

**SLOGANEERING CHRISTIANITY IN SONG:
METATHEATRICALIZING COMMUNAL EXPLOITATION
IN NGUGI WA THIONG'O AND NGUGI WA MIRII'S
*I WILL MARRY WHEN I WANT***

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Abstract. *Metatheatre is a long established theatrical tradition which has been sufficiently calibrated in William Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream, put into a utilitarian proclivity in Anton Chekhov's The Seagull, and fully aestheticized in Jean Genet's The Balcony and The Blacks. It is also a tradition which has been successfully exploited in Wole Soyinka's Madmen and Specialists; Athol Fugard's Sizwe Bansi is Dead; Femi Osofisan's The Chattering and the Song, and skilfully grounded in Segun Oyekunle's Katakata for Sofahead. In I Will Marry When I Want, metatheatre is utilised by Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Ngugi wa Mirii to satirize the duplicitous sloganeering of Christian salvation by the Kenyan Christian elite, in its iniquitous attempt to pauperise and dehumanize the peasants. This paper deals with how Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Ngugi wa Mirii have steeped a metatheatre into the interface of politics and religion in I Will Marry When I Want, in order to foreground the hypocrisy of Christianity as underscored by the exploitation of the downtrodden masses, by the land grabbing Christian elite of the Kenyan society.*

Key words: *Sloganeering Christianity, metatheatre, hypocrisy, communal exploitation, song, commentary, I Will Marry When I Want*

1. INTRODUCTION

Metatheatre often refers to the capability of a stage text and performance to ostensibly establish a gamut of commentaries needed to repudiate a pervading social and political quagmire, tellingly obtainable in societies under siege. The African dramatists have exploited the inherent distinctive tool of metatheatre to repudiate and criticize social and political conditions portrayed in plays like *Madmen and Specialists*, *The circus of Freedom Square*, *Sizwe Bansi Is Dead*, *Once upon Four Robbers*, *The Island*, *Katakata for Sofahead* and

The Chattering and the Song, to discuss the social injustice observable in a particular political milieu, reflected in a theatrical representation, and to appraise its theatrical resistance and dismantling.

Metatheatre is effectively realized in Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Ngugi wa Mirii's play, originally written in Gikuyu as *Ngaahika Ndeenda* but later translated as *I Will Marry When I Want*, through a song-text tradition. The adoption of song-text as a fundamental dramaturgy by the playwrights of *I Will Marry When I Want* is a re-enactment of the pre-colonial metatheatre enriched in the Gikuyu tradition, which was violently truncated by the repressive British colonial apparatuses. This cultural dislocation was clearly articulated in Ngugi wa Thiong'o in *Decolonizing the Mind*: "drama has origins in human struggles with nature and with others. In pre-colonial Kenya, the peasants in the various nationalities cleared forests, planted crops, tended them to ripeness and harvest-out of the one seed buried in the ground came many seeds. Out of death life sprouted, and this through the mediation of the human hand and the tools it held. So there were rites to bless the magic power of tools... Drama in pre-colonial Kenya was not, then, an isolated event: it was part and parcel of the rhythm of daily and seasonal life of the community. It was an activity among other activities, often drawing its energy from those other activities. It was also entertainment in the sense of involved enjoyment; it was moral instruction; and it was also a strict matter of life and death and communal survival. This drama was not performed in special buildings set aside for the purpose. It could take place anywhere-wherever there was an 'empty space'..." (36-37). Ngugi's submission here leads us to understand that drama in the pre-colonial Kenya was bristling and exuberant, and that it served as a conduit for fostering communal cohesion. To the Gikuyu, drama typifies a cultural continuum through which the nuances of tradition are transmitted from one generation to another.

This paper will be examining how Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Ngugi wa Mirii's *I Will Marry When I Want* builds on the harvest of the oral, mimetic and metaphoric signification of myth, history and song, to launch a barrage of criticism against a backdrop of land theft. This appropriation is poignantly accentuated by the language of equivocation, usually associated with the Christian elite in Kenya. To varying extents, *I Will Marry When I Want* shows that the adversarial social relationship between the peasants and the Christian elite is informed by the conflicting motivations of the two groups, distorted by differing social perspectives and shaped by the dynamics of the Gikuyu culture, as well as by the Marxist biases and objectives of the playwrights which are eloquently inscribed within a hegemonic contention for superiority. The paper will emphasize, among other things, that the rapacious gluttony for land is indubitably faith driven, which is clearly demonstrated by the Kenyan Christian elite's sloganeering campaign of salvation in the play.

