



A Comparative Study of Dystopian Themes in the Works of George Orwell and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o: Exploring Power, Oppression and Resistance

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Abstract:

This article, titled “*A Comparative Study of Dystopian Themes in the Works of George Orwell and Ngugi wa Thiong'o: Exploring Power, Oppression, and Resistance*,” undertakes a comparative analysis of Orwell's and Ngugi's works from a dystopian perspective. The study focuses on thematic elements such as power, oppression, and resistance, examining how these themes are explored in their narratives. Using a Marxist framework, it examines the cultural differences and similarities evident in the authors' works, while also highlighting the representation of dystopian elements in their respective contexts. The article argues that Orwell's vision reawakens readers to the dangers of unchecked authority, the betrayal of ideals, and the destruction of individuality. In contrast, Ngugi's vision questions traditional notions of heroism, emphasizing collective action as a means to address shared challenges. Despite the distinct cultural backgrounds and visions of the two authors, their works converge on critical issues, including the idea colonialism, oppression, resistance, and the human condition. This study illuminates the diverse yet intersecting approaches Orwell and Ngugi employ to represent dystopia, showcasing how these elements resonate within their respective cultural and historical contexts. It provides valuable insights into the universality and specificity of dystopian narratives, emphasising their relevance in understanding power structures and resistance across different societies.

Keywords: Comparative analysis, Dystopia and Cross-Culturalism.

Review Article

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INTRODUCTION

Dystopian literature, as a narrative, transcends geographical and cultural boundaries, offering a diverse display of narratives that explore the darker facets of society and human nature. From the ruins of post-apocalyptic landscapes to the oppressive regimes of futuristic societies, dystopian fiction serves as a lens through which authors from different cultures and backgrounds examines the present and imagine possible futures. At its core, dystopian fiction presents a world where utopian ideals have crumbled, giving way to totalitarianism, oppression, and societal degradation. However, the specific manifestations of dystopia vary greatly across

cultures, reflecting the unique historical, social, and political contexts in which these narratives emerge. From the cyberpunk visions of technological dystopias, where writers like Aldous Huxley explore deeply the technological control within a dystopia, to the socio-political assessments of authoritarian regimes, where Orwell and Ngugi speak out to existing felonies of colonialism and totalitarian dominance, each culture brings its own perspective to the narrative, enriching our understanding of the complexities of power, resistance, and human agency.

Cross examining the works of George Orwell and Ngugi wa Thiong'o from a

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comparative standpoint is essential in expanding the scope of dystopia. This is because in as much as both writers have different approaches in raising dystopian concerns, they target a common group made of colonized and proletariats expressing their taste for change and the reconstruction of their society. George Orwell's exploration of dystopia extends beyond the political and societal implications to the very essence of human nature and the nature of truth itself. Most of his works, particularly *1984* and *Animal Farm*, investigates the psychology of conformity and obedience within a dystopian society. Ngugi wa Thiongo's on the other side, explore the failure to keep the independence promise by African leaders, who are still under colonialist influence. This creates a sense of afro-dystopia, putting the people in a state of disillusionment and neo-colonial exploitation.

Orwell and Ngugi come from different cultural backgrounds and write in distinct styles. But their works share parallel themes that addresses concerns across colonial to neocolonial realities, mostly reflecting the reality of the common man. In their respective works, under study, they address the human condition and societal dynamics that leads to dystopia. Literary critics often point out the thematic similarities between Orwell's and Ngugi's works, despite their different cultural backgrounds and writing styles. For example, most critics point out how both authors address themes such as colonialism, oppression, resistance, and the human condition in their respective works. They analyse how Orwell's exploration of totalitarianism and language manipulation in novels like *1984* and *Animal Farm* parallels Ngugi's commentaries on colonialism and linguistic imperialism in works like *Matigari* and *Petals of Blood*.

To set the tone for critical discussion in this article, Marxist literary theory is applied to better situate the arguments in this article. Marxism, as a theory, can be critically defined as a social, economic and political theory

based on the ideas of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (1848). This theory generally provides an inclusive framework for understanding society, history, culture and economics, with a focus on the struggle between different social classes and the dynamics of capitalism. Marxism, however, seeks to analyse and critically evaluate the capitalist system, while enhancing the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a classless, socialist society. Marxism employs a materialist conception of history, which states that the driving force of historical change is the development of the means of production and the struggle over the control of economic resources. According to Marxists, social relations and ideologies are shaped by the material conditions of society (146-202).

Marxist theory views society as divided into different social classes based on their relationship to the means of production. The primary hostile contradiction in capitalist society is between the bourgeoisie (owners of capital) and the proletariat (working class). Marx in "Das Kapital: Critique of Political Economy" (1867), argues that history is characterised by class struggle, as oppressed classes seek to overthrow their oppressors and establish a new social order. Marxists analyze capitalism as a mode of production characterized by the private ownership of the means of production, wage labor, and the extraction of surplus value from workers (14). Capitalism is seen as inherently exploitative, as capitalists accumulate wealth by extracting surplus value from the labor of workers. Most Marxists critics, including Karl Marx (1844), Frederick Engel (1884) and Terry Eagleton (1976) argue that under capitalism, workers are alienated from the products of their labor, from the production process itself, from their own human essence, and from each other. This alienation is a result of the commodification of labor and the separation of workers from the means of production.

It is complex carrying a critical analysis of dystopian works using Marxist perspectives. This is because the relation

between Marxism and dystopian fiction is multifaceted, with Marxist principles often serving as a lens through which dystopian narratives criticise oppressive systems and envision alternative socio-political realities. However, Marxism with its focus on class struggle and capitalism, provides a foundational framework for many dystopian narratives. Dystopian fiction often depicts exaggerated versions of capitalist societies where wealth inequality, exploitation of labor, and commodification of human beings are taken to extreme levels. This reflects Marxist concerns about the inherent contradictions and injustices of capitalist systems. Marxist analysis, per se, emphasises on the role of power dynamics in shaping social structures and relations. Dystopian fiction frequently explores totalitarian regimes, authoritarian governments, and hierarchical societies where power is concentrated in the hands of a few elites. These narratives reveal how power operates to maintain control, suppress dissent, and perpetuate oppression, aligning with Marxist critiques of ruling class domination.

In essence, Marxists critics mentioned above hold that capitalism alienates workers from the products of their labor, from their own human potential, and from each other. Ruling class domination perpetuates alienation by commodifying labor, reducing workers to mere commodities, and fostering individualism and competition over cooperation. Marxist theory also emphasizes the role of ideological hegemony in maintaining ruling class domination. The bourgeoisie control not only the means of production but also the institutions of education, media, and culture, through which they propagate capitalist ideology and naturalize social inequalities. These criticisms highlight the exploitative and oppressive nature of capitalist societies, where the bourgeoisie wield power and privilege at the expense of the proletariat.

