated into the ways of the capitalist tycoons. The Devil says that such exploitation as is being proposed in the cave only acts out the central symbolisms of Catholicism, and that Catholicism's doctrine of turning the other cheek also keeps the exploited and oppressed down. The Devil then jabs even further, saying that Warĩĩnga let the Rich Old Man exploit her without putting up a fight because of how she had been indoctrinated. He then offers Warĩĩnga a reprieve, saying that she can rejoice in riches and property if only she seizes her great beauty and sells herself out in the name of materialism and evil. She can have it all, if only she follows the creed of Satan, the exploiter who helps thieves steal from others. She refuses, and the Devil reminds her that others have already taken his bargain, like Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ. The Devil then tells her that Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ will be cast down into Hell later that very day, since he is about to be murdered by Mwaũra in an effort to appease the foreigners. Warĩĩnga is again shocked, but the Devil tells her that Mwaũra was a mercenary during the Emergency, and one of the most cruel, at that—killing women, children, and the elderly in order to appease people like Kĩmeendeeri wa Kanyuanjii. The Devil then closes by telling Warĩĩnga that he is telling her all of this because he has a job offer for her, one in Nakuru, Ngorika...

Warĩĩnga comes to, and Gatuĩria is before her, which elates her and helps her to relax after the tense nightmare that she just had. Gatuĩria tells Warĩĩnga that they ought to run away, since the cave is in chaos. He then tells her that Wangarĩ arrived with the police, but that just after arriving, the police turned on Wangarĩ and arrested her for spreading rumors to disturb the peace. Warĩĩnga then asks Gatuĩria to tell her the full story, which he does. He says that a man named Kĩmeendeeri wa Kanyuanjii was delivering a harrowing talk about harvesting the blood, sweat, and brains of workers (this shocks Warĩĩnga, who now knows her encounter was more real than she anticipated), when Wangarĩ came in and delivered a stunning speech denouncing the thieves and robbers for stealing from their own people and erasing the great heritage of their culture. The emcee then stood up and talked directly to Superintendent Gakono, who bent easily under pressure and sicced the police on Wangarĩ, sitting down shortly afterwards to have a drink with the foreign delegation. Wangarĩ hurled insults at the police, accusing them of only serving one class, but it was no use. Gatuĩria then says he saw Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ leaving the cave, as well as Mwaũra conversing with Kĩmeendeeri wa Kanyuanjii and the emcee like old friends.

Gatuĩria's tale shakes Warĩĩnga, making her feel that her dream (which she decides not to tell Gatuĩria about) was a revelation, and the two agree to return to the cave to warn Mũturi that the police are potentially waiting for him. Just as they begin to walk to Njeruca, however, they hear the voices of the people, coming together and rejoicing in a new song.

**Chapter 9**

Warĩĩnga and Gatuĩria return to the Ilmorog Golden Heights, where they see an army of people chanting songs about banishing the Devil from their lands. Warĩĩnga wants to find Mũturi and warn him still, but Gatuĩria insists that such a large crowd would not retreat. Just then, Warĩĩnga catches sight of the man who gave her the fake invitation at the Kaka bus stop, and Gatuĩria identifies him as one of the students from the university (proving Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ's earlier theory about the invitations). They then take note of the crowd's placards and signs, all of which decry the exploitation of the people, but they also continue to wonder where Mũturi could possibly be. Just then, as if in answer to their wondering, Mũturi appears and approaches them, speaking quickly. He tells them that he is excited about what is to come, and that future generations will sing about their triumph all over the land. Mũturi mentions that when he went to go call on the poor of Njeruca, they all appeared readily with weapons and joined in the procession. Warĩĩnga and Gatuĩria try to warn him about Wangarĩ and the police, but Mũturi plays this threat down, saying that, once the workers have been roused, there is no turning back. Mũturi also voices his pleasure that the students have opened their eyes and decided to join in the struggle of the working class. He invites Warĩĩnga and Gatuĩria to join the procession, then leaves immediately thereafter to rejoin the movement himself.

Warĩĩnga and Gatuĩria then begin to think about their role in this urgent struggle. Just a short while ago, they thought of themselves as mere observers to the struggles of others, but now a worker's voice has called them into the fray, and they feel that they cannot resist his call. Gatuĩria puzzles over in his mind whether an intellectual but privileged student should side with the wealthy or the downtrodden, and Warĩĩnga thinks to herself about all of the ways in which she, a mere secretary and typist, relates to the peasants. Between her and other women in her line of work, they have had to sacrifice her arms (for typing), their brains (because no male boss wants to employ a woman who thinks for herself), their humanity, and their thighs (when dealing with bosses who make sexual advances). She thinks to herself about who she is and what she wants, then advances towards the cave with Gatuĩria.

Upon reaching the cave, Warĩĩnga and Gatuĩria find it reeking of smoke and completely surrounded by the mass of Ilmorog peasants. A tragicomic scene unfolds before them as the robbers and thieves, caught in the act, either run to their cars or jump through the windows to avoid the advancing mob of laughing peasants. As they realize that the thieves are fleeing, however, the crowd's joy turns to malice, and they begin to roar and take up arms against the thieves and robbers before them. The foreign delegation barely makes it out, and this is because of their cars being located nearby. After the fracas ends, Mũturi gathers those assembled and begins to speak. He tells of the courage of the people who have showed up that day, and he voices their shared devotion to hard work and prosperity for the collective of people. The Ilmorog students' leader speaks next, saying that neocolonialism and imperialism, these blood sucking and cannibalistic ways, must come to an end. Finally, the Ilmorog workers' leader speaks, and he both thanks the students and sings in praise of the workers, whose creed of class loyalty and integrity supersedes all clan or other divisions. The crowd then erupts into song.

As the crowd sings, Warĩĩnga feels someone tug at her dress from behind—Mũturi, who is secretly trying to get her attention. She follows Mũturi to a hidden place behind the cave, where he gives her a pistol and tells her not to tell anyone, not even Gatuĩria, about it. Warĩĩnga feels empowered with the pistol in her hands, and she suddenly feels the courage to call out to Mũturi and ask who he really is. Mũturi replies that he is a delegate from a secret worker's organization in Nairobi, and he tells Warĩĩnga that she is never alone. He then leaves. Afterwards, Warĩĩnga tells Gatuĩria that they must part company for the day, though they agree to meet up the following day at the Sunshine Hotel. Warĩĩnga then sets off alone, suddenly remembers Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ's soon-to-be fate, and rushes to the hotel where he was staying in hopes of rescuing him from Mwaũra. When she arrives at the hotel, however, the receptionist tells her that Mwaũra has already left with Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ. Warĩĩnga then leaves the hotel, but as soon as she does so, she begins to hear the people from the caves screaming.

The next day, Warĩĩnga goes to the bus stop to meet Mũturi, but he is nowhere to be found. She meets up with Gatuĩria, who recounts to her the violence and arrests that happened at the cave after Warĩĩnga left. The police arrested several people, and many died on both sides of the ensuing conflict between workers and the police. These workers' deaths severely affect Gatuĩria and Warĩĩnga, who sit in silence brooding over the facts of the matter. Finally, Gatuĩria tells Warĩĩnga that what bothered him most is that radio stations only talked about the casualties to the police, rather than the carnage on both sides. He also mentions that Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ was found dead in a car accident, though Mwaũra escaped narrowly with his life.

**Analysis**

These two chapters serve as a turning point in the text for two reasons. First, they represent the climax of the preceding narrative and bring all of the complications of the previous chapters to their necessary resolutions. Second, they serve as the place where Warĩĩnga redeems herself from a victim of postcolonial exploitation into, as we will see in the last three chapters, a Marxist heroine figure. In each instance, however, these two chapters bring prior themes and details back into focus, such as a distrust of organized religion, the corruption of the postcolonial Kenyan state, the coexistence of reality and fantasy/dreams, and a veneration for all those who would unite as a working class against the minority of exploitative tycoons and compradors.

Chapter 8 is primarily the chapter which develops and resolves the events which have come before in the text. For Wangarĩ, it is the chapter in which her plan to turn in the thieves and robbers, something that has been developing for most of the novel, resolves against her. Despite her fiery speech before all of the thieves and robbers assembled in the cave, she is taken into custody and disrespected, a live picture of corruption at work in the modern Kenyan state. Ngũgĩ even makes the additional ironic and anticlimactic move here of having Superintendent Gakono join the foreign delegation for a drink of whiskey after deploying force to incapacitate Wangarĩ. Regarding the storylines of the Devil's Feast, too, there is resolution in Chapter 8: after all, Kĩmeendeeri wa Kanyuanjii is the last tycoon to speak at the feast, and his idea is the most gruesome of all. More than just gruesome, however, it serves as a fitting climax for the plans presented at the Feast simply because of how explicit it is in saying that workers are the origin of all wealth in a country. Previous plans have mentioned exploiting workers and peasants to sell them land or food at a premium, but Kĩmeendeeri wa Kanyuanjii's plan goes to a more abstract and yet more material place, saying that wealth lies in the very blood, sweat, and tears of the workers. This drives home a key Marxist point that Ngũgĩ wants to advance—that the workers united represent the source of all wealth and power, and can usurp their bosses and oppressors—pointing out that these resources are being stolen from workers unwittingly. Previous plans were just as satirical and absurd as Kĩmeendeeri wa Kanyuanjii's, but the materialism of this plan in particular (i.e., reducing people to their bodily fluids, mental resources, and strength) reminds us of the real world consequences of theft, robbery, and imperialism.