1.1. Song-text as a genre in African literature

Song-text has become an important aspect of post-colonial African literature, and its practice has been heightened to the point of obsession. This ineluctably makes tradition an indispensable motif in the literary engagement of contemporary African writers across the continent. The significance of song as inexorably grounded in oral literature, has been acknowledged by Helen Nabasuta Mugambi, "song constitutes a critical component of that 'matrix of the African imagination' and deserves to take its rightful place beside other more frequently explored oral forms" (423). Its central power lies in its potential to engender a distinct literary genre - "song-text"- that cuts across the conventional (i.e., colonial) genres of fiction, verse, and drama.

Song-texts exhibit an intricate or systematic use of songs for the purpose of establishing meaning. In other words, "song-texts" exist not necessarily because they can be musically scored and sung, but because they share marked characteristics that traverse conventional genres. Authors creating song-texts strategically and systematically employ song in their content, structure, themes, and style, leading to an ideological/decolonizing statement" (Mugambi, 2005:423). The signification of song in African literature has also been corroborated by Daniel Avorgbedor, when he observes that "man is ontologically an expressive being, and both actions and reactions consequently permeate our modes of life and living. Artistic diversity, which is a distinctive and distinguishing mark of all cultures, provides indisputable evidence of our basic human need for expression. The song-mode is just one of the innumerable artistic avenues through which our latent response energies are released" (Avorgbedor, 1990:208). Avorgbedor further contends the indubitable power of song to elicit a reaction, "A response is basically either an action or a reaction. While "reaction" will imply some confrontation and overtness, "action" is of no less status, and differences between the two should be sought from the emphatic qualities of the stimulus involved" (208). As Avorgbedor has implicitly shown in his essay, song is a poetry written in lines of verse which makes special use of language by appropriating imagery, irony and metaphor to verbalize love, happiness, sorrow and anguish in different African communities.

The use of song in *I Will Marry When I Want* not only accentuates its Brechtian influenced dramaturgy, but it also ostensibly delineates the controversies generated by the land tenure in Kenya. Grounded in the plot of the play are "...issues of exploitation and the examination of the range of forms which it can take – class (Kiguunda by Kioi), sexual (Kiguunda's daughter Gathoni by Kioi's son John Muhuuni) and religious, offering an extensive and bitter critique of the religious hypocrisy and opportunism of the post-colonial ruling class, as well as the way in which Christianity can continue to be at best an intrusive (neo) colonial irrelevance for ordinary people, and at worst a means of their active oppression. The action of the play is punctuated and commented upon by (as well as in some respects structured around – if not actually subordinated to) songs of all kinds" (Williams, 1999:120-121). Ngugi's adoption of song as a Brechtian mode in *I Will Marry When I Want* seems to bring a complex appreciation of reality to bear on the tenuous relationship between the Kenyan peasants and the elite class. Undoubtedly, song is utilised in the play as instrument of protest against the Kenyan Christian elite's religious hypocrisy and its duplicitous sloganeering of salvation.

Ambitiously embedded in these songs are, the repertoire of Kenya's pasts, which provide the audience with the necessary insights for deconstructing the complexity of Kenyan nationhood. A cursory look at the harvest of song-text tradition in African literature, startlingly parades successful literary titles like, John Pepper Clark-Bekederemo's *Song of a Goat* (1961), Okot p'Bitek's *Song of Lawino* (1972), Byron Kawadwa's *Oluymba Liva Wankoko (Song of the Cock)* (1972), Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Mother Sing for Me* (1982), Niyi Osundare's song-texts: *Songs of the Market Place* (1983), *Moon Songs* (1988), Tanure Ojaide's *The Endless Song* (1989), Sekai Nzenza- Shand's *Songs to an African Sunset* (1997), Kofi Anyidoho's *Song in Praise Song for The Land* (2000), Marjorie Macgoye's *Make It Sing and Other Poems* (2001), Okello Oculi's *Song for the Sun in Us* (2001), and Micere Mugo's *My Mother's Song and Other Poems* (2001).