Parallel between George Orwell and Ngugi

It is of no doubt that George Orwell and Ngugi wa Thiong'o, though separated by

cultural and continental boundaries and contexts, converge in their approach to dystopia. Orwell's dystopian lens exposes the perils of totalitarianism, while Ngugi challenges colonial legacies through Afrocentric narratives. Both authors illuminate the struggles for freedom, justice, and the human spirit. Christopher Hitchens, a prominent critic and essayist, discusses the parallel between George Orwell and Ngugi in his book *Why Orwell Matters*, (2002). He explores Orwell's enduring relevance and impact on politics and literature, drawing parallels between Orwell's works and contemporary issues. While Hitchens does not specifically focus on the parallels between Orwell and Ngugi, he does analyse Orwell's approach to colonialism, imperialism, and totalitarianism. Hitchens emphasises Orwell's commitment to truth-telling and his willingness to confront oppressive systems, traits that he believes are shared by Ngugi and other writers who challenge authoritarian regimes. Hitchens's examination of Orwell's themes and principles indirectly focus on similarities with Ngugi's works, particularly in their shared concerns about power, oppression, and social justice. However, without a specific reference to Ngugi, it's difficult to provide a direct statement from Hitchens about the parallel between the two authors.

Other critics like Simon Gikandi (1999), a renowned literary critic and scholar, has written extensively on African literature and postcolonial theory. He mostly examines the thematic similarities between Orwell's and Ngugi's works, particularly in the manner in which they handle topics like colonialism and oppression. Gikandi's analyses pays special attention to how Orwell's examination of totalitarianism and language manipulation in *1984* echoes with Ngugi's analysis of colonialism and linguistic imperialism in novels such as *Petals of Blood* and *A Grain of Wheat*. He, however, explores how both authors employ literary techniques such as allegory, satire, and realism to convey their social and political messages. Additionally, Gikandi discusses the enduring relevance of

Orwell's and Ngugi's works in contemporary society, arguing that their themes of power, resistance, and social justice continue to resonate with readers worldwide (2003).

Benjamin Graves has written articles and essays that explore the intersections of Orwell's and Ngugi's works, focusing on themes such as power, resistance, and social justice. His analyses in "Power Dynamics and Resistance" (2015) in the Works of Orwell and Ngugi offers a better understand of the parallels between the two authors' literary works. Graves reflects on how both Orwell and Ngugi depict power structures in their respective works, examining the ways in which colonialism, imperialism, and authoritarian regimes exert control over individuals and communities. He compares Orwell's portrayal of totalitarian regimes in *1984* and *Animal Farm* with Ngugi's punch on the colonial oppression in *Petals of Blood* and *Matigari*. He further explores how Orwell and Ngugi depict acts of resistance and defiance against oppressive systems while analysing characters and narratives that challenge authority, question dominant ideologies, and strive for liberation and social justice.

Graves focus in these two texts reshapes and restructure the manner in which dystopia is portrayed in this work. In *1984*, for instant, he discusses how Orwell portrays a dystopian society where the totalitarian regime, led by Big Brother, exercises pervasive control over individuals. The Party employs propaganda, surveillance, and psychological manipulation to maintain power and suppress dissent. He examines how Orwell uses allegory to critique the corruption and hypocrisy of totalitarian regimes. The pigs, who lead the revolution against human farmers, gradually become indistinguishable from the oppressors they overthrew, bringing to light the cyclical nature of power and corruption. In *Petals of Blood*, he explores how Ngugi depicts post-colonial Kenya, where the promise of independence has been betrayed by the emergence of a new elite that perpetuates inequality and exploitation. The

critic focuses on the neocolonial structures that continue to oppress the Kenyan people. The approach used in *Matigari*, shows how Ngugi uses the character of Matigari, a freedom fighter, to symbolize resistance against both colonial and post-colonial oppressors, emphasizing the continuous struggle for justice and the need to challenge corrupt leadership.

Graves presentation of an act of resistance in the works of these two authors set a standard of discussion for the chapters ahead. In *1984*, he highlights Winston Smith's acts of defiance, such as maintaining a secret diary and engaging in a forbidden love affair. These acts symbolize personal rebellion against the oppressive regime, although they ultimately lead to his tragic downfall. He notes the initial rebellion of the animals in *Animal Farm* as an act of collective resistance against human oppression. However, the subsequent betrayal by the pigs revealing the complexities and challenges of sustaining revolutionary ideals. In discussing *Petals of Blood*, he points to the characters' various forms of resistance, including protests, strikes, and armed struggle. These acts are portrayed as essential in challenging the exploitative post-colonial order and striving for true liberation. He examines Matigari's quest for justice and his confrontations with authority figures as a symbol of enduring resistance. The character's unwavering commitment to truth and justice inspires others to join the struggle against oppression.

Comparatively, graves effectively compare these two authors from the angle of power and resistance. He examines Orwell's works as the mechanisms of totalitarian control and the psychological impact on individuals, with a pessimistic view on the possibility of successful resistance. He believes Ngugi's works emphasise the ongoing struggle against both external and internal forms of oppression, with a more hopeful perspective on the potential for collective action to achieve social justice.

Barbara Harlow in the "The Struggle for Freedom: Orwell, Ngugi, and the Politics of Resistance" (2010), engages with themes of resistance and liberation in the writings of Orwell and Ngugi. Her analyses shed light on how both authors challenge oppressive systems and advocate for social change. Harlow focuses on themes such as resistance, liberation, and the struggle against colonial oppression. She situates Orwell's and Ngugi's works within their respective colonial and postcolonial contexts, examining how historical and political forces shape their narratives of resistance. She explores how Orwell's experiences in British colonial Burma and Ngugi's upbringing in colonial Kenya influence their perspectives on power, oppression, and liberation. Harlow examines how both authors depict acts of resistance against colonial rule and oppressive regimes, examining characters, narratives, and symbols that embody resistance and defiance, exploring the strategies individuals employ to challenge authority and assert their agency. Given Ngugi's emphasis on language and decolonization, Harlow explores how Orwell and Ngugi engage with issues of language, identity, and cultural heritage in their works. She discusses Orwell's standpoint on the linguistic manipulation and advocacy for indigenous languages as tools of resistance and cultural revitalization.

Neil Lazarus in "Postcolonial Perspectives on Orwell and Ngugi: Power, Ideology, and Class Struggle" (2002) and "Marxist Literary Theory and the Politics of Resistance in Orwell and Ngugi" (2015) offers critical insights into the ways in which Orwell and Ngugi engage with issues of power, ideology, and class struggle. Neil Lazarus's analysis of Orwell and Ngugi's works focus on themes such as power, ideology, and class struggle within the context of colonialism and postcolonial resistance. Lazarus examines how Orwell's and Ngugi's works depict power relations within colonial and postcolonial societies. He looks a little deep to the ways in which colonialism and imperialism operate as systems of economic exploitation and social

control, perpetuating inequalities and injustices. He offers an ideological examination of Orwell's and Ngugi's works, exploring how dominant ideologies shape perceptions of reality and constrain possibilities for social change. He pictures how Orwell exposes the mechanisms of ideological manipulation in works like *1984* and *Animal Farm*, while Ngugi challenges colonial ideologies in novels such as *The Petals of Blood* and *Matigari*.