Kĩmeendeeri wa Kanyuanjii's plan is also significant for how it allegorically frames an understanding of religion and culture within a capitalist frame. Regarding the former, note how the perversion of scripture throughout the text resurfaces here, not only in the reiteration of the Parable of the Talents by the Devil, but also in the way that the Devil frames his discussion of the Eucharist with Warĩĩnga. Consuming the blood and body of Christ, the Devil charges, trains Catholics to accept blood-sucking and cannibalistic behavior from capitalist tycoons in the real world. Its lessons of empathy, pacifism, and humility also teach the masses to grow complacent as injustices are perpetrated against them. Moreover, as the Devil states in Chapter 8, these religious means of keeping the masses down are accompanied by a series of cultural reinforcements. Among these, the Devil lists films which glorify wealth and the products of theft, newspapers which publish propaganda designed to keep the people at bay, and schools that teach that there is no revolutionary path towards overthrowing oppressive systems. Thus, in breaking down Kĩmeendeeri wa Kanyuanjii's plan through the voice of Satan, Ngũgĩ gives us one of his most pointed critiques of the capitalists superstructures that dominate not only postcolonial Kenya but also much of the Western world.

Additionally, a climax of another kind is reached in the encounter between Warĩĩnga and Satan itself. This encounter represents a rehashing and culmination of her earlier recurring nightmare, where the Devil was crucified before being restored to Earth by his evil and ill-tempered acolytes. Moreover, it represents the most severe instance in the text of Warĩĩnga's dreams commingling with reality. Often, Warĩĩnga has felt that the scene before her was too grotesque or absurd to be true, or else she has felt that the real consequences and terror of her dreams have been too great to bear. Here, however, we are explicitly shown the overlap between Warĩĩnga's dream and the reality which unfolded while she was asleep. This makes readers feel the full terror the Devil's material presence on Earth; moreover, it primes us to expect something more in the future for Warĩĩnga, in the form of an event at Ngorika, Nakuru. This is clear foreshadowing for what is to come, and so is Warĩĩnga's explicit rejection of the Devil's logic.

This rejection of the Devil's logic comes in Chapter 9, specifically at the end. After Warĩĩnga is energized into action by Mũturi—symbolized by his presentation to her of a gun, which makes her feel powerful and courageous—she takes it upon herself to save the life of Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ. Whereas before, Warĩĩnga was more cowardly and weak, she is now someone who is able to take action for both her own sake and for the sake of others, even those who disagree with her like Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ. As she walks away to carry out this task, however, she thinks about the ways in which the Devil's promises to her—of wealth, stability, and happiness—were all lies. She recognizes that it would have provided an escape route for her from neocolonialism, but it also would have cost her her life, integrity, and even her body. From this point on, Warĩĩnga will never compromise her morals or ideals ever again, and we see the consequences and various dimensions of this turn in her play out over the next few chapters.

Finally, Chapter 9 is also an important turning point for Mũturi, whose revolution of the people initially succeeds in dispelling the thieves from the Golden Heights. Mũturi finds his apotheosis as the leader of a true and powerful movement of the people, but at the same time, Chapter 9 also sees his arrest and disappearance, evidence of just how strong the cause he's fighting against truly is. Additionally, it is in Chapter 9 that Mũturi reveals the truth of his identity—as a secret agent for a worker's group in Nairobi. In a novel where so much remains hidden from view or hidden from light through deception, the fact that Mũturi reveals his true purpose and role just before he disappears solidifies his status as a kind of semi-mythic figure, almost an antithesis to the Devil that we see in Chapter 8. While Mũturi tells Warĩĩnga his true name, so to speak, and successfully converts her to the cause of revolutionary action, the Devil tells her his true name and fails to gain her loyalty—telling her of the path to revolutionary action, but urging her to ignore it in favor of decadence, stagnation, and luxury.

**Chapter 10**

Two years have passed since the events at the Ilmorog Golden Heights and since the Devil visited Warĩĩnga at the Ilmorog golf course. The narrator puzzles over where to pick up his narrative, then decides to change up both the speed and manner of his narrative moving forward. He reiterates that his narrative is for instructional purposes—lest we pass hasty judgment on Warĩĩnga—then urges us forward to the continuation point of the story.

Warĩĩnga is a totally changed woman, living in a busy area in a full house in Nairobi. She has committed herself to self-reliance and daily struggle in order to realize the truth of her own humanity. She no longer alters her appearance to look more white, but instead revels in the Blackness of her appearance. As she gets ready in the morning, she thinks about the fact that tomorrow she will undertake a second journey—to go to Nakuru with Gatuĩria to meet his parents. Warĩĩnga is now an engineer, and every day she takes both her phase tester and Mũturi's pistol with her, as a type of talisman.

We then flash back briefly to Warĩĩnga's new education as a mechanical engineer, specializing in internal combustion engines. When she was in her early stages, taking classes at the Polytechnic in engineering, she had social difficulties, since the male students used to laugh at her. Quickly, however, she shut them up with her high ranking in the class. She also had financial issues, which Gatuĩria offered to help her with, but she refused, committing herself entirely to self-reliance and taking on odd jobs like hairdressing. In the time since she started school up again, also, we learn that Warĩĩnga has taken self-defense classes at a martial arts club.

In her second year at school, Warĩĩnga got a job working at an open-air garage, which helped ease her financial troubles. On the first day that she walked past the garage, she inquired about taking on a working role there, and the men laughed at her, telling her that she was only good for flirting and sex. One man even went so far as to challenge Warĩĩnga to diagnose what was wrong with the engine he was working on. Warĩĩnga, however, was courageous, picked up a wooden spoon with a long handle, and used it as a stethoscope to listen to the engine's interior. When she invited the man who challenged her to do the same and say what was wrong, he could not, but Warĩĩnga correctly identified the issue. This earned her then men's respect and caused a deep friendship to develop between her and the other mechanics. Another story is then recounted of a time a man brought his car in for work and got handsy with Warĩĩnga; in return, she beat this man up using her newfound self-defense skills. One final aspect of the garage that is mentioned is that each mechanic earns his own money, but each of them also contributes to a mutual aid fund every month to take care of both communal expenses and unexpected individual emergencies.

We are now back in the present, as Warĩĩnga heads to work the day before her journey to Nakuru. Her colleagues inform her that their garage has just been sold off by the City Council to Boss Kĩhara, in order to build a tourist hotel (which, in reality, functions more like a brothel for foreigners) on the site. This infuriates Warĩĩnga, who is stirred with anger to recall the events that happened two years before.

Later that day, Warĩĩnga and Gatuĩria are on their way to Ilmorog, where they will spend the night before heading to Nakuru the following day. Warĩĩnga is dressed is kitenge cloth now, embracing her local heritage while also bucking stereotypes as a mechanic who can fight to defend herself. Warĩĩnga and Gatuĩria are deeply in love, and Gatuĩria reflects on how lucky he is to have Warĩĩnga by his side. After seeing the events of the Devil's Feast, Gatuĩria decided that he could not procrastinate anymore, and he set to completing his national composition for two years. He has recently completed his task, and after doing so reached out to his father in Nakuru to receive his blessing for marriage to Warĩĩnga. Warĩĩnga jokes with Gatuĩria that she does not know whether his father will be happier to see her or hear his score, to which Gatuĩria replies that Warĩĩnga's beauty is immense and cannot be ignored. In saying this, however, he uses language identical to that of the Devil when he visited Warĩĩnga on the Ilmorog golf course two years prior. This scares Warĩĩnga, but in order to keep her vision hidden and set herself at ease, she begins to talk about Gatuĩria's piece with him.

Gatuĩria explains that the piece was difficult to compose because one had to find a way to express utter unity between different pieces of instrumentation and different voices. He was only inspired to do so after looking upon Warĩĩnga's beauty, so in a way, the piece is like Warĩĩnga's engagement ring. In his mind, then, Gatuĩria recounts the various movements and cues of his composition: the first movement is dominated by unity of country, as well as by the sounds of Kenyan tradition; the second is a dissonant movement, rife with struggle and emblematic of the foreigners' arrival to seize local land and goods; the third movement is an oily movement symbolizing the deception of the foreigners as they rule colonially over Kenya and enslave the people; the fourth movement is a movement of this slavery, in which the people are all together, yet oppressed by their foreign masters; finally, the last movement is an ode to national rebirth and Mau Mau, as well as the potential for revolution.