1.2. Land as a sphere of contestation in Kenya

Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Ngugi wa Mirii have exegetically utilized the interplay of history, songs and literary consciousness in their three-act play, *I Will Marry When I Want*, to dramatize the postcolonial narratives of Kenya, and to question the shameless appropriation (by the Kenyan Christian elite) of the land owned by the masses. The words of Ngugi Wa Thiong'o "*Ngaahika Ndeenda (I Will Marry When I Want)* depict the proletarianisation of the peasantry in a neo-colonial society. More precisely, it shows the way the Kiguunda family, a poor peasant family, who have to supplement their subsistence on their one and a half acres with the sale of their labor, is finally deprived of even the one-and-a-half acres by a multi-national consortium of Japanese and Euro-American industrialists and bankers aided by the native comprador landlords and businessmen" (Ngugi, 1987:44). This questioning is effectively done to challenge the excesses of the unquenchable desire of the Kenyan elite to employ all manner of chicanery endorsed by the Bible passages, to cunningly steal the land which belongs to the poor.

At this juncture it is important to acknowledge Ngugi wa Thiong'o's comment on the underlined land tenure problematic in Kenya's political history, as contained in *Decolonizing the Mind* "the land question is basic to an understanding of Kenya's history and contemporary politics, as indeed it is of twentieth century history wherever people have had their land taken away by conquest, unequal treaties or by the genocide of part of the population. The Mau Mau militant organization which spearheaded the armed struggle for Kenya's independence was officially called the Kenya Land and Freedom Army. The play, *Ngaahika Ndeenda*, in part drew very heavily on the history of the struggle for land and freedom..."(Ngugi, 1987:44).

Land in Kenya has portentously generated malignant rounds of crisis from the colonial period to the post independence era, with debilitating consequences. The "ordering of land and its inhabitants becomes a form of epistemic violence to the extent that it involves immeasurable disruption and erasure of local systems of meaning that guide the ownership and use of land" (Simatei, 2005:86). The primary focus of the play is the importance of land in Kenyan cultural worldview, and this is pointedly raised by Eustace Palmer, when he asserts that "political freedom in Kenya became synonymous with repossession of the land, and this struggle is central to *Ngugi wa Thiong'o's literary works* (author's emphasis). In Kenya, land is not only held to be of much greater importance than money or cattle, it clearly has spiritual associations" (Palmer,1981:1).

This spiritual significance of the land is correspondingly illustrated by Ngugi wa Thiong'o in his novel, *Weep Not, Child* (1964):

In studying the Gikuyu tribal organization, it is necessary to take into consideration land tenure as the most important factor in the social, political, religious and economic life of the tribe. As agriculturalists, the Gikuyu people depend entirely on the land. It supplies them with the material needs of life, through which spiritual and mental contentment is achieved. Communion with the ancestral spirits is perpetuated through contact with the soil in which the ancestors of the tribe lie buried. The Gikuyu consider the earth as the 'mother' of the tribe...it is the soil that feeds the child through lifetime; and again after death it is the soil that nurses the spirits of the dead for eternity. Thus the earth is the most sacred thing above all that dwell in or on it. Among the Gikuyu the soil is especially honored and an everlasting oath is to swear by the earth .(32)

Ngugi's explication of the spiritual attachment to the land by the Gikuyu, has a parallelism in the Jomo Kenyatta's view in *Facing Mount Kenya*:

The Gikuyu defended their country collectively, and when talking to a stranger they would refer to the country, land, and everything else as "ours," *borori wiito* or *borori wa Gikuyu*, to show the unity among the people. But the fact remained that every inch of the Gikuyu territory had its owner, with the boundary properly fixed and everyone respecting his neighbor's. (25)

Ngugi's commitment to the tension generated by the issue of land dispossession in the post-independent Kenya as grounded in *I Will Marry When I Want*, is reinforced by the Gikuyu's anthropological ethos, which is poignantly rendered in myth, history and songs. This incisively reflects the influences that the oral tradition exerts on the significance of land in the Gikuyu's orature. The signification of myth in Ngugi's literary oeuvre is underscored by the observation of Tirop Simatei, who argues that "...although the Gikuyu myth of creation is central of Ngugi's textual strategies of destabilization, he does not use exclusively Gikuyu myths in his probing of the colonial hegemonic formation. In his decolonization novels, he often resorts to both indigenous and Judeo-Christian myths and legends, in order to evolve a grammar of contestation with which to construct not only a counter discourse to colonial ideologies of conquest and domination, but also a liberation aesthetics that justifies anti-colonial violence" (Simatei, 2005:88-89).