Peter Edgerly Firchow in "Truth-Telling and Social Critique in Orwell and Ngugi: A Comparative Study" (2012) and "Ethics and Politics in Orwell and Ngugi: Narratives of Resistance and Transformation" (2017) examines the political and ethical dimensions of their works, emphasizing their shared commitment to truth-telling and social critique. His analyses lighten the parallels between the two authors' literary projects. Firchow's analysis of Orwell and Ngugi's works would likely focus on the political, ethical, and narrative dimensions of their literary projects, emphasizing their shared commitment to truth-telling and social critique. Firchow examines how Orwell and Ngugi employ narrative techniques to convey their critiques of power and oppression. He analyse the ways in which both authors use allegory, satire, and realism to expose social injustices and challenge dominant ideologies. He reflects on the ethical dilemmas faced by characters in Orwell's and Ngugi's works, exploring questions of morality, agency, and responsibility in contexts of oppression and resistance. He analyses how characters navigate complex moral landscapes and make choices that reflect their ethical principles and political commitments.

Drawing on Firchow's expertise in political theory, he examines the ways in which Orwell and Ngugi depict processes of resistance and social transformation. He leverages on how their works advocate for individual and collective action against oppressive systems. This offers visions of alternative futures and possibilities for change.

Firchow conducts a comparative analysis of recurring themes and motifs in Orwell's and Ngugi's works, indicating their shared concerns and divergent perspectives. He explores how themes such as surveillance, censorship, language, and memory are addressed in different cultural and historical contexts. Most of these ideas have already been discussed in the previous chapters in relation to the contexts of the two writers under study. Orwell and Ngugi explore the impact of colonialism and imperialism on individuals and societies. Orwell's experiences as a colonial officer in Burma influenced his views on imperialism, as depicted in works like *Shooting an Elephant* and *Burmese Days*. Similarly, Ngugi's novels such as *Petals of Blood* and *Matigari* offer a critical examination of British colonialism in Kenya and its enduring legacy of exploitation and oppression.

Power and Corruption

In terms of power and corruption, both authors examine the corrupting influence of power and authority. In Orwell's *Animal Farm*, the pigs' abuse of power and betrayal of revolutionary ideals serve as a call against a totalitarian system. In both Orwell's *1984* and *Animal Farm*, power is handled as inherently corrupting and a tool for manipulation and control. In *1984*, the Party, led by Big Brother, exercises absolute power over its citizens, using surveillance, propaganda, and brutal repression to maintain its authority. The protagonist, Winston Smith, gradually realizes the extent of the Party's manipulation and the futility of resistance in a totalitarian system where truth itself is controlled. In *Animal Farm*, the pigs, who initially champion equality and freedom, gradually become indistinguishable from the tyrants they overthrew. The revolutionary ideals of the farm are betrayed as the pigs, led by Napoleon, consolidate power, altering the commandments to suit their desires and oppressing the other animals. Orwell's works serve as a critique of totalitarianism, illustrating how power, when unchecked,

inevitably leads to corruption and the subversion of democratic principles.

Ngugi's *Petals of Blood* and *Matigari* similarly explore the corrupting influence of power, particularly in post-colonial African societies. In *Petals of Blood*, the political elites and business tycoons exploit the common people, perpetuating the inequalities that were supposed to be eradicated after independence. The novel portrays the betrayal of the revolutionary spirit, as those in power prioritize their own wealth and status over the needs of the masses. In *Matigari*, Ngugi creates an allegorical figure who symbolizes the struggle for justice and the corruption of post-colonial leadership. The protagonist, Matigari, searches for truth and justice in a society where the new leaders are as exploitative as the colonial rulers they replaced. Through these works, Ngugi attacks the betrayal of revolutionary ideals and the perpetuation of oppression by those who wield power, bringing out the cyclical nature of corruption in both colonial and post-colonial contexts.

Language and Identity

The two authors' treatment of language and identity has some common approach. They explore the relationship between language and identity, showing how language can be used as a tool of oppression or resistance. Both Orwell and Ngugi explore the intricate relationship between language and identity, revealing how language can be manipulated as a tool of oppression or wielded as a means of resistance. In Orwell's *1984*, language is systematically controlled through Newspeak, a state-imposed language designed to eliminate rebellious thoughts and restrict the range of human expression or freedom of speech. The party approach to narrow the vocabulary indicates the party's desire to limit the capacity for dissent, ultimately erasing individual identity and free thought. According to Syme in the text, "It's a beautiful thing, the destruction of words." Syme is discussing the purpose of Newspeak, which is

designed to diminish the range of thought by reducing the number of words in the language.

Power is in tearing human minds to pieces and putting them together again in new shapes of your own choosing. Do you begin to see, then, what kind of world we are creating? It is the exact opposite of the stupid hedonistic Utopias that the old reformers imagined. A world of fear and treachery and torment, a world of trampling and being trampled upon, a world which will grow not less but MORE merciless as it refines itself. Progress in our world will be progress towards more pain. The old civilizations claimed that they were founded on love or justice. Ours is founded upon hatred. In our world there will be no emotions except fear, rage, triumph, and self-abasement. Everything else we shall destroy — everything (335).

O'Brien in the text explains the Party's use of language and control to dominate identity and thought. It illustrates the Party's brutal philosophy of power, which is fundamentally different from the ideals of past civilizations. Rather than aiming for a utopia based on love or justice, the Party seeks to create a dystopian world where power is maintained through fear, hatred, and relentless oppression, the control of language being one. The Party's control extends to the very minds of individuals, tearing them apart and reconstructing them according to its own will. This manipulation of reality ensures that emotions like love or compassion are eradicated, leaving only fear, rage, triumph in submission, and self-abasement. The passage reveals a chilling vision of "progress" as the refinement of cruelty and pain, where the goal is not a better society but an increasingly merciless one, built on the complete subjugation of the human spirit.

In *Animal Farm*, language is similarly used to manipulate and control. The pigs, particularly Squealer, use propaganda,

euphemisms, and the distortion of commandments to maintain their power and justify their actions, gradually altering the animals' perceptions of reality. One of the primary ways this manipulation occurs is through the gradual alteration of the Seven Commandments, which were initially established to uphold the principles of the revolution. For instance, the commandment "No animal shall sleep in a bed" (21) is later changed to "No animal shall sleep in a bed with sheets" (55) after the pigs begin sleeping in the farmhouse. Similarly, "No animal shall drink alcohol" (21) is altered to "No animal shall drink alcohol to excess" (84) when the pigs start indulging in alcohol. These subtle changes are designed to confuse the animals and make them believe that the pigs are still adhering to the original revolutionary ideals, even as they increasingly resemble the humans they once overthrew.

Squealer also uses euphemisms and complex language to obscure the truth. For example, when the pigs decide to reduce the rations of the other animals, Squealer describes it as a "readjustment" rather than a "reduction," making the situation seem less dire. He frequently appeals to the animals' fears, reminding them of the potential return of Mr. Jones, the former human owner of the farm, to quash any dissent.

For the time being, certainly, it had been found necessary to make a readjustment of rations (Squealer always spoke of it as a "readjustment," never as a "reduction"), but in comparison with the days of Jones, the improvement was enormous. Reading out the figures in a shrill, rapid voice, he proved to them in detail that they had more oats, more hay, more turnips than they had had in Jones's day, that they worked shorter hours, that their drinking water was of better quality, that they lived longer, that a larger proportion of their young ones survived infancy, and that they had more straw in their stalls and suffered less from fleas. The animals believed every word of it (87).