Gatuĩria's talk of this symphony, meanwhile, has reminded Warĩĩnga of Mũturi, Wangarĩ, and the student leader, a group that she and Gatuĩria refer to as the Holy Trinity. They then recollect the trial of the Holy Trinity together, and another flashback ensues. Warĩĩnga and Gatuĩria were asked to be witnesses for the prosecution, but they refused. Mwaũra, however, testified against Mũturi and Wangarĩ, but just as he was in the middle of his testimony, a note came in directing the judge to immediately release the three defendants for unclear reasons. The workers and peasants shouted with joy, but shortly after their trial, the Holy Trinity was rearrested and detained to an unknown fate. Mwaũra, for his part, earned more money and started up a more "modern" transport business with the emcee from the Devil's Feast and Kĩmeendeeri wa Kanyuanjii.

In the present again, Warĩĩnga and Gatuĩria puzzle as they drive over the ultimate fate of the Holy Trinity. Gatuĩria hopes that they will be released with some other convicts on Jamhuri Day, and Warĩĩnga affirms this with an "Amen!" (265).

**Chapter 11**

Warĩĩnga and Gatuĩria are now back in Ilmorog, where much has stayed the same since their last visit. The Golden Heights have expanded and become even more opulent, but Njeruca has also expanded and become even more rundown, with the Golden Heights residents setting up exploitative shops in Njeruca and deploying the Devil's Angels in order to help them collect rent.

Warĩĩnga and Gatuĩria arrive at Warĩĩnga's parents' house in Ngaindeithia Village in Njeruca. Warĩĩnga's father and her daughter, Wambũi, are out for the day, so only Warĩĩnga's mother receives the two of them. She asks Warĩĩnga if she has told Gatuĩria that she has her own daughter, and Gatuĩria replies that he already knows, saying that it does not bother him in the slightest that he will take on a daughter to whom he has no blood relation. This pleases Warĩĩnga's mother immensely, and she comments that Gatuĩria even looks like Wambũi, so she can see that they will be a great family together. She also tells Warĩĩnga and Gatuĩria that money is not everything, and that true happiness in life comes from the deeds a person does during their time on Earth.

After receiving her mother's blessing, Warĩĩnga heads with Gatuĩria to the Golden Heights for a breath of fresh air. They sit together and reflect on the depth of their love for one another, and Warĩĩnga asks Gatuĩria what his parents are like. Gatuĩria is scared to answer her, since he knows that his parents are exactly the type of people Warĩĩnga would hate—kowtowing to foreigners, exploiting the local populations, and likely looking down on Warĩĩnga for already having a child. Gatuĩria then reflects to himself about what will happen when he goes to see his parents, since he has not told his bride that his parents are throwing a big feast in his honor. In their house at Ngorika, Gatuĩria's parents are throwing a big party for a wide variety of political and wealthy guests, during which men and women are both to dress fancily and gift the happy couple things from a variety of expensive foreign shops. Gatuĩria thinks about all this and feels a heavy burden on his heart, since he knows that his parents are pitiable and that Warĩĩnga may not approve of them. He gets her off of this topic of conversation, but Warĩĩnga seems to be hurting about something.

When Gatuĩria asks Warĩĩnga what is wrong, she tells him about the plan to sell off her garage. They then discuss the fact that Warĩĩnga has once again had her recurring dream about the Devil being crucified—only, this time, it was slightly different. Instead of waiting three days to rescue the Devil from the cross, this time his acolytes showed up immediately with armored vehicles, dispersing into the woods and singing songs Warĩĩnga had not heard before. Gatuĩria then rationally interprets Warĩĩnga's dream in order to put her at ease, and the two laugh it off together.

The chapter then closes with a meditation on the love that Warĩĩnga and Gatuĩria share. When Warĩĩnga reflects that Nakuru is the place she last tried to kill herself, and that she has not been back since, Gatuĩria reminds her of the happiness she will feel at getting married, and he urges her to let this wash away her pain as a kind of miracle. Warĩĩnga and Gatuĩria then begin to sing to each other and kiss, and the chapter ends.

**Chapter 12**

The following day, when Gatuĩria comes to gather Warĩĩnga for their journey, he finds her dressed from head to toe in the traditional Gĩkũyũ way. He is utterly struck by her beauty and praises her profusely, but Warĩĩnga jokingly urges him to focus on driving instead. Whenever they stop at places along the way, people comment on Warĩĩnga's beauty and comment on the fact that there is no national tradition that cannot be cultivated and developed to a high and beautiful place. Back in the car, Gatuĩria comments to Warĩĩnga that what they said is true, and that the people should never bow to foreign impulses or trends, instead embracing their own traditions and building them up. He says that Warĩĩnga is a shining example of this principle, having been educated as a local woman in the ways of mechanical engineering, a field that local women traditionally do not enter. This sends Warĩĩnga into a fit of recollection where she recalls her instructor teaching her how an internal combustion engine works. She stirs from this recollection when Gatuĩria decries local women, saying that they should be doing more with their lives than serving at the feet of foreign men. Warĩĩnga retorts that the Kenyan men are just as much to blame for the women's state as the women are. They agree on this, then agree to build a better future together. Meanwhile, Gatuĩria thinks to himself about his parents will react to seeing Warĩĩnga dressed in her traditional clothing.

Warĩĩnga and Gatuĩria have a pleasant journey to Ngorika, Nakuru, and the narrator tells us that their journey was pleasant even as they arrived and saw the faces of almost every tycoon from the Devil's Feast two years prior. Warĩĩnga even sees her aunt and uncle in attendance. The narrator then cuts the story off, begging for the courage and strength to continue his story, which he eventually does. Warĩĩnga and Gatuĩria enter into an incredibly lavish scene, where Warĩĩnga's aunt and uncle are shading their eyes in shame for how she is dressed. They then enter into a room laid with exquisite carpet and chandeliers, where Gatuĩria's father is to be the first to receive Warĩĩnga. He is seated on a high cushion above his guests, and as Warĩĩnga walks into the room and sees Gatuĩria's father, she is shocked to see that he is, in fact, the Rich Old Man from Ngorika. Warĩĩnga is disgusted upon this revelation to think that Wambũi and Gatuĩria have the same father.

The Rich Old Man keeps a straight face, and he dismisses everyone from the room but Warĩĩnga, in keeping with tradition. Once alone, he begins to tremble and lays his hands on a Bible that is sitting before him. Warĩĩnga is fearless as she meets his gaze, and the Rich Old Man is, conversely, very nervous. He asks her to pray with him, but she is silent and fiery in her steadfast courage. He begs her to ease his suffering by leaving his son and shacking up with him again, becoming a sugar girl to whom he would virtually give everything. He speaks like Boss Kĩhara as he makes this proposition. Warĩĩnga directly accuses the Rich Old Man, telling him that he is also the father of her own child and that he does not really care for her or this child. In response, he tells her that, if she refuses to do as he says, he will have her killed by the Devil's Angels, just like Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ.

Suddenly, a miracle happens. The Rich Old Man falls to his knees before Warĩĩnga, pleading with her to save his honor. In return, Warĩĩnga delivers a fiery rebuff, telling the Old Man that he is a snatcher of other people's lives, and that he is now the hunted, and she the hunter (referencing the game they used to play as lovers). She says that she will not save him, but that she will save many other people. The Old Man then mistakes this for an agreement to his terms, and as he profusely thanks her, Warĩĩnga takes out the pistol from her handbag and kills the Rich Old Man.

Outside, people hear the shots, so Gatuĩria comes in and asks what has happened, to which Warĩĩnga points out the Rich Old Man's body and calls him a parasite on other people's lives. Without looking back, she then leaves the room, encounters the other tycoons, and shoots them right in the kneecaps. People who try to arrest Warĩĩnga are felled by her new self-defense techniques, and she leaves the compound as the other tycoons flee. For his part, Gatuĩria does not know who to turn to or comfort, so he instead sits stagnantly. As the novel closes, Warĩĩnga thinks to herself that the hardest days of her struggle still lay ahead of her.

**Analysis**

These last three chapters of the novel bring the story to a dramatic and shocking close. And, while much of these last three chapters is devoted to showing how much Warĩĩnga and Gatuĩria have changed in the intervening two years, Ngũgĩ here also skillfully and purposefully reminds us of everything that has stayed the same for our characters. It is not just our characters that we are able to reflect on here, however: in these chapters, we are also given ample opportunity to reflect on what changes and stays the same in commerce, politics, and the geography of the cities we have been introduced to throughout the novel. Thus, in telling the story of Warĩĩnga's redemption and in showing us the consequences of what we have already seen, here Ngũgĩ at once cashes in on earlier foreshadowings, reiterates earlier thematic concerns, and shows us the potential for a way forward—though it is uneasy and violent—from neocolonial exploitation.