The exploitative propensity of the elite class, as underlined by its Christian posturing, is tellingly criticized by Gicaamba, a member of the oppressed, landless peasant class of Kenya:

Gicaamba:
 why didn't Kioi come
 To tell you that he has increased your wages?
 Or to give you a piece of his own lands?
 Yes, for the earthly treasures are not that important!
 Or is it a sin to increase a worker's wages?
 Religion... religion...!
 Religion is the alcohol of the soul!
 Religion is the poison of the mind!
 It's not God who has brought about our poverty!
 All of us were born equally naked.
 Wa Gathoni,
 It's not that we don't work hard:
 I drive a machine all the day,
 You pick tea-leaves all the day,
 Our wives cultivate the fields all the day,
 And someone says you don't work hard?
 The fact is
 That the wealth of our land
 Has been grabbed by a tiny group
 Of the Kiois and Ndugires
 In partnership with foreigners!
 Accompany them to church, if you like!
 No one regrets the going as the returning,

Take care you don't lose four
 While running after eight.
 (*I Will Marry When I Want*, 61-62)

In the passage, Gicaamba pointedly raises awareness of the negative posturing of Christianity as an alien religion in colonial Kenya. This awareness has unequivocally verbalized the inherent fear of the Kenyan peasants regarding land dispossession brought on by the Kenyan Christian elite. For him, this dispossession takes place in two phases: First, the sloganeering of Christian salvation which usually entails cajoling and blackmailing of the peasant as a heathen who needs to urgently repent from the evil ways by dumping ancestral worship for Christianity. Secondly, the need for the convert to obsequiously surrender his/her land to the whims and caprices of the church leaders, who will in turn take a full possession of the land. By articulating this fear, Gicaamba's controversial perception of Christianity in colonial Kenya sharply reflects Ngugi's portrayal of Western religion as a decoy and falsehood which is manipulated by the Kenyan Christian elite to pauperise and dispossess the peasants of their inheritance.

2. METATHEATRICALIZING LAND THEFT THROUGH SONG IN POST-INDEPENDENT KENYA

Metatheatre is surreptitiously grounded in the plot of *I Will Marry When I Want*, to highlight and parody the hypocrisy of the Kenyan Christian elite in their attempt to proselytize Kenyan peasants. Song and chorus are basically appropriated as dialogic for the purpose of explicating the dialectical relationship between the peasants and the elite classes in the play. Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Ngugi wa Mirii foreground metatheatre in the tension generated by the power relation between the protagonist, Kiguunda wa Gathoni, an impoverished farm laborer and Ahab Kioi wa Kanoru, a dubious Christian elite and businessman. While the former is a traditionalist, a cynic of Christianity and a farm hand on Ahab wa Kioi's farm, the latter is a self-styled fire brand Christian, who doggedly believes in manipulating the Bible verses to arm-twist the peasant Kenyans in order to make them part with their inherited landed properties. The hypocrisy and religiosity of the Christian elite reaches its crescendo in the play when Ahab Kioi wa Kanoru deftly equivocates a sermon which treacherously ranges from overt bullying to subtle emotional blackmail against Kiguunda wa Gathoni to become a Christian:

Kioi:
 We have brought you the tidings
 So that when our Lord comes back
 To separate goats from cows
 You'll not claim
 That you had not been warned...(49)

Becoming a Christian implies that Kiguunda wa Gathoni would have to be re-married to his wife in the church. Kiguunda wa Gathoni sought a loan from Ahab wa Kioi for his church wedding in order to authenticate his new-found Christian fate. But Ahab Kioi wa Kanoru refused Kiguunda wa Gathoni, and asked him to obtain a loan from the bank by using his ancestral (land) inheritance as collateral. Shortly after the church wedding, a brief but embarrassing crisis ensued between Kiguunda wa Gathoni and Ahab wa Kioi when it was discovered that Kioi's son had impregnated Gathoni, the daughter of Kiguunda wa

Gathoni. This development led to a serious altercation between the two, which consequently led to the sacking of Kiguunda wa Gathoni from the farm by Ahab wa Kioi. The inability of Kiguunda wa Gathoni to pay back his bank loan made him lose the ownership of his piece of land, which was bought at an auction by Ahab wa Kioi.