Through constantly manipulating language, Squealer and the pigs maintain their control over the farm, altering the animals' perceptions of reality and preventing them from recognizing the betrayal of their revolutionary ideals. This use of language to distort the truth and maintain power is a central theme in *Animal Farm*, pointing out how those in authority can exploit communication to oppress and deceive.

Ngugi, in *Petals of Blood* and *Matigari*, also addresses the role of language in shaping identity and resisting oppression. In *Petals of Blood*, the characters' struggle to reclaim their cultural identity is tied to their use of language, as the imposition of foreign languages and ideologies is seen as a form of cultural domination. Ngugi emphasizes the importance of indigenous languages as vehicles for preserving cultural identity and resisting colonial influence. He shows the importance of indigenous languages as vital tools for preserving cultural identity and resisting colonial influence through the character of Nyakinyua in *Petals of Blood*, an elder who embodies traditional wisdom and cultural heritage. Nyakinyua frequently uses her native language, Gikuyu, to tell stories, sing songs, and impart knowledge, ensuring that the younger generation remains connected to their roots despite the pervasive influence of colonial culture.

Gikuyu - "Ni mūdū — ni aaringire ūteti wa arūme, andū aingīa atongoretie nīrī kīrīra hīndī īno. Ningīkwīra atī andū a ithaka īno rīngī ithaka īno nīmōtheire kūrīa gīthūrūrū nī kwonjuria kīngī kīrīra. Atī irī na ūteti wa kīrerethi kīrīra, kīrehe kīrīra kīrīra. Ningīkwīra atī nī wakīhūrīra, na gūkīa ūteti wothe, na kīngī kīrīra nī akīnjūrūkīra andū a itina ūrīrī na mūrīrī wothe ūgūrūka, na kīngī kīrīra kīūrīrīru gīkīra, kīgūrūka kīūrīrīru gīkīra. Ningīkwīra atī itina ūmūrīrī mūkaūrūrū wothe wa kīrīra, na kīgūrūka wothe kīūrīrīru gīkīra kīūrīrīru gīkīra."

English - "He was a man — he belonged to a race of men such as will never be. I

know it: didn't he take me under the millet growth and I felt his power making a woman out of me, a girl? Didn't we make Theng'eta together? Not this concoction you and Abdulla are cheating people with. But he was always troubled by memories of the past and fears for the future. It is, he told me, because of what as a boy — a young man on the verge of manhood — he had seen and witnessed with his own eyes. He had heard of what once had happened in Ilmorog market. He had also heard of other deeds but only about lands afar. This was a time when pitched battles against the strangers were fought — you know the whole of that side of Dagoretti was then dominated by Itungati led by Waiyaki: walk on through Wangigi, leaving the ridges of Koinange to your right, and you come to Githiga, the clan of Muniu, where your mother came from. All this he had heard but thought it would never happen in Ilmorog. And then it . did. The women and children were hidden in caves and in the forests. The young men of Ilmorog were determined that they would never again be taken asleep; that they would always defend their goats and land in obedience to the curse of Ndemi. Your grandfather... he hid in a barn... he refused to run away with the women and the other boys. He wept because he was not yet circumcised to join in the defence of this soil. He told me how he saw a thousand spearblades of our warriors catch the afternoon sun and turn red like flames from a burning house ... marching against the enemy. A thousand brave men walking to their death, mowed down by fire and noise from those sticks ... but they fell on the enemy, screaming defiance, until the enemy was forced to flee... but on the ground lay the flower of Ilmorog manhood ... He had wept ... at his own inability to help ... and he swore... next time... next time... (324)

In one poignant scene, Nyakinyua recounts the tale of Waiyaki, a Gikuyu hero

who resisted British colonization, using her native tongue. This story not only serves as a means of preserving history and cultural identity but also acts as a form of resistance against the erasure of indigenous cultures by colonial powers. She chooses to tell the story in Gikuyu, reinforcing the significance of language as a repository of cultural memory and as a medium through which the community can resist the dominance of the colonizer's language and maintain their sense of self and collective identity. This emphasis on the use of indigenous languages in *Petals of Blood* draws us closer to Ngugi's broader assessment of colonialism and his advocacy for the decolonization of the African mind through the reclamation of native languages.

In *Matigari*, language serves as a means of resistance against the corrupt post-colonial regime. The protagonist, Matigari, uses language to challenge the oppressive narratives imposed by the ruling elites, seeking to awaken the people to their collective identity and potential for resistance. He harnesses oral storytelling traditions and symbolic language to challenge the oppressive narratives imposed by the ruling elites. Through traditional stories, proverbs, and myths from Kikuyu culture, Matigari reconnects the people with their cultural heritage and criticizes the socio-political corruption that has emerged in the post-colonial state. His use of symbolic language and allegory not only highlights the contrast between the oppressed and the oppressors but also critiques the government's deceitful rhetoric and manipulative tactics. Matigari employs language to mobilize a collective identity among the people, fostering unity and solidarity in their struggle for freedom and justice. His speeches and dialogues are crafted to awaken a shared sense of purpose and common destiny, encouraging the oppressed to recognize their collective power.

Let me tell you one thing,' Matigari said. 'Whether they imprison, detain or kill us, they will never stop we who toil from struggling against those who only feed on our toil. Between

producers and parasites, there will never be peace, or unity, or love. Never! Supposing our forefathers and foremothers had behaved as if they had no eyes to see, no ears to hear and no tongues to speak? Where then would we be today? Yesterday, yes, only yesterday, I believed that if I wore a belt of peace, I would be able to find truth and justice in this country. For it has been said that truth and justice are mightier than any armed power. That the enemy who is driven out peacefully, by negotiations, never comes back. But the one driven out by force alone always comes back. Yet where did that kind of thinking land me? First in prison, then in the mental hospital. If it were not for the two of you, where would I be today? Still in prison, or in a mental hospital. Since last night, I have now learned a new lesson - or, rather, learned a new and an old lesson. The enemy can never be driven out by words alone, no matter how sound the argument. Nor can the enemy be driven out by force alone. But words of truth and justice, fully backed by armed power, will certainly drive the enemy out (138).

Using inclusive and confrontational language, Matigari seeks to bring together popular support and inspire action against the corrupt regime. His ability to articulate a vision of resistance helps to forge a sense of communal resistance against the exploitation and inequality perpetuated by the ruling class. Matigari's resistance is also marked by his rejection of Western languages and cultural influences. He prioritizes indigenous languages and cultural practices and attacks cultural imperialism that accompanies colonial and post-colonial rule. This deliberate choice of language serves as an act of reclaiming and affirming local identities and values, positioning linguistic and cultural resistance as central to the broader struggle against oppression. Through these various linguistic strategies, Ngugi stresses out the integral role

of language in the fight for justice and liberation in *Matigari*.