First, we will examine the trajectory of Gatuĩria from his state at the beginning of the novel to his state at the end. When we first meet Gatuĩria, he is a reticent character who mixes his Gĩkũyũ and English haphazardly. Moreover, he is unsure where he fits as an intellectual in the worker's struggle and fails to see the urgency or reality in the traditional tales of the Gĩkũyũ. Throughout the text, he remains a fundamentally ambivalent character, remaining a mere observer/witness at the Devil's Feast, hiding the truth of his parentage from Warĩĩnga, and joining in the workers' struggle only after both Warĩĩnga and Mũturi enjoin him to. After the fateful events of the Devil's Feast, however, Gatuĩria seems to have redeemed himself and set himself completely on a righteous and productive path. He has finished his composition, which he hopes will cause a revolution in Kenyan music, has shacked up with and kept Warĩĩnga as his girlfriend, and denounces the tycoons and compradores with full force when prompted to by Warĩĩnga. He even mentions that he is unbothered by Warĩĩnga's child from her relationship with the Rich Old Man, something that earns him the love and respect of Warĩĩnga's mother. What is so shocking about Gatuĩria's ultimate fate, then, is that everything is taken away from him in an instant on account of one indiscretion—hiding the truth about his lineage and wealth from Warĩĩnga, despite her repeated questions to him on this topic. In showing readers that even those who are sympathetic with the workers' plight cannot be the workers' allies if they fail to denounce the evil or exploitation in their own backgrounds, Ngũgĩ uses the character of Gatuĩria to send us a stern warning. In the struggle for justice and truth, all will be revealed, so deception can only produce negative results if deployed in an effort to maintain peace.

Laid out in contrast to Gatuĩria's trajectory is that of our heroine, Warĩĩnga. Warĩĩnga begins the novel as a victim of the Rich Old Man from Ngorika, someone who has attempted suicide multiple times and attempts nonstop to suppress her Blackness in an effort to appear more palatable or refined to tycoons and foreigners. When she witnesses the events of the Devil's Feast—and specifically, once she is visited by and rejects the Devil on the golf course—she resolves to never follow the false paths out of neocolonial oppression. Rather, she commits herself to follow the example set for her by Mũturi, working with her own hands and earning an honest living, defending herself and being dependent on no one else for her livelihood and well-being. She is radically transformed in ideas, as well as in appearance, opting for the rest of the novel to embrace local cultural garb and wearing her hair in a more natural way. Finally, it goes without saying that Warĩĩnga's commitment to her new ideals far surpasses her commitment to anything else in life—in service of her newfound Marxism and anti-cronyism, she sacrifices everything she has ever wanted (by killing the Rich Old Man) and putting herself in jeopardy. Even so, she looks back not even once as she does so in the text, realizing that such struggle is necessary if she is really to free herself from the systems that oppress her.

This trajectory of Warĩĩnga's character is so sharp and clear that, in looking at the Old Warĩĩnga and the New Warĩĩnga, several pointed contrasts—as well as some interesting continuities—emerge. Warĩĩnga begins the novel victimized by the Rich Old Man, but she ends it by victimizing him. She begins the novel beset with the burden of the Rich Old Man's child, but she ends it by burdening his child with his own death. She begins the novel with a foreshadowing look into how empowered she feels once armed with a gun, and she ends it with the same, steely confidence that comes with being armed and willing to defend one's self at all costs. These are just a few contrasts that specifically pertain to the dynamic between her and the Rich Old Man—others abound, as well as many interesting continuities that Ngũgĩ chooses to foreshadow earlier in the text. When Warĩĩnga rejects the Devil's proposition in Ngorika, Nakuru, for example, it is hardly known that he is referring to her future engagement party—at once a foreshadowing of her future and an echo of her past. When Warĩĩnga's mother points out a familiar resemblance between Warĩĩnga's daughter and Gatuĩria, readers take it to be a jocular and endearing joke; we do not yet know that Ngũgĩ is clearly and pointedly foreshadowing the true identity of Gatuĩria's father. Finally, there is a continuity and contrast between the Warĩĩnga of old and the new Warĩĩnga where the engagement party's guests are concerned. Many of these guests come from Warĩĩnga's past and have traumatized her (a continuity), but instead of cowering before them or turning the other cheek, Warĩĩnga chooses to accuse and aggress against these guests (shooting several of them in the kneecaps). Through such contrasts and continuities in Warĩĩnga's character, then, Ngũgĩ emphasizes the transformative nature of her growth into a radical martyr figure, just like Mũturi.

Finally, in light of the changes and continuities seen in Warĩĩnga and Gatuĩria, it does readers well to look at how these individual-level dynamics map to greater changes and continuities in the wider cities, communities, and world in which the novel is set. Given the events that took place after the Devil's Feast (i.e., the peasant/worker's revolt), one might expect that certain things may have changed as a result. Perhaps the thieves would no longer meet as brazenly in public, or perhaps the law might take notice of the peasants' aggravation. Regarding the former point, it is clear from what we see in these chapters that the action taken by the people that day did not change anything, with the Devil's Angels branching out into Ilmorog, the Golden Heights expanding, and Njeruca also growing while falling into even deeper disrepair. Note also Boss Kĩhara's continued, shameless profiteering and expansion of his business within Nairobi, this time at the cost of Warĩĩnga's workplace community. Regarding the latter point about the government noticing the pain of its people, it is possible that such a change actually does take place, although briefly and only in service of further deceiving the people. For evidence of this, one need only look at the trial of the Holy Trinity, where three such martyrs of the peasant class were spared nominally in the courts, then detained and taken to an unknown place shortly afterwards. Such action on the government's part possibly shows that they recognize the people's partial awakening, but it also shows that, if they do, they know exactly how to resolve these emotions and keep tensions at a low simmer.

Thus, by the end of the novel, where are we left? One woman has seen a fundamental and radicalizing series of changes in herself, but what is the point? The world around her is just as cruel, and even those who are close to her have deceived her with their failure to live an examined and self-critical life. Rather than be depressed about the lack of changes in the world, however, one does best to think like Warĩĩnga does. There is much hardship and many trials in the world, but one must always work hard and struggle against them, working in solidarity with others who recognize this fact, if we are to have any chance at easing these hardships for all people.

**CHARACTERS AND CHARACTERISATION**

**1. Jacinta Warĩĩnga**

Warĩĩnga is the protagonist of Devil on the Cross. As a young girl, Warĩĩnga hoped to become an engineer, but her involvement with the Rich Old Man from Ngorika caused her to get pregnant with a daughter, Wambũi.

Warĩĩnga then dropped out of school, leaving her baby with her parents, in order to pursue secretarial work. When this does not work out due to the predatory behavior of her bosses, however, Warĩĩnga decides to return to her home of Ilmorog and see her parents.

On the way, she encounters Robin Mwaũra, Mũturi, Wangarĩ, Gatuĩria, and Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ, whose tales of neocolonial Kenya shock her into realizing her solidarity with the peasants and workers of the world. She attends the Devil's Feast in Ilmorog, and then is visited by the Devil himself afterwards at a golf course. She constantly resists the temptation to give in to corruption and the exploitative nature of sugar relationships, however, and she grows greatly as a person after taking up with Gatuĩria.

Once a victim who sought to end her life, by the end of the novel, Warĩĩnga has become a stereotype-dispelling mechanic who embraces her Blackness, her past, and her Marxist sensibilities. These sensibilities run so deep and so passionate that, when confronted with the truth that Gatuĩria's father is the Rich Old Man from Ngorika, she kills the Old Man and runs away, sacrificing her own comfort and marital bliss for her Marxist ideals and in the name of freeing Kenya from robbers and tycoons.

**2. The "Devil's Feast" Guests**

At the Devil's Feast, Warĩĩnga is made to sit and listen to lengthy speeches, during which the various guests all stand and explain why they are eligible to celebrate with foreign extortionists and how they intend to enslave the Black race even more to White colonizers in service of making money for a select few native Africans. They are guilty of exploitative business practices, dehumanizing schemes, and betraying the loyalty of their clans and race. Even so, they freely tell their stories at the party, bragging about the ease of making money through betrayal and framing it as a progression towards modernity. Warĩĩnga is stunned by what they say, but even more importantly, each of the guests is described using grotesque language, which blends the real and fantastical and also draws parallels between these guests and ogres and monsters from Gĩkũyũ legend.

**3. Rich Old Man from Ngorika**

The Rich Old Man from Ngorika is an exploitative sugar daddy who is introduced to Warĩĩnga by her uncle, who hopes to earn some money and social status in return for her innocence and body.

He initially is nice to Warĩĩnga, and Warĩĩnga loses sight of her personal goals as the Rich Old Man lavishes her with money, presents, and attention in exchange for sex.

However, once Warĩĩnga becomes pregnant with his child, he sours and abandons her to a cruel fate, never seeing her again. Or so he and she think, until Warĩĩnga arrives in his house as the betrothed of Gatuĩria, his only son.

Again, here, the Rich Old Man propositions Warĩĩnga and tries to pressure her to leave his son, but in return, Warĩĩnga draws a pistol and kills the Rich Old Man.

He is a symbol of both the corrupted bourgeois class of neocolonial Kenya as well as of the piggish nature of wealthy men in post-colonial Kenya, and his retribution at the end of the novel is evidence of Ngũgĩ's anti-bourgeois sympathies.

**4. Robin Mwaũra**

Mwaũra is the driver of the Matatũ Matata Matamu Model T Ford, which conveys Warĩĩnga and the others to the Devil's Feast in Ilmorog.

