

**A MARXIST CRITIQUE OF THE PRESENTATION OF THE THEME
OF SALVATION IN THREE SELECTED PLAYS**

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Declaration

I, Kotaki George William Kutosi, declare hereby that this study is my own work and that this work, or part of it has not been submitted in any other institution of higher education for any award.

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Date

Approval

This Report has been submitted to the University Examination Board with my approval as
|University Supervisor.

.....
Dr. Frances A. Nakiwala

Date

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my dear daughter Emannuella Williams Ayeeta.

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Abstract

This study is a Marxist critique of the presentation of the theme of Salvation, in David Mulwa, Bernard Shaw, and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and Ngũgĩ wa Mirĩĩ plays: *Redemption*, *Major Barbara* and *I Will Marry When I Want* respectively. The researcher used a qualitative research methodology of description linguistics to analyse all situations in Marxist terms and to show how the Marxist theory entrenched in the playwrights the will to voice their own feelings about injustices. The available literature on the theme of salvation, life and criticism of the dramatists was reviewed. The researcher proceeded to examine the Marxist overtones in the plays and proceeded with a comparative analysis of the Marxist statements on the theme of salvation in the plays.

The study discovered that each dramatist had a unique recipe for the full attainment of salvation. Bernard Shaw fully embraced the Marxist metaphor of the 'economic substructure' and thus negating the supremacy of 'spirituality'. Similarly, the Ngũgĩs, in *I Will Marry When I Want*, totally dismissed the relevance of 'spirituality' to salvation (the wellbeing of the human being) and depicted spirituality as a ploy to rob people of their property. This, in effect rhymes with Marx view that Religion is the 'opium of the masses'. Mulwa on the other hand, reconciles 'materiality' with 'spirituality'. The study has established that humanity cannot attain true salvation by relying solely on either 'materiality' or 'spirituality' but both. It was concluded that, David Mulwa offers a more convincing Marxist view on the theme of salvation.

1.0 Introduction

This study is a Marxist reading of three plays: David Mulwa's *Redemption*, Bernard Shaw's *Major Barbara*; and Ngũgĩ wa thiong'o and Ngũgĩ wa Mĩriĩ's *I Will Marry When I Want*. An intensity of Marxist overtones, particularly in relation to the Marxist theme of salvation, in all the three plays compelled me to do a comparative analysis with a view to establishing which of the playwrights presents a more convincing argument on the theme of salvation.

The Marxist theory, in all its ramifications, is pertinent to literature today. There are two reasons for the applicability. First, advent of theory as a literary unit has given literary scholars latitude for using it as a methodology for analysing literature. Theory also allows for exiting the subject and embracing other disciplines. Hence the examination of the presentation of the theme of salvation, leave alone its definition was done in the Marxist contexts and in various disciplines. The aim of the study was to establish which of the playwrights presents a more convincing adoption of the Marxist theory.

Second reason for focusing on the Marxist theory was its applicability to the contemporary world. Although Marxism was scorned as a 19th century philosophy and declared as anachronistic by the end of the 20th century, the Marxist theory has once again proved to be the only scientific theory to analyse the crisis facing contemporary capitalism. To some people today, Marxism remains the guide to action on how to transcend capitalism and build a new society free from unbridled class exploitation and social oppression. By and large, Marxism is a living theory; anatomy of society from any perspective will most definitely underpin a Marxist theory in evolution. Marxist detractors and capitalistic sympathisers have made attempts to water down the impact of Marxism but reality has proved otherwise. Marx's views, however sweeping and provocative they may be, no sagacious scholar can bury one's head in the sand as to the relevance of Marxism to the contemporary world.

Despite its relevance, the Marxist theory cannot be embraced wholesale today. In the study and I compare and contrast those who have adopted it in its naked form and those who have tried to tone it down to a logical analysis. Today, salvation/deliverance/redemption from oppressive conditions is the catch word to many people. The plight of millions of people who form the greater majority of the population are faced with the most precarious of circumstances ranging from, war, disease, abject poverty to preventable death. Through a multitude of services right across the world, Governments and Non-government institutions are trying to mitigate this plight. At the helm of this is Church. Christianity has been understood to be primarily concerned with the Spiritual salvation and without considering other aspects of human existence. Basing on Christ's teaching: "Man does not live on bread alone." the church teaches that salvation is primarily spiritual. Other aspects of human existence are secondary. This teaching has led many Marxist sympathizers to disregard the role of Christianity in the mitigation of human misery.

A critical task of this study is explored of the contrasting notions of salvation embodied within the works of the playwright understudy and in the secondary literature related to the study. In the final analysis the study seeks to find which of the playwrights presents a holistic view of salvation, with the potential for reuniting the 'material' and 'spiritual' to achieve meaningful Salvation.