Social Injustice and Resistance

One important thing that Orwell and Ngugi both address in their texts under study is social injustice and resistance. In *1984* and *Animal Farm*, George Orwell explores the theme of social injustice through the lens of oppressive regimes and their impact on society. In *1984*, Orwell presents a dystopian world where social injustice is institutionalised by a totalitarian regime. The Party, led by Big Brother, employs pervasive surveillance, propaganda, and suppression of opposition to maintain its control. The stark disparity between the privileged Party elite and the oppressed Proles informs us about the extreme social inequality inherent in this system. Winston Smith's attempts at resistance through seeking truth and forming a rebellious relationship with Julia ultimately fail as the Party's overwhelming power crushes any form of opposition, illustrating the futility of individual resistance against a monolithic totalitarian state. Similarly, in *Animal Farm*, Orwell uses allegory to depict the betrayal of revolutionary ideals. The initial overthrow of the human farmer is meant to create a just society, but the pigs' rise to power reflects the oppression they once fought against. Social injustice emerges as the pigs become a new elite, exploiting their fellow animals, which reflects the corruption of revolutionary principles. Characters like Boxer, who symbolizes loyalty and hard work, are ultimately betrayed by the very leaders they helped establish.

Ngugi addresses social injustice in *Petals of Blood* and *Matigari* by depicting the image of the post-colonial state and its failure to address the needs of the marginalised. In *Petals of Blood*, the novel examines the exploitation and marginalisation of the poor by both local elites and global capitalism. The protagonists, who experience systemic injustice firsthand, struggle against a corrupt system that perpetuates economic and social disparities. The resistance in this context

involves efforts to confront and challenge the corrupt elites and seek justice, reflecting a broader struggle against both neocolonial and internal forms of exploitation. Ngugi's portrayal of resistance is deeply rooted in the experiences of those directly affected by the injustices of the post-colonial state.

In *Matigari*, he uses the character of Matigari to symbolise the fight against the corrupt post-colonial regime, pointing out the role of cultural and linguistic resistance. Social injustice in *Matigari* is portrayed through the systemic oppression and exploitation perpetuated by a government, a reflection of the injustices of its colonial predecessors. Matigari's resistance is articulated through his use of indigenous language and cultural practices, which serve as tools to challenge the status quo and reclaim cultural identity. Through the prioritization of the Kikuyu language and traditions, Matigari confronts the cultural imperialism that accompanies the regime's control, positioning linguistic and cultural resistance as central to the broader struggle for social justice. Ngugi's work underscores the importance of cultural reclamation and collective action in addressing social injustices and achieving liberation.

Class Struggle

Class struggle is another interesting angle where the works of Orwell and Ngugi, under study, mirror each other. Class struggle is a central theme in both authors' works, with each of them critically examining the dynamics of power, inequality, and social stratification. In Orwell's *1984*, the dystopian society is strictly divided into three classes: the Inner Party, the Outer Party, and the Proles. The Inner Party wields absolute power, manipulating reality and history to maintain its dominance. The Outer Party, comprising the middle class, is subjected to intense surveillance and control, while the Proles, representing the working class, are largely ignored, kept in a state of ignorance and poverty. Orwell uses this division to highlight the oppressive nature of a totalitarian regime that exploits class differences to perpetuate its

rule, illustrating how the elite manipulates and suppresses the lower classes to maintain power.

Similarly, in *Animal Farm*, Orwell uses allegory to depict the Russian Revolution's betrayal of its original ideals, portraying the rise of a new ruling class. The animals on the farm, initially united in their struggle against human oppressors, soon witness the emergence of a new hierarchy led by the pigs. As the pigs consolidate power, the other animals, representing the working class, find themselves in an increasingly oppressive situation, mirroring the very tyranny they sought to overthrow. The famous line, "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others," encapsulates the betrayal of the revolution's egalitarian principles, illustrating how class struggle can be co-opted by those in power to create a new, equally exploitative system.

In "Social Stratification and Class in *Animal Farm*," Nicole Smith (2011) argues that throughout Orwell's *Animal Farm* one of the most prominent themes is that of the inevitability of class and social stratification and the problems of the working classes, especially in terms of their relationship to power structures. She argues that in fact, it is not difficult to analyse *Animal Farm* from a Marxist perspective. The lower animals in *Animal Farm* who comprise the working class and who are not part of Napoleon's intimate circle are hard workers and do not complain, even though they seem to realise that something foul is going on around them. Still, these lower classes in *Animal Farm* do not rise up and can thus be named as the major reason why the failed utopian social experiment of Animalism never worked. Smith further support this argument by stating throughout *Animal Farm* another theme emerges, the idea of inevitability of class stratification. She argues that this can be extended somewhat to include the idea that although the animals' lack of realisation about the verbal manipulation was genuine, this was part of their characterisation because of the belief that

the working class is unable, despite its seeming might, to climb out from under repressive leadership.

Smith also notes in this study that it is difficult to cast aside more critical biographical slants on *Animal Farm* because this is a work that came out of the perceptions of George Orwell's modern politics and society. The working class in *Animal Farm* is generally sympathetically portrayed, but not entirely. These classes are guilty of being like sheep in terms of following a leader and they rarely rise or voice dissent despite the growing authority of the pigs. To amplify this argument Smith quotes one scholar who notes that in *Animal Farm*, George Orwell has many great thoughts about the working class and their lack of potential. She writes,

"He [Orwell] often praised the working class for their stoicism and hard work—but never for their intelligence or leadership. To his mind, workers were not just ordinary people whose education had often limited their intellectual horizons, they were inherently mentally inferior" (48).

Thus, from Smith's perspective the working class who are represented by most of the animals, are shown to be at the lowest end of the spectrum throughout the book. By making them appear as such, *Animal Farm* seems to be making a statement about societal structure.

Ngugi also examines the idea of class struggle in *Petals of Blood* and *Matigari*, where he explores the socio-economic inequalities in post-colonial Kenya. *Petals of Blood* portrays the lives of ordinary Kenyans struggling against the backdrop of neocolonial exploitation, where the political elite and foreign investors collude to maintain a system of economic oppression. The characters in the novel, particularly the peasants and workers, are caught in a cycle of poverty and exploitation, reflecting the broader class struggles in a society still grappling with the legacies of colonialism. In *Matigari*, Ngugi

presents a more allegorical tale, where the protagonist, Matigari, represents the spirit of resistance against both colonial and post-colonial injustices. The novel criticises the corrupt post-independence leadership that perpetuates class divisions, showing how the dream of independence has been betrayed by a new ruling class that exploits the masses just as their colonial predecessors did. Through these works, Ngugi points out the ongoing struggle of the working class to achieve true liberation and justice in a society where power remains concentrated in the hands of a few.

Divergent Perspectives on Dystopia and Cross-Culturalism

Dystopian literature and cross-culturalism are two powerful dimensions through which literary critics and authors explore very complex societal issues, including politics of power, colonialism, neocolonialism, culture and tradition, environmentalism, politics and others. During such analysis, we often gain a deeper understanding of these themes and their implications on diverse world view. Dystopian literature often paints an unattractive picture of a future society, characterised by oppression, dehumanization, and bleak environments. It often criticise current societal trends, warn of potential futures, and provoke thought about human nature and societal structures. Dystopian literature typically presents a scary vision of the future, often characterised by oppressive regimes, environmental degradation, and a loss of individual freedoms. These narratives serve as cautionary tales, warning readers about the potential consequences of unchecked power, technological advancements, and societal negligence.