Mwaũra is a very stingy and greedy person, driving an old and rundown matatũ while at the same time constantly doing everything he can to earn additional money on the side.

Throughout the novel, Mwaũra espouses a very unsettling, wealth-based value system and also expresses his discontent with the Communist leanings of Mũturi and Wangarĩ.

However, he swears that he has no allegiance to either God or the Devil. He claims that he simply works in service of whomever pays more. By the end of the novel, however, Mwaũra is exposed as a former mercenary working for the neocolonial bourgeoisie, someone who would not hesitate to kill anyone if it meant that he would receive a paycheck in return.

In fact, he is hired to kill Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ, and he succeeds in doing so through a car accident that does not take his own life. Even so, despite Mwaũra's evil heart and clear interest in exploiting others, he is laughed off the stage at the Devil's Feast for the relatively small scale of his operations of theft and robbery.

**5. Mũturi**

Mũturi is a hardworking builder, the representative of the working class in the novel. He used to work for the same company as Warĩĩnga, but when wages stagnated, Mũturi left his job to journey to Ilmorog.

Throughout the novel, one gets the sense that he is unnaturally interested in the devilish work of the Ilmorog thieves and robbers, and it is eventually revealed that he works for a secret organization of workers, one whose goal is to banish neocolonial thieves, put power back in the hands of the people, reject globalist modernity, and restore Mau-Mau-era nationalist fervor to the country.

After hearing some speeches at the Devil's Feast, Mũturi goes to lead a revolt of the people against the tycoons of Ilmorog, but he is eventually arrested.

Though he is freed at his trial, he is soon taken into custody again by the corrupt government.

Additionally, late in the novel, it is revealed that Mũturi saved Warĩĩnga's life not once but twice—once as a security guard that prevented her from drowning herself in a school pool, and again as a samaritan who saved her from throwing herself in front of a train.

**6. Wangarĩ**

Wangarĩ is a peasant woman and a kind of counterpart to Mũturi. As a young woman, Wangarĩ participated in Mau Mau and fought for the independence of Kenya.

As a result, she is deeply shocked in the present to find that the same exploitative conditions exist in Kenya as before the Mau Mau Uprising.

She is particularly disgusted by the fact that certain Black people would work with foreigners in the exclusion and exploitation of their own kind. Warĩĩnga admires Wangarĩ greatly, but Wangarĩ suffers an ultimately similar fate to Mũturi, being arrested and freed, only to be arrested once more.

During the novel, she travels to Ilmorog with the others in order to report the thieves and robbers there to the police of Nairobi, but she is double-crossed by the police in the end, who work in reality for the very tycoons and robber barons she seeks to expose and report.

**7. Gatuĩria**

Gatuĩria is a musician and professor from the university in Nairobi. Seeking to write a composition that embodies the national history of Kenya, he learns folklore from a storyteller but is unsure whether he believes in the literal and material manifestations of evil (e.g., ogres, demons) that occur in these stories.

He is reluctant as an educated petit-bourgeois to take sides with either the Communist workers or the Capitalist tycoons throughout the novel, but by the end of the novel, he has taken up with Warĩĩnga, become inspired to write his music by the horrors he sees at the Devil's Feast, and at least nominally accepts the truth of the Marxist worldview and history of Kenya.

At the same time, however, Gatuĩria's father is secretly the Rich Old Man from Ngorika, and he does not tell Warĩĩnga of his father's wealth for fear that she will abandon and leave him.

However, this only serves to hurt Gatuĩria in the end, since Warĩĩnga kills his father and leaves him alone to deal with the consequences of her actions.

**8. Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ**

Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ is an international business major and scholar who joins the other characters in their journey to Ilmorog. Though he remains quiet for much of the ride to Ilmorog, he eventually reveals that his sympathies are in line with the capitalist business tycoons who exploit locals and make money from the ignorance of others. At the Devil's Feast, Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ speaks his mind and tells the guests there that they ought to reject foreign interference, and develop indigenous frameworks for theft and robbery without enslaving themselves in perpetuity to foreigners. This, however, garners an incredibly negative response from the audience, who agree to have him killed for his insolence before their foreign guests.

**9. The Devil**

The Devil is an important character in the text, not just as an allegorical figure or imagined presence but as a real and material presence that causes and effects change in the world.

Not only is he allegedly the person who throws the feast in Ilmorog, but he is also the person who tempts Warĩĩnga on the Ilmorog golf course and offers her a life of luxury in exchange for a betrayal of her own experiences and ideals.

Warĩĩnga rejects the Devil ultimately, but his presence throughout the text is undeniable, and his central role in the main allegory of the text (Warĩĩnga's recurring dream) is a severe and passionate indictment of capitalism and the neocolonial ways in which foreign governments control former colonies indirectly through opportunistic race and class traitors.

**10. Boss Kĩhara**

Boss Kĩhara is the boss of both Warĩĩnga and Mũturi, and he is responsible for both of them getting fired. He is a representative of corruption in modern Kenya, both of the piggishness and lasciviousness of rich men and of the avarice of wealthy businesspeople.

**11. John Kimwana**

John Kimwana is Warĩĩnga's former lover, a passionate and young student at the university. Though Warĩĩnga loves him deeply, he abandons her when she tells him of her experiences with Boss Kĩhara. He does not believe that Warĩĩnga was really able to reject her boss, and so he ironically rejects her in turn.

**12. Gĩcaandĩ Player**

The Gĩcaandĩ player is the narrator of Devil on the Cross. He is initially reluctant to tell the story of Warĩĩnga, but after being visited by the divine in the form of the collective voice of the people, he is moved to recite the majority of the novel. He is also shown to not necessarily be an entirely reliable narrator, which forces readers to consider the text he provides us with in light of several contexts—temporal, gendered, and so on.

**THEMES AND IDEAS**

**1. Neocolonialism and Corruption**

Perhaps more than anything else, Devil on the Cross is a biting satire directed against the powers of neocolonialism and the corruption that is bred by a faulty process of decolonization.

As Ngũgĩ shows us through characters like Boss Kĩhara, the Rich Old Man from Ngorika, and the local tycoons present at the Devil's Feast, that even after Kenyan natives fought for their freedoms during Mau Mau and "expelled" the white man after earning their independence, many Black people are happy to work as their proxies behind the scenes, giving off the appearance of self-rule while actually exploiting local people in service of foreign lords.

Such corruption of the people against their own countrymen is not just morally wrong, it is in fact cannibalistic, and this is why Ngũgĩ links stories of neocolonial exploitation to the stories told in the novel of man-eating ogres, monsters, and witches.

Moreover, the link given in the novel between neocolonial cannibalism and the holy sacrament of the eucharist (as told by the Devil to Warĩĩnga on the Ilmorog golf course) reinforces Ngũgĩ's belief that Western religion has had great power in cementing the rule of neocolonialism over Kenya's people. Indeed, through such details as the Parable of the Talents, tycoon involvement in churches, and the Devil's claim to Warĩĩnga that religion fosters complacency among the peasants (since they believe they will be rewarded in the next life for humble servitude in this life), Ngũgĩ makes it clear that religion is not just tangentially involved in Kenyan neocolonialism, but rather plays a central role in upholding and maintaining it.

**2. Marxism and the Power of the Collective**

Ngũgĩ is unequivocal in voicing his Marxist sympathies in Devil on the Cross. In a broader/historical sense, Ngũgĩ's narratology is Hegelian in itself, as much of the story's progression results from the collision and synthesis of opposites (or a thesis and antithesis).

There are always two of something being thrown into relief or tension so as to produce a picture of Ngũgĩ's reality. On a larger level, these include such binaries as good and evil and reality and fantasy, detailed below. On a smaller level, these include the two clans of thieves at the Devil's Feast, the two human hearts posited by Mũturi, the two journeys undertaken in the novel, and so on.

In terms of actual Marxist/Communist thought, then, Ngũgĩ is also unequivocal in his support and his belief in the restorative power of a worker's revolution.

By showing us characters like Mũturi and Wangarĩ, and by comparing them with people like Mwaũra and Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ, Ngũgĩ invites our sympathy with the peasants and revolutionaries, who work hard for everything they have and do not prey on the property of others.

He also does this by showing us the destructive effects of neocolonialism (such as sugar relationships, murders, firings), while also setting up comparisons between the ultra-rich and ultra-poor.

Finally, his faith in the collective is also clear, even from the opening chapter, which suggests that the collective of people is as holy and powerful as God himself: "the voice of the people is the voice of God" (3). The collective is kept down only by the deception of those at the top: otherwise, they would easily free themselves and take revolutionary action as they turn from victim to hero (as Warĩĩnga does by the novel's end).

**3. Women's Conditions in Post-Colonial Kenya**

Ngũgĩ is also critical of gender inequalities in post-colonial Kenya. Through the central role of sugar girls in the text (including Warĩĩnga herself), Ngũgĩ shows us just how easy it is for girls to succumb to the temptation of wealth, as well as the harsh consequences of ruination and even death (take Warĩĩnga's attempted suicides, for example) that result from such a temptation.