The analysis was done in a broader view of salvation which is reflected in the early history of Salvation, has a solid scriptural basis and also fits within a number of other contemporary theological frameworks which are based in the life experience of people in search of salvation most especially the poor and oppressed.

In its most basic semantic meaning, salvation means deliverance from danger or difficulty. In Christian science, salvation means 'deliverance from power and effects of sin' or the

realization of the supremacy of infinite Mind over all bringing with it the destruction of the illusion of sin, sickness and death (Mathew 1:21; Luke 1:77).

From the Marxist point of view, salvation means ‘deliverance from exploitation and the general state of being socially deprived and materially wanting’ (Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, 1844). Marx’s pronouncements on salvation are derived from one of the basic tenets of the Marxist theory that; ‘It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being but, on the contrary, their social being determines their consciousness’ (Selden P. 82). By the above stated tenet Marx means that the life of people is not determined by ideas/consciousness because often times these are false consciousness because they are politically determined. What determines the life is the material condition under which people live and work and earn a living. Bluntly speaking Marx is arguing that the salvation of man is essentially material (man lives on bread alone). Thus Marx denies the relevance of God to Salvation/ well-being of man. Marx’s statement would mean that man’s deliverance is absolutely caused by material and social wellbeing. This runs contrary to the Christian principle that ‘man does not live on bread alone’ (Luke 4:4).

According to Raman Selden, in his *Contemporary Literary Theory*, the above Marxist statements have ‘shaken the Christian thought to its foundation’ (p.71). The Christian world was set to think that the Biblical teachings about salvation were divine. With regard to literature, the Marxist views have led to pragmatic literature; Literature that is meant to cause change even in the way people think and relate to each other.

The definition crises reflected in the categories such as material acquisition versus theology or a balance between theology and material wellbeing are represented in David Mulwa’s *Redemption* on one hand and exclusively material wellbeing on the other hand as advocated for by Bernard Shaw in *Major Barbara*. This is further complicated by scenarios where

theology is wrongly applied to domesticate the oppressed to make them ripe for further exploitation as portrayed by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and Ngũgĩ wa Mĩriĩ in *I will marry when I want*, he co-scripted with Ngũgĩ wa Mĩriĩ the Gikuyu play *Ngaahika Ndeenda (I Will Marry when I want)*. The play makes a strong statement that 'those who fought hardest for independence had gained least' (Foden 1998: 1), thus criticising the inequalities and injustices of the Kenyan society.

According to the proponents of Marxism, literature reflects those social institutions out of which it emerges and is itself a social institution with a particular ideological function. Literature often reflects class struggle and materialism: for instance, think of how often the quest for wealth traditionally defines characters. So Marxists generally view literature; 'not as works created in accordance with timeless artistic criteria, but as products of the economic and ideological determinants specific to that era' (Abrams p. 149). Thus Literature reflects an author's own class or analysis of class relations, however piercing or shallow that analysis may be.

In the three plays all dramatists use characterization to depict the Marxist tenets. Mulwa shows that material wellbeing is absolutely necessary for development. The play shows a call to workers to unite and throw off the oppressive conditions. However, Mulwa shows that all other aspects of human existence: morality, social and spiritual must be fully sound in order for a person to be fully liberated.

Similarly, in Bernard Shaw's *Major Barbara* uses characterization to show that salvation whether spiritual or moral is determined by material wellbeing. Unlike Mulwa, Shaw underpins the dependence of the spiritual on the material. The playwright adamantly queries the salvation of the poor. He argues that one can only think of the spiritual after attaining material comforts. Similarly, in the Ngugis' play the playwright peg salvation to material development the

playwright's still use characterization to query the possibility of attaining salvation when one is entangled in poverty.

The study sought to establish which of the playwrights presents a more comprehensive definition of salvation than that which is commonly assumed by those who hotly pursue and unfairly obtain material wellbeing or by hypocritical dedication to religion. It is hoped that a renewed understanding of the meaning of salvation might positively contribute towards developing not only a new pragmatic theology but also a modified version of the Marxist theory.

1.1 Statement of the problem

Salvation is a mystical concept that has puzzled the world today. Four playwrights, namely, Ngugi wa Thiongo, Ngugi wa Miiri, Bernard Shaw and David Mulwa have adopted the Marxist theory, in various ways, in their representation of the theme of salvation, in their respective works. The central question of the research was: which of the playwrights presents a higher /more convincing argument for the Marxist interpretation of theme of salvation; This research intended to analyse David Mulwa's *Redemption*, Bernard Shaw's *Major Barbara*, and the Ngũgĩ wa Thiongo and wa Miiris: *I Will Marry When I Want* in the context of the Marxist and Christianity views on salvation to establish which of the playwrights presents a holistic view of salvation.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this study was to establish who of the writers presents a more palatable and convincing Marxist critique of salvation.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Examine the presentation of the supremacy of material wealth over spiritual wealth
2. Examine the presentation of the call for a revolution
3. Establish who of the playwrights offers a higher argument on salvation.