Most literary works written under dystopian narrative frequently kick against the legacy of colonialism and the continuing influence of neocolonialism. For example, in one of Orwell's works under study, *1984*, the totalitarian regime of Oceania exerts control over its citizens through constant surveillance, propaganda, and the erasure of history. This

mirrors the tactics used by colonial powers to dominate and control colonised populations. The novel serves as a warning against the perpetuation of such oppressive practices in modern societies. This takes us back to use of surveillance as a form of control in Oceania. In *1984*, the telescreen is used as a strong tool to monitor the activities of the people of Oceania. The omnipresent telescreens in *1984* symbolise the extent of government surveillance. These devices monitor citizens' every move, ensuring compliance and suppressing any form of opposition. This parallels colonial powers' use of surveillance to control and subjugate colonised populations. The constant monitoring in this text creates a climate of fear and mistrust, similar to the ways colonial regimes instilled fear to maintain control.

David Dwan, in his analysis of Orwell's work, discusses how the telescreen represents the ultimate tool of totalitarian control (2007). He points out that Orwell's depiction of constant surveillance is against the extreme measures totalitarian regimes will take to maintain power. Dwan notes that the omnipresent telescreens create a sense of paranoia and self-censorship among citizens, mirroring the psychological control used by colonial powers to subdue colonized populations. He further argues that the psychological impact of surveillance in *1984* is as significant as the physical control exerted by the regime (2007). The fear of being watched at all times forces individuals to conform to the Party's expectations, much like how colonial authorities instilled fear to prevent rebellion and dissent among colonized peoples.

Thomas Pynchon, in his introduction to a 2003 edition of *1984*, draws parallels between Orwell's telescreens and contemporary surveillance technologies (Pynchon, 2003). Pynchon suggests that Orwell's vision has become increasingly relevant in the modern age, where governments and corporations use advanced technology to monitor and control individuals.

This comparison highlights the enduring significance of Orwell's critique of surveillance and its implications for personal freedom and privacy. Pynchon also explores the historical context of Orwell's work, noting that the surveillance tactics depicted in *1984* are reminiscent of those used by colonial powers. He argues that Orwell's portrayal of a society under constant watch reflects the experiences of colonized populations, who were subjected to similar levels of scrutiny and control (Pynchon, 2003).

Margaret Atwood, in her writings on dystopian literature, often references *1984* as a seminal work on the theme of surveillance (Atwood, 2003). Atwood emphasizes that the telescreens in Orwell's novel are a powerful symbol of how totalitarian regimes maintain their grip on power by monitoring and manipulating their citizens. She draws connections between Orwell's vision and the surveillance methods used by colonial authorities to enforce their rule. Atwood also discusses the psychological effects of constant surveillance, arguing that the fear it generates leads to widespread conformity and the suppression of individuality (Atwood, 2019). This aspect of Orwell's work, she suggests, is a potent commentary on the ways colonial powers sought to control the minds and behaviors of those they governed.

Christopher Hitchens highlights the historical context of surveillance and its role in colonial and totalitarian regimes. Hitchens argues that Orwell's depiction of the telescreen is informed by his experiences and observations of oppressive governments, including the British colonial administration (Hitchens, 2002). He suggests that Orwell's work serves as a warning against the dangers of unchecked surveillance, drawing parallels to the control mechanisms used in colonial contexts. Hitchens further examines the societal impact of surveillance in *1984*, noting that the pervasive monitoring creates an atmosphere of fear and mistrust. This environment, he argues, is essential for maintaining the Party's power, much like how

colonial regimes relied on fear to suppress resistance and maintain control over colonized populations.

The essential of the thought police, introduced by Orwell in *1984*, takes us to yet another level of control in a dystopian context. The Thought Police in *1984* enforce the regime's ideology by punishing thought crimes. This parallels the colonial practice of suppressing indigenous ideologies and enforcing colonial rule through violence and intimidation. The Thought Police's role highlights the extent to which the regime intrudes into the private lives of individuals, stifling free thought and expression. The invention of Newspeak demonstrates the regime's manipulation of language to control thought. By reducing the complexity of language, the regime limits the ability of citizens to express dissent or conceive of rebellion. This tactic mirrors colonial powers' efforts to impose their language and culture on colonized populations, erasing indigenous languages and cultural practices. The daily ritual of Two Minutes Hate also exemplifies the regime's use of propaganda to manipulate emotions and maintain control.

Structures like The Ministry of Truth, set up in the *1984* by the oppressive regime of Big Brother, focus on altering historical records to fit the regime's narrative. This erasure and rewriting of history ensure that the regime maintains control over the past, shaping citizens' perceptions of reality. This tactic is reflected in Ngugi's *Matigari*, reminiscent of colonial powers' efforts to rewrite history, erasing the achievements and cultures of colonized peoples to justify their dominance. The use of memory holes to destroy documents and evidence of the past in *1984* symbolizes the regime's desire to obliterate any trace of historical truth. Ngugi pictures this in most of his works, where colonial practices of destroying indigenous histories and traditions to assert the superiority of the colonisers' culture are constantly portrayed.

In the village of Ilmorog, depicted in Ngugi's *Petals of Blood*, the characters face a lot of resistance from the forces of modernization and its impacts on their traditional way of life. The village, once cohesive and united, begins to fracture as external influences and economic pressures create divisions among the people. Karega, one of the protagonists, reflects on the struggle for social cohesion amidst these changes, "We must unite and fight for a better tomorrow... but how can we, when we are being torn apart by forces beyond our control?"(38) This tension is echoed in the experiences of displaced persons who find themselves at odds with the host communities, both groups trying to navigate a rapidly changing landscape. In *Matigari*, the reality is almost reflected the same. We see a protagonist, Matigari, who embarks on a quest for justice and reconciliation in a post-colonial society crowded with corruption and inequality. Matigari's journey pictures the difficulty of achieving social harmony when the very structures of power are designed to perpetuate division. "I will not rest until justice is done," (104) Matigari vows, embodying the relentless pursuit of a society where displaced persons and host communities can coexist peacefully and equitably.

The dystopian worlds of George Orwell's *1984* and *Animal Farm* provide a stark contrast to the aspirations of characters in Ngugi's works. In *1984*, for instance, the totalitarian regime of Big Brother exercises absolute control over every aspect of life, eradicating any possibility of genuine social cohesion. Winston Smith, the protagonist, yearns for connection and truth in a society where "War is peace. Freedom is slavery. Ignorance is strength" (8). His futile struggle against the omnipresent surveillance and propaganda machine reflects the broader challenges of maintaining solidarity in the face of oppressive power structures. In Orwell's allegorical novel, the *Animal Farm*, further explores the different level of power and betrayal. The animals on the farm initially unite under the banner of equality and shared

purpose, but this unity quickly disintegrates as the pigs, led by Napoleon, consolidate power for themselves. The famous proclamation, "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others," (46) represents the corruption and hypocrisy that undermine any attempts at genuine social cohesion. The displaced and marginalized groups within the farm, much like those in *Petals of Blood* and *Matigari*, find themselves exploited and betrayed by those in power.