Moreover, this gendered power dynamic is not just limited to sugar relationships in the text: in Wangarĩ's tale of traveling to Nairobi for work, consider the ways in which she too is sexualized and told that she should sell her body rather than find real work.

Note also in many cases that the exploitation of women in post-colonial Kenya is explicitly linked to imperialist and tourist aims—for example, the love hotel to be built on the land of the communal garage and Mwaũra's recollections of serving a foreigner as he picked up women with his matatũ.

Importantly, however, there is a gender disparity between the narrator and the subject of our tale, Warĩĩnga. We already know from his false start that he is not the most reliable of narrators, but how can we be sure that he accurately represents everything Warĩĩnga thinks, says, and does, especially in instances when she was alone (as with the Devil or the Rich Old Man)? Might his narrative, even if inspired divinely, be tinged with masculine inflections and moralizing, or is the story more or less correct?

**4. Indigenity and Local Traditions**

Ngũgĩ's text is also remarkable in its incorporation and prioritization of local Kenyan (and specifically Gĩkũyũ) traditions and culture. From the very beginning of the novel, for example, the Gĩcaandĩ Player informs us—by performing a traditional oral art no less—that Warĩĩnga's story is not one that is meant for foreign ears, and that the story (like the land itself) belongs to the people of Ilmorog. Despite this inauspicious opening, however, we do hear the story, and it is one that is jam-packed with local fables, songs, and other cultural allusions—from Gatuĩria's planned national composition and areas of study, to the stories he hears from the old man Bahati in Nakuru, to the Kamoongonye ballad, and so on. In prioritizing such sidebars and digressions from the main text, and in incorporating many different genres together in one text, Ngũgĩ lays the groundwork for a literature that rejects Western narratology and perhaps provides a potential answer to the perennial question of what African Literature truly is. Moreover, in placing such a heavy emphasis on the primacy of local life and traditions, Ngũgĩ also is telling us that the way forward from an exploitative globalism is a return towards more local ways of life, giving more care to the neighbors that one forms a community with.

**5. The Battle between Good and Evil**

As is clear even from its title, Devil on the Cross is a novel heavily invested in the conflict between good and evil, both on earth and in a theological context.

In terms of material wrongs that are done on earth, the conflict between good and evil roughly maps for Ngũgĩ to the the conflict between capitalism/bourgeois life and communal (Communist)/peasant ways of life.

Moreover, as Mũturi tells us in his stunning Chapter 3 speech, good is not just the abstract force which drives people to love, but also the material result of that love in the world, which in turn sustains a community.

Evil on the other hand, is parsed as that which parasitically seeks to destroy what has been built by the forces of good. This emphasis on material consequences and realities is inherently Marxist, and it also translates to Ngũgĩ's theological positions on good and evil.

As is clear in the text, it is important to Ngũgĩ that we accept the material reality and truth of an incarnate God and Devil. Doing so helps us to recognize that we ourselves are responsible in this life for either creating sadness or joy, and it allows us to recognize good and evil more easily in others. Finally, it allows us to see something like crucifying the devil as possible, which implies that we may have distinct and real paths towards saving ourselves from earthly pain.

**6. The Tension between Reality and Fantasy**

The tension between reality and fantasy is also a dominant dynamic in Ngũgĩ's text. A great deal of the novel's significant moments, such as the Devil's revelations to Warĩĩnga, her recurring nightmare about the Devil's crucifixion, and many of the events of the Devil's Feast either literally or figuratively seem to take place in a dream state. This is done by Ngũgĩ most likely to highlight the absurdity and depravity of the conditions created by neocolonialism and corruption in post-colonial Kenya.

Moreover, the idea that dreams can be a site of real revelation (or that dreams are in any way contiguous with or connected to reality) invites us to even more generously interpret Ngũgĩ's Marxism. After all, if an individual can see the hidden truth of reality in dreams, it is equally within their power to act as a revolutionary and make sure that what is hidden is brought correctly to the surface for all to see.

**7. Language as Power and Language as Tool**

In Chapter 3, the narrator tells us Gatuĩria is aware "that the slavery of language is the slavery of the mind" (58).

Though it seems rather contextual, this quote in fact expresses a central tenet of Ngũgĩ's text—that is, the language that we use and communicate in both shapes the world around us and defines our relationships with this world.

In more succinct terms, language is a tool to build a world—to create culture, communicate and collaborate with others, and so on—but it is also a tool that allows us to define ourselves within these constructs.

This is why, in Ngũgĩ's novel, it is so insidious when Kenyans refer to themselves first with their English names and later on with their Gĩkũyũ names: it reflects an erasure of culture and, as a result, an erasure of entire worlds and identities.

This is also why Gatuĩria wants to find and construct the language for a truly national kind of music, and why he seeks inspiration in the local oral tales of tradition. Outside the world of the text, too, this is a powerful aesthetic claim that Ngũgĩ is well aware of, and this is a major reason that Ngũgĩ deploys local legends, allusions, and the like in service of telling his stories (see the points about indigeneity above).

**NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES IN DEVIL ON THE CROSS**

**1. Genre**

Political Satire, Fiction

**Setting and Context**

Kenya, the early 1980s

**2. NARRATOR AND POINT OF VIEW**

The story is told from the point of view of an unnamed Gĩcaandĩ Player, who nonetheless has limited insight into each character's thoughts and feelings. Thus, at time the narrative takes a first-person point of view (during which the Gĩcaandĩ Player comes off as a less-than-reliable narrator), but the text primarily consists of third-person limited narration.

**2. TONE AND MOOD**

The text is enraptured by the fantastical and musical, but it is also elegiac and aggrieved with the treatment of peasants and workers in post-colonial Kenya.

**3. PROTAGONIST AND ANTAGONIST**

Jacinta Warĩĩnga is our protagonist, while the antagonist is less distinct—standing opposite Warĩĩnga are the tycoons, businesspeople, and compradores who have exploited her and other workers.

**4. MAJOR CONFLICT**

The major narrative arc of the text revolves around Warĩĩnga's journey towards self-discovery and redemption from a hopeless victim into a strong, Marxist heroine. Thus, the major conflict is both internal (i.e., within Warĩĩnga as she convinces herself that she is capable of revolutionary self-reliance and dismissing the temptations of the Devil) as well as external (i.e., in terms of the ideological conflict between Warĩĩnga and the tycoons who speak at the Devil's Feast and who manipulate workers outside the Feast). More generally, the major conflict in the text may also be understood as class conflict between the bourgeoisie and the working class.

**5. CLIMAX**

The climax of the text, as referenced by the narrator in his false start to the narrative in Chapter 2, is in the discussion that Warĩĩnga has with the Devil on the Ilmorog golf course. In this conversation, not only are the capitalist superstructures that keep the masses enslaved laid bare (i.e., in the form of the Devil's discussion of propaganda, education, religion, etc.), but it is also here that Warĩĩnga is made to most climactically confront and reject the neocolonial conditions that are being forced on her. It is notably only after this climactic moment that she is able to reform her life and get to a place where she can confront the Rich Old Man from Ngorika, another tense and action-packed moment in the text.

**6. FORESHADOWING**

Ngũgĩ deploys foreshadowing extensively in the text, contributing to his larger development of the theme of dualities (since foreshadowing represents a kind of doubling or echoing), as well as his combination of fantasy and reality (since certain foreshadowings are so pointed as to appear a little unrealistic or unlikely). For example, consider how the game of the Hunter and the Hunted, played by Warĩĩnga and the Rich Old Man from Ngorika in her youth, foreshadows her eventual killing of the Old Man with Mũturi's pistol. Consider also how this event is foreshadowed by the Devil's proposition to Warĩĩnga, where he tells her that he has a job proposal for her in Ngorika.

**8. ALLUSIONS**

Kenya's history, geography, popular culture, religion, and folk traditions are referenced heavily in the text, which also makes heavy use of Kenyan adages and idioms. Also, Ngũgĩ's other works are alluded to, as Ilmorog is a shared setting between many of his works.

**9. IMAGERY**

Ngũgĩ's imagery is at once surreal and highly grounded in the material facts of local reality. This contributes to his larger development of fantasy and reality as commingled, and it also establishes his writing style as distinct from a Western or Eurocentric canon.

**(a) Mwaũra's Matatũ Matama Matamu Model T Ford, Registration Number MMM 333**

Towards the beginning of the novel, just after Warĩĩnga decides to board Mwaũra's Matatũ, we get a description of the vehicle:

It looked as if Mwaũra’s Matatũ Matata Matamu Model T Ford, registration number MMM 333, was the very first motor vehicle to have been made on Earth. The engine moaned and screamed like several hundred dented axes being ground simultaneously. The car’s body shook like a reed in the wind. The whole vehicle waddled along the road like a duck up a mountain.