Christianity in the post-independent Kenya is portrayed as an exploitative agent of neo-colonialism that is always striving to disintegrate the Kenyan tribal set-up, embedded in its social norms and values, which the people had originally adopted in the ordering of their lives and in the sustenance of mutual relationships with others. This is aptly emphasized in Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Homecoming* "For Kenya perhaps more than other parts of Africa has gone through certain difficult periods in her history, which have been a result of the contradiction inherent in colonialism and its religious ally, the Christian church...So that in Kenya, while the European settler robbed people of their land and the products of their sweat, the missionary robbed people of their soul. Thus was the African body and soul bartered for thirty pieces of silver and the promise of a European heaven" (31-32). The inscription of exploitation into Kenya's colonial trajectory is significantly articulated in Ngugi's *Homecoming* in the violent appropriation of the land by the British colonial authorities, and the manipulation of the peasants by the church. The play remarkably tasks Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Ngugi wa Mirii's Marxist, dialectical-materialistic and artistic consciousness in their representation of Kenya's socio-historical context. The playwrights did not hesitate to bring the past onto the stage through songs in *I Will Marry When I Want*:

Soloist:

Great our patriots for me...

Where did the whites come from?

Chorus:

Where did the whites come from?

Where did the whites come from?

They came through Murang'a,

And they spent a night at Waiyaki's home,

If you want to know that these foreigners were no good,

Ask yourself:

Where is waiyaki's grave today?

We must protect our patriots

So they don't meet Waiyaki's fate.

Soloist:

Kimaathi's patriots are brave

Where did the whites come from?

Kiguunda: How the times run!

How many years have gone

Since we got independence?

Ten and over,

Quite a good number of years!

And now look at me!

One and a half acres of land in dry plains.

Our family land was given to home guards.

Today I am just a laborer

On farms owned by Ahab Kioi wa Kanoru
 My trousers are pure tatters..
 (I Will Marry When I Want, 28-29)

The significance of the song lies in the fact that it takes a new look at the vexed question of colonialism, which Ngugi and wa Mirii have implicitly described in *I Will Marry When I Want* as despicable intrusion into the organized Kenyan communal bliss. As such, the song locates cultural disruption and exploitation within the context of the British meddlesome political system of colonialism, which has turned Kenya upside down.

2.1. Linking Kenya's present with its past through song

The infusion of song into the dramaturgy of *I Will Marry When I Want* is designed to invoke introspection into the Kenya's past, in ways that emphasize the dialogic of the oppressor/oppressed. "The song arises from what has gone before and it leads to what follows. The song and the dance become a continuation of the conversation and of the action..." (Ngugi,1987:45). Rather than using song as a latent motif in the play, the playwrights essentially employ it as a major dramatic technique for linking Kenya's present with its past. The employment of song as a technique in the play underscores Richard Wagner's analysis of the complimentary roles of the art in his seminal work, *The Art-Work of the Future*, where he states that "true Drama is only conceivable as proceeding from a common urgency of every art...In this Drama, each separate art can only bare its utmost secret to their common public through a mutual parleying with other arts..." (Wagner,1993:184). The historical tropes embedded in the songs are aptly employed in the play, to criticize the socio-political tensions, the foundations of which were laid by the British colonial authorities and which are nurtured and sustained by the Kenyan political elite through the demagoguery of Christianity. But in following Bertolt Brecht's dramatic strategy, Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Ngugi wa Mirii decided to render in song the radical reinterpretations of the trauma experienced by the downtrodden Kenyans, who suffered a huge casualty of land loss.

The songs in the play are essentially self-revealing and they serve as a convenient platform to mock, to expose the high handedness of the British colonial authorities in colonial Kenya, and the neo-colonial exploitative gambit of the church. The songs are used in lampooning the inequity in land distribution system of the postcolonial Kenya and caricature the overt posturing of the Christian elite class. Commenting on the foregrounding of song in the structure of the play, Helen Nabasuta Mugambi opines that "Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Ngugi wa Mirii's *I Will Marry When I Want* signals the song motif in the opening scene of the play, with the drunk's song, from which the text takes its title. From then on, nearly all the clashes between the people and the colonial and neo-colonial impositions are invoked in song. The play is enveloped in song, and it culminates in the sharp revolutionary choral challenge: "on whose side are you?" (Mugambi, 2005:424). Songs in the play serve as a medium of dialectical dialogue between the elite class and the downtrodden masses, and their potency for resisting the Kenya's post-independent inanities is unambiguously reiterated from the beginning to the end of the play.