Despite the grim portrayals of Orwell's works, the narratives from both authors converge on a central theme: the relentless human spirit's pursuit of justice, equality, and understanding. Whether in the fictional village of Ilmorog or the dystopian world of Oceania, the struggle for social cohesion amidst displacement and power dynamics is a universal one. The characters in these stories, from Karega and Matigari to Winston and the animals of *Animal Farm*, reflect the ongoing fight for a world where all individuals, regardless of their circumstances, can live together in harmony and dignity.

Politics and Power

Dystopian societies often feature centralized and authoritarian governments that exercise vast control over their citizens. Political power is usually concentrated in the hands of a single ruler, party, or oligarchy. Politics in dystopian settings often involve the use of propaganda to manipulate public awareness and maintain control. The ruling powers disseminate false information and ideologies to suppress dissent and maintain the status quo. Dystopian governments frequently employ extensive surveillance mechanisms to monitor and control the population. This includes the excessive use of technologies such as cameras, tracking devices, and informant networks. In many dystopian societies, individual freedoms and rights are severely restricted. Freedom of speech, movement, and assembly are reduced to prevent opposition to the ruling regime. Fear is a common tool in dystopian politics. The government often uses violence,

imprisonment, and psychological manipulation to instill fear and prevent rebellion.

Politics and power are translated by literary critics through centralized and authoritarian governments. In Orwell's *1984*, for instant, the government of Oceania, led by the Party and its figurehead Big Brother, represents an authoritarian regime. Power is centralized in the Party, which exercises total control over all aspects of life. The Party in *1984* uses propaganda extensively to control the populace. The Ministry of Truth constantly rewrites history and disseminates lies to ensure the Party's version of events is the only one known. Slogans like "War is Peace, Freedom is Slavery, Ignorance is Strength" exemplify this manipulation. Surveillance is omnipresent in *1984*, with telescreens, hidden microphones, and informants constantly monitoring citizens. The Thought Police enforce loyalty to the Party by detecting and punishing thoughtcrime. Individual freedoms are virtually non-existent in *1984*. The Party controls every aspect of life, from thoughts to actions. Freedom of speech, movement, and assembly are abolished to prevent any form of opposition. Fear is a central tool of control in *1984*. The Party uses torture, violence, and psychological manipulation to instill fear and maintain obedience. The threat of being vaporized or sent to the Ministry of Love keeps citizens in constant fear.

Animal Farm illustrates the rise of a totalitarian regime on a farm, where the pigs, led by Napoleon, gradually consolidate power and become indistinguishable from the human oppressors they replaced. There is a use of propaganda in *Animal Farm* to maintain the pigs' control over the other animals. For instant, Squealer, the pig, frequently revises the Seven Commandments and spreads false information to justify Napoleon's actions and policies. This includes the usage of surveillance, which is less technological but equally very oppressive. Napoleon employs dogs as enforcers and spies to intimidate and control the other animals, ensuring no

opposition goes unnoticed. The pigs restrict the freedoms of the other animals, gradually changing the rules to benefit themselves. The animals' initial freedoms are stripped away as the pigs consolidate their power. Fear is used in *Animal Farm* through the threat of violence from Napoleon's dogs and the constant reminder of Mr. Jones' possible return. The pigs use fear to keep the other animals in line and prevent rebellion.

In *Petals of Blood*, the government of independent Kenya is depicted as corrupt and authoritarian. The authorities manipulate the judicial system and use force to suppress dissent and maintain control. The text shows how the government and those in power use propaganda to maintain their control. The media is used to spread the official narrative and suppress dissenting voices, painting a false picture of prosperity and progress. The idea of surveillance is carried out through informants and government spies who monitor and report on the activities of those suspected of opposing the regime. The authorities maintain control through fear and intimidation. *Petals of Blood* depicts a society where individual freedoms are heavily restricted. The government uses force to suppress protests and silences dissenting voices, curbing freedoms of speech, movement, and assembly. the government uses fear to control the populace. The threat of violence, imprisonment, and even death is used to suppress opposition and maintain the regime's power.

Matigari features a post-colonial African country where the new ruling class exercises authoritarian control, replacing the colonial oppressors with their own form of tyranny. The government is characterized by corruption and brutal suppression of any opposition. *Matigari* showcases the use of state-controlled media and propaganda to maintain the ruling regime's narrative. The government spreads misinformation and suppresses the truth to keep the population in check. Surveillance in this case is conducted by the government using informants and secret

police to keep tabs on dissenters. The protagonist, Matigari, is constantly pursued by the authorities, symbolizing the pervasive control the regime exerts over its citizens. Individual freedoms are severely cutdown. The protagonist's quest for justice highlights the lack of freedom in society, where speaking out against the government leads to persecution and imprisonment. Fear is a pervasive element in *Matigari*. The government uses violence, intimidation, and psychological manipulation to instill fear in the population. Matigari's constant avoidance of the authorities emphasizes the ever-present threat of government retribution.

Cross-Culturalism

Cross-culturalism in literature examines the interactions, conflicts, and blending of different cultures. It often highlights issues of identity, belonging, and the complexities of navigating multiple cultural landscapes. Orwell's novels, under study, portrays a society where individual identity is suppressed under a totalitarian regime. The Party in *1984*, for instant, controls every aspect of life, eliminating cultural diversity and enforcing conformity. Winston Smith's rebellion against this oppression reflects the struggle for personal identity within a bigger cultural framework. In *Animal Farm*, he uses humanized animals to satirize political systems and human behavior. The novel examines the Soviet Union under Stalin but also serves as a broader commentary on power struggles and the corruption of ideals. The clash of different ideologies and the manipulation of cultural narratives points out the complexities of cultural conflict and transformation in these works.

Cross-culturalism is represented from the angle of postcolonialism. Ngugi's *Petals of Blood* explores Kenya's post-independence struggle for identity and development. It confronts the collision of traditional African culture with Western influences brought by colonization. The characters navigate these conflicting cultural forces as they strive for personal and communal liberation, reflecting the broader tensions of postcolonial societies. The literary works of Orwell and Ngugi, showcase

the interplay of culture, tradition, and cross-cultural influences. These shape the characters' experiences and the societies they inhabit. Each of them examines, deeply, the dystopian impacts of power and control from the neocolonial angle, with attention to the enduring importance of cultural identity and tradition in the face of such forces.

In *1984*, Orwell presents a society where culture and tradition have been systematically destroyed or eliminated by the totalitarian regime of Big Brother. The past is constantly rewritten to serve the Party's present needs, and cultural heritage is rendered meaningless. The protagonist, Winston Smith, secretly yearns for the lost past and seeks truth in the few remnants of unaltered history he can find. "Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past," (11) summarises the Party's manipulation of history and culture to maintain its grip on power. The eradication of cultural memory creates a dystopia where individuals are stripped of their identity and autonomy, illustrating the destructive potential of cultural erasure.