In the morning, before starting, the matatũ gave spectators a wonderful treat. The engine would growl, then cough as if a piece of metal were stuck in its throat, then it rasped as if it had asthma. At such times Mwaũra would open the bonnet dramatically, poke here and there, touch this wire and that one, then shut the bonnet equally dramatically before returning to the steering wheel. He would gently press the accelerator with his right foot, and the engine would start groaning as if its belly were being massaged. (29)

This imagery is significant and masterful for many reasons. First, as Namwali Serpell notes in the text's introduction, each detail describing the vehicle here is rooted in the real and the material (i.e., the sound of axes, the sound of a reed, the coughing noise), but that, in aggregate, these details produce a surreal or absurd effect. This is a key narrative technique of Ngũgĩ's. Moreover, note the absurdity in the naming of the vehicle and the excess of M's. This detail seems to merely be a surface-level joke at first, but upon closer examination, one may realize that M is the 13th letter of the alphabet—the letter in the complete middle, just as Mwaũra himself claims to be a middle-of-the-road observer of the conflict between good and evil. Moreover, the 333 serial number of the car evokes 666, the number of the beast. The number being halved here also implies a kind of half effort, and it echoes Mwaũra’s claim that he can take one both to the Devil and to God's kingdom with equal effort.

**(b) The Devil's Feast: The Scene**

Just after the emcee gives the introductory speech at the Devil's Feast, Warĩĩnga looks around her at the scene in the "cave," which in reality is a very fine home:

It was certainly a feast. The order of the day was drink your fill; indulge yourself by scattering bank notes about. It was an arrangement that pleased most of the competitors, for now everyone had a chance to display his wealth. When it was their turn, many of the guests would order rounds of drinks in measures that were generous—large bottles of whisky, vodka, brandy and gin, or whole cases of beer for each person. Such people would have bitten their lips in anger had they heard that at the table which they occupied there was someone who was ordering hard drink in tots or single bottles of beer. To order single bottles of beer or meager tots of liquor, it was generally agreed, was the drinking style of the wretched.

Many of them had armed themselves with young women—sugar girls—who wore very expensive jewelry, like pearl and ruby necklaces around their necks or silver and gold rings on their fingers. It looked as if the women in the cave had dressed for a fashion parade, for a display of valuable stones. For their girlfriends the men ordered nothing but champagne, bragging: "Let the champagne foam and flow like the Rũirũ River. If we can’t drink it all, we’ll bathe in it." (100)

Here, note the imagery of excess and waste, as well as the general showiness and competitive quality to the wealth being displayed at the feast. Also important is the presence and focus on sugar girls, who are dehumanized and seen as yet another extension of the men's property and wealth, a viewpoint that only becomes more explicit when one's sugar relationships are codified in the tournament rules as something that competitors have to address. In sum, the scene is decadent but it is also tense, even among robbers and thieves. This, too, only becomes more clear as the robbers break up into clans and factions over the course of the tournament.

**(c) The Devil's Feast: The Competitors**

At the Devil's Feast, the imagery surrounding the competitors is strange and grotesque. To mention one of just two examples, note how, when Gĩtutu wa Gataangũrũ takes the stage, he is described as appearing like "his belly had absorbed all his limbs and all the organs of his body" (108). Moreover, his head is described as being "shrunk[en] to the size of a fist" (108). As another example, consider how Nditika wa Ngũũnji is described as wearing a suit with "tails cut in the shape of the wings of the big green and blue flies that are normally found in pit latrines or among rotting rubbish" (199). Such imagery relates the competitors at the Devil's Feast to demonic entities or mutated abominations of nature, which in turn solidifies readers' sympathies with Marxism and against them.

**(d) Njeruca and Nakuru: A Tale of Two Cities**

Another stunning example of imagery in the novel comes in the contrasting descriptions of rich and poor communities. When Gatuĩria and Warĩĩnga go to get lunch in Njeruca, for example, he asks her what Njeruca looks like, and Warĩĩnga replies spitefully:

How can you ask that, as if you were a foreigner in Kenya? Have you never visited the slum areas of Nairobi to see for yourself the amazing sight of endless armies of fleas and bedbugs marching up and down the walls. or the sickening, undrained ditches, full of brackish water, shit and urine, the naked children swimming in those very ditches? A slum is a slum. Here in Njeruca we don’t have any drainage. Human shit and urine and the carcases of dead dogs and cats—all these make the area smell as if it were nothing but pure putrefaction. Add to this decay the smoke of dangerous gases from the industrial area—all these are blown toward Njeruca by the wind—and add too the fact that all the rubbish and waste from the factories is deposited there, and you’ll see why I compare Njeruca with Hell. To bury a people in a hole full of fleas, lice, bedbugs—what hell could be worse than that? (146).

The conditions here are incredibly destitute, especially considering that the dangers are not just sanitary, but also environmental (in the form of industrial gases) and perhaps even religious (note Warĩĩnga's equation of Njeruca with Hell). This is especially disheartening when one compares the environment of a place like Njeruca with a place like Gatuĩria's home in Nakuru:

When Gatuĩria and Warĩĩnga walked into the courtyard, they were met by servants in uniform: striped trousers, dark tail coats, top hats and white gloves. Gatuĩria and Warĩĩnga were escorted toward a special room, where Gatuĩria’s father, together with a select inner circle of elders, was waiting to receive them. Things had been organized so that Gatuĩria’s father would be the first to receive his son’s bride, would be the first to touch her. The owner of the homestead had to be the first to receive the bride of his only son, according to modern tradition.

[...]

The men had on dark suits, white frilled shirts and bow ties. The women wore very expensive clothes of different colors. But they all wore hats and white gloves.

On the outer edges stood foreign guests and tourists, dressed very lightly for a sunny day and bemusedly watching the drama unfolding before them as if they were studying the ridiculous products of their own civilizing missions.

[...]

A red carpet had been laid at the entrance to the special room. On the floor of the special room was green carpet four inches thick. From the ceiling hung chandeliers like bunches of glass fruit. (282-283)

Here, the details much resemble the details of the home that hosted the Devil's Feast, a congruity that is not without reason (since Gatuĩria’s father is of the class of tycoons that thieves from and exploits common people). The contrast between wealthy and poor home imagery in the novel is thus particularly clear and powerful insofar as it illustrates the extent and severity of the plight faced by the Kenyan poor.

**10. PARADOX**

There are many paradoxes that exist in the system of capitalist oppression laid out by Ngũgĩ in the text. As just one example, consider how the Devil tries to sell Warĩĩnga on a potential escape route from neocolonial conditions. He tells her that, in order to escape the system, Warĩĩnga must sell her body and become arm candy for a rich tycoon, both allowing herself to be completely obliterated by capitalist desire and also continuing to perpetrate the system. In this way, her only path out is a path back in and a reinforcement of the system.

**11. PARALLELISM**

Warĩĩnga's story is often paralleled to the story of other Kenyans (like Mũturi, with whom she shares a boss)—and, specifically, with other women and sugar girls. This is done to make Warĩĩnga stand out as a representative of both the average worker's struggle and the average woman's struggle in modern Kenya. This everywoman status to Warĩĩnga is a reason that the narrator consistently reminds us that he tells Warĩĩnga's tale only for instructional purposes.

**12. PERSONIFICATION**

Kenya as a country is personified often throughout the book—for example, as a pregnant mother.

**13. SYMBOLS, ALLEGORY AND MOTIFS**

**(a) Clothing (Symbol)**

Throughout the novel, clothing becomes an stand-in for how one responds to the threat of national opposition by foreign colonizers, as well as a symbol of one's corruption by these colonizers' ideals.

Mũturi, for example, dresses in overalls, a symbol of his higher loyalty to the working people's cause. Wangarĩ dresses in Kitenge, a symbol of her Mau Mau roots and ongoing love for the local customs and culture of Kenya.

Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ, like many others, is dressed in a Western suit that indicates his loyalty to the causes of corruption and money.

Warĩĩnga begins the novel dressed in imitation of others, trying to meet foreign trends in a way that does not fit her body, but by the novel's end, she shines by wearing national dress to the engagement party at Gatuĩria's parent's home. This, however, is also a notable act of resistance directed towards the social standards propagated by tycoons and thugs that support the neocolonial regime (like Gatuĩria's father).

**(b) The Cross (Symbol)**

The cross, the instrument on which the Devil is executed and from which he is afterwards spared, is an intensely symbolic image corresponding to the deficient and faulty procedure of decolonization towards self-rule and autonomy. While workers might think they have gained opportunity by taking bold and revolutionary action, the Devil resurges—as did Christ, according by Christian religious philosophy—by finding incarnation in the structures of neoimperialism and neocolonialism.

Moreover, the way in the Devil both exits and comes back to the world is dependent here on the Christian symbol of the cross—an indictment of the role that religion can play in upholding both white supremacist ideologies and a social caste system based on wealth and its alleged correlation with holiness.

**(c) The Parable of the Talents (Allegory)**

The Parable of the Talents recurs heavily throughout Devil on the Cross. In the context of the novel, it is often told by those who align with capitalist or neocolonial ways of thinking, and it seems to convey the message that those who are entitled and wealthy are to be enriched even more by God's will.

In this regard, the Parable seems to be a direct allegory for the real conditions of Kenyans after Mau Mau—those who worship at the feet of foreign lords are enriched even more, while those who call out the truth are chastised and dispensed with.