Songs in the play are quite thematic, they evince symbolic and witty rhetoric, which constantly shift from colonial subjugation and land theft by the elite class to the hypocrisy of the Christian faith, which endorses the despicable dispossession of the peasants. The playwrights are able to render the burden of the Kenyan nationhood, precariously borne

by Kiguunda, Wangeci, Gathoni, Gicaamba and Njooki in songs, whose politicization is succinctly rooted in the chorus. Since written words would have made the playwrights susceptible to a libel, the songs provide a convenient platform for hurling innuendoes and invective at the anti-peasant forces. The use of song in the play obviously takes off moral responsibilities from the playwrights, thereby allowing them to make scathing remarks on the plight of the downtrodden peasants:

Gicaamba

Njooki[sing as if continuing the song Gicaamba has just sung]:

Yes we find out why

It's the children of the poor

Who look after rich people's homes,

Who serve them beer in beer-halls,

Who sell them their flesh.

Come my friend

Come my friend

We reason together.

Our hearts are heavy

Over the future of our children.

Let's find ways of driving away darkness

(I Will Marry When I Want, 106)

2. 2. The chorus as dramatic element of metatheatre in *I Will Marry When I Want*

The song and chorus ubiquitously loom large and serve as a propagandistic conduit for running socio-political commentaries on the difficulties, complexities and frustration suffered by peasant characters. The chorus in the play as reiterated by Ngugi in, *Barrel of A Pen*, remarkably calls for "the need to look for causes and solutions in the social system of how wealth is produced, controlled and shared. This calls for the unity of the workers and peasants - without sexist prejudices - against imperialism and all its class allies in the colonies and neocolonies...In the specific case of Kenya, *the chorus* (emphasis mine) pays tribute to the important role women have always played in our history. They have been at the forefront in all its crucial and decisive phases" (41). The visibility of the chorus as a constant character burgeons throughout the play, and retains its legitimacy through its skilful use of repetition. Its dexterity at gauging and articulating the social quagmire of the downtrodden masses in their relationship with Kenya's oppressive social system is vivaciously underlined by the play's dramaturgy. The determination to forge cohesion among the peasants in order to assert their stand against a virulent exploitation is concertedly couched in the vituperation hurled at the Kenya's kleptomaniac elite class. This wake-up call for unity is vociferously amplified towards the end of the play:

Soloist:

The trumpet-

All:

Of the workers has been blown

To wake all the slaves

To wake all the peasants

To wake all the poor.

To wake the masses

Soloist:

The trumpet-
 All:
 Of the poor has been blown.
 Soloist:
 The trumpet!
 All:
 The trumpet of the masses has been blown.
 Let's preach to all our friends.
 The trumpet of the masses has been blown.
 We change to new songs
 For the revolution is near.
 Soloist:
 The trumpet!
 All:
 The trumpet of the masses has been blown.
 Soloist:
 The trumpet!
 All:
 The trumpet of the masses has been blown.
 We are tired of being robbed
 We are tired of exploitation
 We are tired of land grabbing
 We are tired of slavery
 We are tired of charity and abuses.
 Soloist:
 The trumpet!
 All:
 The trumpet of the poor has been blown.
 Let's unite and organize
 Organization is our club..
 (*I Will Marry When I Want* , 115-116)

The peasants are perceived as the victims of the conspiracy of Christianity and the British neo-imperialism, vibrantly coordinated by Kenya's political authorities and their lackeys: Kenyan repressive police, Ahab Kioi wa Kanoru, Jezebel, Ikuua wa Nditika, Samuel and Helen Ndugire. The physical and metaphysical exploitation of the peasants by the Kenyan Christian elite is sufficiently reverberated in the oratory and lyricism of Gicaamba's subversive speech:

Gicaamba:
 And how does religion come into it?
 Religion is not the same thing as God.
 All the religions that now sit on us
 Were brought here by the whites...
 When the British imperialists came here in 1895
 All the missionaries of all the churches
 Held the Bible in the left hand
 And the gun in the right hand.
 The white man wanted us

To be drunk with religion
 While in the meantime,
 Was mapping and grabbing our land
 And starting factories and businesses
 On our sweat.
 He drove us from our best lands,
 Forcing us to eke a living from plots on road sides
 Like beggars in our own land,
 Some of us dying in his tea and coffee plantations
 Others dying in his factories...
 (*I Will Marry When I Want*, 56-57)

The intensity and viciousness of anger against the exploitative proclivity of the Kenyan Christian elite, which is in correspondence with the connivance of the church as underlined in Gicaamba's vitriolic speech, is given further eloquence in his sarcastic song:

Goats and cows and money
 Are not important.
 What is important
 Is the splendid face of Jesus.
 I glance here
 I glance there
 And I see a huge bonfire
 In Devil's Hell
 And I ask myself:
 What can I do
 To avoid the Hell fire?
 But they, on this earth, this very earth,
 They are busy carousing on earthly things, our wealth,
 And you the poor are told:
 Hold fast unto the rosary,
 Enter the church,
 Lift up your eyes unto
 the heavens.
 (*I Will Marry When I Want*, 57-58)

3. CONCLUSION

Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Ngugi wa Mirii have demonstrated in their play, *I Will Marry When I Want*, that song is a vibrant tool of metatheatre and a fundamental dramatic technique linking the Kenyan's past to its present. The paper has essentially examined how songs were employed by the playwrights to illustrate the dialectical tension between the Kenyan Christian elite class and the peasants in the post-independent Kenya. The relationship between the two is underscored by suspicion and mutual distrust. While the peasants in the play are hopelessly trapped in the throes of misery and abject poverty, the Christian elite class is comfortable and exploitative. This class is constantly preoccupied with maintaining the colonial legacy of subjugating and pauperizing peasants through the deft sloganeering of Christian salvation, which is used to manipulate and steal the peasants' inherited portions of land. The peasants are aware that their misfortune is

dialectically caused by the greed and gluttony of the Christian elite in collaboration with the neo-imperialistic forces. On the other hand, the Christian elite class erroneously believes that its domination over the peasants is biblically endorsed by God.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Ngugi wa Mirii have ostensibly manipulated a Brechtian inspired revolutionary aesthetics in the dramaturgy of *I Will Marry When I Want*, for the purpose of deconstructing the biblical assertion that the peasants are poverty stricken because they have not accepted Jesus Christ as their lord and savior. Through the appurtenances of history, mythology and song anchored in metatheatre, the playwrights have unequivocally asserted that the poverty and misery of the poor Kenyans was orchestrated by the elite class. The play foregrounds the debilitating poverty experienced by the peasants, caused by the socio-economic dislocation they suffered in the hands of the colonial authorities and the Kenyan Christian elite class.

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HRIŠĆANSKI SLOGANI U PESMI: METATEATRIZACIJA DRUŠTVENE EKSPLOATACIJE U NGUGI VA TIONGOVOM I NGUGI VA MIRIJEVOM DELU UDAĆU SE KAD JA HOĆU

Metateatar je pozorišna tehnika sa dugom tradicijom, koju je usavršio još Šekspir u svom delu San letnje noći, stavio u kontekst utilitarizma Anton Čekov u drami Galeb, i koja je konačno dostigla svoju punu estetsku vrednost u Žan Geneovim dramama Balkon i Crnci. Ova tehnika je uspešno korišćena i u mnogim drugim delima, između ostalih i u drami Udaću se kad ja hoću. U ovom delu, pesme se koriste sa ciljem da satirično prikažu licemerje slogana o hrišćanskom spasenju, koje koristi kenijska hrišćanska elita u nameri da seljake degradira i otme im zemlju. Ovaj rad bavi se načinom na koji su Ngugi Va Tiong i Ngugi Va Miri u drami Udaću se kad ja hoću uveli metateatar u domen politike i religije kako bi istakli licemerje hrišćanstva, iza koga se zapravo krije želja za eksploatacijom potlačenog naroda Kenije.

Ključne reči: hrišćanski slogani, metateatar, licemerje, kolektivna eksploatacija, pesma, Udaću se kad ja hoću