In *Animal Farm*, Orwell offers a different but related point of view as in *1984*, through its allegorical depiction of a farm where animals overthrow their human owner only to fall under the tyrannical rule of the pigs. Initially, the animals' revolt is steeped in the idealistic preservation of their cultural values of equality and community. However, as the pigs consolidate power, these traditions are corrupted and manipulated to justify their dominance. The famous commandment, "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others," symbolizes the betrayal of cultural values and the establishment of a new, oppressive tradition that mirrors the human tyranny they sought to escape. This distortion of culture and tradition becomes a tool for maintaining power and control.

In contrast, Ngugi's *Petals of Blood* examines the clash of traditional African culture with the forces of colonialism and modernization in the village of Ilmorog. The characters in this text, scramble with preserving their cultural identity amidst very charge

colonial economic and social changes imposed by external forces. For instance, the protagonist Karega reflects on the importance of cultural memory and solidarity in resisting exploitation: "We must remember our past to fight for our future" (39). Culture and identity in Ngugi's context become sources of strength in the midst of colonial domination. Karega portrays how culture and tradition can be sources of strength and resilience, helping the community of Ilmorog to navigate and resist the disruptive impacts of cross-cultural encounters and economic exploitation.

Matigari extends this exploration by depicting a post-colonial society struggling with the legacy of colonial rule and the betrayal of revolutionary ideals. The protagonist, Matigari, searches for justice and truth in a society where the new rulers have adopted the oppressive tactics of the colonizers. The novel emphasises the significance of cultural values and traditions in the fight against corruption and tyranny. Matigari's quest symbolises the broader struggle to reclaim cultural identity and integrity in the face of betrayal and oppression. His belief in traditional values of justice and community is an indication of the potential of culture and tradition to inspire resistance and hope. In one scene, Matigari confronts the new leaders, declaring, "I fought for freedom, not for this new form of slavery. Where is the justice we dreamed of?" This statement underscores the betrayal of the revolutionary values and the continuity of oppression.

Matigari draws on traditional values of justice and community to inspire resistance and hope throughout his journey. He frequently refers to Gikuyu proverbs and stories, which serve as moral guides and sources of strength for the oppressed underprivileged people represented by Ngugi. For instance, when Matigari speaks to the youth in part one of the novel, he uses the proverb, "A tree does not grow from the top," (34) emphasizing the need for grassroots movements and the importance of ordinary people in bringing about change. This reflects the potential of cultural traditions to foster a sense of community and collective action

against tyranny. Matigari's belief in traditional values of justice and community speaks to the transformative potential of culture and tradition. His entire journey reflects the broader struggle to reclaim cultural identity and integrity in the face of betrayal and oppression. In part two of *Matigari*, a climactic scene, Matigari confronts the corrupt leaders, asking, "What have you done with the freedom we fought for? Where is the justice we promised our people?" (112). This confrontation embodies the struggle to hold leaders accountable to the cultural and revolutionary ideals that they have abandoned.

In Orwell's *1984*, the whole idea of exploration and defamation of traditional values and culture is presented differently. The Party's manipulation of history and cultural destruction serve to maintain totalitarian control. Winston Smith's job at the Ministry of Truth involves altering historical records, effectively erasing any true cultural past. The Party's slogan, "Who controls the past controls the future: who controls the present controls the past," (25) illustrates how the suppression of cultural memory can prevent resistance. Winston's yearning for a genuine connection to the past, such as his treasured but forbidden act of writing in a diary, parallels Matigari's efforts to revive traditional values as a form of resistance.

Orwell takes a different form in the *Animal Farm*. He explores the betrayal of revolutionary ideals through the corruption of cultural values, what binds the animal together. The Seven Commandments initially embody the ideals of Animalism, promising equality and fairness to all the animals. However, as the pigs consolidate power, they alter these commandments to justify their actions. It becomes like tampering with the culture and tradition of the animal, one which they believe deeply in. For example, "No animal shall sleep in a bed" is changed to "No animal shall sleep in a bed with sheets." This manipulation of cultural values serves to entrench the pigs' dominance, a glaring example of how the new rulers in *Matigari*

adopt colonial tactics to maintain power. Matigari's insistence on true justice and equality contrasts with the pigs' betrayal, highlighting the potential of cultural integrity to inspire hope and resistance. Ngugi uses *Petals of Blood* to reemphasize on the clash of traditional African culture with the forces of colonialism and modernization. This explains why the characters are in constant struggle to preserve their cultural identity amidst economic and social changes imposed on them by the colonizers and their "colonized black skins." Karega's reflection, "We must remember our past to fight for our future," resonates with Matigari's belief in the power of cultural traditions. Both characters view the reclamation of cultural identity as essential to resisting exploitation and oppression.

Across these works, the authors lay emphasis on the multifaceted role of culture and tradition in dystopian settings and cross-cultural contexts. Orwell's dystopias illustrate the dangers of cultural elimination and manipulation, showing how totalitarian regimes exploit these forces to maintain control. In contrast, Ngugi emphasises the resilience and transformative potential of cultural traditions in resisting oppression and navigating the complexities of cross-cultural encounters. Ultimately, these narratives impact of culture and tradition on individuals and societies. They reveal how these elements can be both weaponized for control and harnessed for resistance, shaping the contours of dystopian realities and the struggles for justice and identity within them.

Conclusion and Recommendation for Future Research

The analysis of dystopian narratives within different cultural frameworks affirms the genre's potential to engage with diverse audiences and provoke meaningful reflections on the human condition, resistance, and the pursuit of justice. The comparative analysis of Orwell and Ngugi's works enriches our understanding of dystopian literature and strengthen the importance of cultural diversity in shaping literary expressions. As the world

deals with complex social, political and economic challenges, the knowledge gained from studying dystopia through a cross-cultural approach remains as relevant and urgent as ever.

Future research could explore how authors from Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America engage with dystopian narratives in ways that reflect their unique cultural and political realities. Such studies would further expand the genre's global adaptability and relevance. Future research could also incorporate perspectives from sociology, anthropology, and political science in the analysis of dystopia. This could deepen our understanding of the societal constructs within dystopian literature. For instance, examining the intersection of dystopia with contemporary issues such as migration, gender, climate change, and technological innovation could offer fresh insights. Many contemporary dystopian critics have attempted to analyse how contemporary authors address the dystopian implications of technology, digital surveillance, and artificial intelligence, but much have not really been done in this domain. A closer look at these areas of knowledge could expand dystopia's relevance in the 21st century. These studies could examine how technological advancements shape new forms of control and resistance, diverting from the telescreen surveillance in *1984* to a more automated surveillance control through well-structured and digitalised cameras and computer systems in today's world.

Future research around the domain of dystopia could examine how themes of gender and patriarchy intersect with dystopian narrative. This could reveal new dimensions of oppression and resistance, enriching the field by addressing the often-overlooked gendered dynamics of power and identity. Researchers could also love to investigate the use of dystopian literature in educational contexts to foster critical thinking about power, identity, and resistance. This could offer practical applications for this field of study and as well

explore how teaching dystopian texts enhances students' understanding of socio-political issues and their capacity for critical engagement.

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