Alternatively, one could see the Parable as a lesson in how society goes wrong: the third servant ought not to be chastised, and perhaps if the other two servants had aligned with him, they could have withstood the impositions of their cruel, foreign master. Here, as in the Bible, the ultimate message is unclear. Ultimately, however, Ngũgĩ uses the Parable so prevalently in his text to show the ways in which religion can be used to justify the subjugation of those who stand up for what is fair.

**(d) Kĩmeendeeri wa Kanyuanjii's Plan (Allegory)**

Late in the novel, the plan of Kĩmeendeeri wa Kanyuanjii is related to Warĩĩnga by the voice of Satan. He tells her about this plan, to have a farm where blood, sweat, and brains are drained from workers and sold at a premium around the world using pipelines, and Warĩĩnga is incredulous. She fails to understand how Kĩmeendeeri wa Kanyuanjii could possible keep people in a deluded enough state to have their lives stolen from them, and she also questions whether people could actually be so cruel as to feast on the blood and bodies of other human beings. Satan makes clear to Warĩĩnga, however, that this plan is more allegorical and real than she could ever think: Kĩmeendeeri wa Kanyuanjii will delude people, as the current tycoons do, through both religion and educational systems designed to hide the truth and possibility of revolution from the workers. He will devise entertainment for the workers that makes wealth appear glamorous and distracts them from their plight. As for the consumption of human blood and flesh, Satan mentions that this is in fact a sacrament of Catholicism, meant to train people to be as selfish and cannibalistic as possible in their own quests for self-salvation. In sum, what Ngũgĩ does through the plan of Kĩmeendeeri wa Kanyuanjii is lay out an arresting allegory for modern conditions that are more desperate and horrible than we have perhaps ever noticed. This allegory, like the whole of the text, is then meant to awaken us, as it does Warĩĩnga, into the eventuality of revolutionary thought and action.

**(e) Music and Song (Motif)**

Music and song are prevalent throughout the novel, often intervening in and being interwoven with the prose content of the novel. This calls our attention to the tradition of oral recitation in Gĩkũyũ storytelling, as well as how closely related this tradition is to the companion arts of dance, song, and poetry. At the same time, through Gatuĩria's plan to write a "song of Kenya," we see the ways in which music and song can also contain history, telling the truths of a specific person, group, or country through authentic emotion and direct language. Compare the music Gatuĩria ultimately composes with, for example, with the music heard by Warĩĩnga when she attempts suicide, as well as the Congolese music heard at the Devil's Feast (an intermediary between foreign and local music that aligns with the race/class treachery of those present).

**14. METAPHORS AND SIMILES**

**(a) Pig-like Skin (Simile)**

In various places in the novel, both the Devil and white/European foreigners in Kenya are described as having skin that is red like a pig’s (as on pages 8 and 43, to name just a couple). Not only does this highlight the avarice and animalistic brutality of the colonizing powers and their cronies that destroy everyday life for the average Kenyan, but it also paints white people as being uncannily related to or close to the Devil. Especially considering Warĩĩnga's recurring dream, where the Devil's acolytes are the ones who facilitate the Devil building Hell on Earth, this is a very subtle yet purposeful move on Ngũgĩ's part.

**(b) The Body as a Sword (Simile)**

While explaining that definition of good and evil is contingent on the deeds that one does in their life, Mũturi says the following to Mwaũra and the other passengers on the matatũ:

For our hands, our organs, our bodies, our energy are like a sharp sword. This sword, in the hands of a producer, can cultivate, make food grow, and can defend the cultivators so that the blessings and the fruits of their sweat is not wrested from them; and the same sword, in the hands of a parasite, can be used to destroy the crops or to deny producers the fruits of their industry. (55)

By comparing the body to a sword, something that can be seen as a tool in the right hands but a weapon in the wrong hands, Mũturi succinctly and powerfully showcases his basic idea: no person is born evil; they are just a material being with a heart to fuel them. What their heart drives them to do, then, and what they allow themselves to do, determines whether or not they are good—using their bodies and power to construct a better world for everyone—or evil—using their bodies for selfish and self-annihilating purposes.

**(c) Kenyans as Wounded Birds (Simile)**

During the matatũ journey, Gatuĩria delivers his own speech and tells his own life story, including a variety of tales that the Old Man from Bahati, Nakuru told him. In between telling the second and third stories of this kind, however, Gatuĩria stops himself to say that he may not be able to tell the last story correctly, since "the kind of education bequeathed to us by the whites has clipped the wings of our abilities, leaving us limping like wounded birds" (65). Here, Gatuĩria's point is clear: the education of the colonial regime did not prioritize local customs and traditions, completely stunting the ability to recite traditional stories in the younger generation. On a deeper level, though, if one mines the sense data of this image, they see that what Gatuĩria is lamenting on a deeper level is a loss of freedom and beauty (like a bird's flight) that accompanied the removal of traditional activities and arts from Kenyans' education.

**(d) Grotesque Imagery at the Devil's Feasts (Similes)**

At the Devil's Feast, Warĩĩnga and the other central characters of the text are introduced to a variety of absurd and grotesque figures, each of whom is described using a variety of similes and metaphors. For example, take how the narrator describes the emcee of the proceedings: "He had a well-fed body: his cheeks were round, like two melons; his eyes were big and red, like two plums; and his neck was huge, like the stem of a baobab tree" (94). The similes here are notably all natural images, but when re-contextualized into the realm of the human, they become uncanny, evidence of these speakers' complicity in demonic, unnatural, and evil thievery, much like the reference to white people's red, pig-like skin that we have already seen.

**(e) Trumpeting Ululations (Simile)**

After Mũturi and his army of peasants storms the Golden Heights and scares away the thieves and robbers who congregated there, a series of victorious speeches are given by various group leaders. The last of these leaders is the leader of the Ilmorog workers, and when he ascends the stage, we are told that "he [...] got a big ovation, and the women's ululations were like the trumpets of war" (238). This simile not only evokes a strong sonic image, but it also reminds us that there is no turning back for the workers after this point—war has, in effect, been declared between them and the thieves who oppress them, and the consequences for both sides of the war could be fatal.

**15. IRONY**

**(a) The Irony of Kenyan "Independence"**

One of the greatest ironies that Ngũgĩ teases out in his text is the irony of "independence" in a post-colonial and neocolonial context. While many people in Kenya fought for their land's freedom and self rule through the Mau Mau Uprising—and despite the fact that many Kenyans and other Black people occupy positions of political and economic power in the country—foreign powers still dominate the country behind the scenes.

This irony results from the fact that, as Ngũgĩ tells us and shows us, so many Kenyans are willing to work for foreigners in service of exploiting their own people if it means that they can enrich themselves in the process. This betrayal of independent Kenyans by their own countrymen and women also perhaps chains Kenya even more to foreigners than in the pre-independence era.

**(b) The Irony of Warĩĩnga's "Salvation"**

In addition to being a tale of post-colonial Kenya, Devil on the Cross is also a tale about the redemption of Warĩĩnga. Warĩĩnga begins the novel as an exploited sugar girl, the very picture of everything that is ruined by the corruption of both Kenyan people and the Kenyan government. Over the course of the novel, she is then radicalized and begins to follow Marxism as a result of the horrors she witnesses during and immediately following the Devil's Feast. In other words, she becomes a Marxist through a baptism by fire. At the novel's end, then, once she has already been "saved" and is able to live the life she always dreamed (with an ideal career, ideal husband, etc.), she reaches the apex of her personal development when her principles drive her to kill the Rich Old Man from Ngorika. This is ironic because, in a vacuum, one would hardly speak of a violent act towards another as the height of salvation, but here, Warĩĩnga's personal growth necessitates it on her path towards higher ideological and personal fulfillment.

**(c) The Irony of Religious "Virtue"**

Another major irony in the text is that religion is often used as an excuse or defense for corruption and evil. Note, for example, how much the Parable of the Talents is deployed in service of promoting the ideas of foreign servitude and unfettered capitalism. Moreover, in the text, almost every tycoon or comprador is heavily involved with their local church, more often than not using the church as a charitable cover-up for all of the bad deeds they truly are perpetrating on their own people. Finally, note also that the same religious tools that allow tycoons to exploit locals in the text are the same religious tools that were once used by the colonizing powers to subjugate all of their colonized subjects. In sum, religious virtue in the novel is more or less a direct and ironic stand-in for how evil someone actually is.

**(d) The Irony of "Modern" Theft**

Another irony in the text is the irony inherent in how Ngũgĩ's characters define "modern" theft. "Modern" theft, after all, is not the theft of Ndaaya wa Kahuriaa, who steals chickens and women's purses. Nor is it the theft of Mwĩreri wa Mũkiraaĩ, who wants to steal from his own people and keep foreign masters completely out of the equation. Rather, "modern" theft as defined by Ngũgĩ's characters is exclusively that kind of theft which reinforces colonial-era profiteering and betrayal. Not only is this particularly ironic because this form of theft is centuries old, but it is also ironic because this definition of theft is incredibly far-removed from the conventional definition of theft that would be commonly understood by a third party.

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