1.4 Scope

1.4.1 The conceptual scope

The research was a Marxist reading of David Mulwa's; Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and Ngũgĩ wa Mĩriĩ's; and Bernard Shaw's assertions on the subject of salvation. The analysis concentrated three major plays. These are: David Mulwa's *Redemption*, Bernard Shaw's *Major Barbara* and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and Ngũgĩ wa Mĩriĩ's *I will Marry When I want*. Besides these primary texts, other relevant texts were too consulted.

1.4.2 Geographical scope

The plays are set in two geographical regions: Kenya, East Africa 1991 and England, Great Britain 1905.

1.4.3 Time scope

20th century

1.5 Research questions

The research seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How relevant is Marxism to our times?

2. How do the four playwrights adopt the Marxist tenet of the supremacy of money/material well-being over other aspects of human existence in their respective works?
3. How do the four playwrights represent the Marxist call for change/revolution in their respective works?
4. Which of the dramatists presents a more holistic view of salvation?

1.6 Significance

It is hoped that the study findings will add to the wealth of knowledge for use by other researchers with regard to application of the Marxist Theory.

1.7 Theoretical framework

The study was informed by the Marxist theory. The basic tenets of the theory are: 'it is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness' (Selden p. 82). This Marxist statement refers to the fact that money economy is what controls all aspects of human existence.

The second tenet is that: 'the philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it' (Selden p.70). Here philosophy is metonymically used to refer to all mental ideologies such as politics, education, and religion. So by this tenet, Marx provokes people to struggle and liberate themselves from exploitative mental ideologies which are tools that the dominant class, use to drain the energy to struggle. As long as people uphold these ideologies, they will never see salvation.

From the reader response point of view; the researcher exploited the two views first, then brought his experiences and knowledge to the text he was writing. Second, the writer was influenced by what read but made effort to be different from those he read.

So I argued that Mulwa's knowledge of Christianity affects the way he interpreted and adopted the Marxist tenets. He combines good elements of Marxism with Christianity. Bernard Shaw's social aspirations tainted his religious affiliation while the Ngũgĩs' detest of imperialism and neo-colonialism influenced his adoption of Marxism. So Mulwa mitigates the extremes in both Bernard Shaw and the Ngugi. This theory therefore was used to explain why the playwrights applied the Marxist tenets differently.

1.8 Methodology

The researcher used a qualitative research methodology of description linguistics (diachronic and conversation analysis), the study examined Marxist overtones in the main study texts and comparatively analysed; David Mulwa, G.B. Shaw and the Ngũgĩs' statements on salvation. This was preferred because it was the most appropriate for the analytical nature of the study. As noted earlier, the research is a qualitative one that sought to compare the above authors in their presentation of the theme of salvation as illustrated in their books: *Redemption*, *Major Barbara* and *I Will Marry When I Want* respectively.

Textual analysis and comparison techniques were used to obtain information through; content analysis of the main texts of the study. That is to say David Mulwa's *Redemption*, George Bernard Shaw's *Major Barbara* and the Ngũgĩs' *I Will Marry When I want* as well as a review of relevant literature on the theme of salvation.

Qualitative methods of analysis and presentation were used. To edify the treatise, narrative explanations and quotations were used in the presentation. These enhanced comparisons in identifying similarities and differences for the issues under investigation and the underlying conclusion were drawn.

While the main views of this paper were drawn from Marxist tenets and as adopted by Mulwa, Shaw and the Ngũgĩs, their views in no way do represent a universal doctrine. Salvation in its entirety is both subjective and relative and above all it's a mystery that transcends human knowledge. Users are advised to read this paper alongside other doctrines.

In addition, it should be noted that, this study relied heavily on available secondary sources and acknowledges them while surveying them critically. The rest of the comprehensive research was the candidate's own observation and conclusions. The choice of who and what, to put in, and who and what, to leave out was difficult and was therefore highly subjective in such decisions. Academic jargon was avoided where possible to enable the general reader who has an interest in salvation to enjoy it.

Finally but equally important, from a sociological perspective, the texts for the study were read against the social situation which determined their creation and functionality in society.

1.9 Review of related Literature

The related literature in this section falls under four categories: the variables within the title of the study: salvation, Marxism, and the available criticism on each of the writers.

1.9.1 Salvation

Salvation is more or less a mystery that has puzzled many a people. The existence of essentially competing soteriology's testify to a deep divide in practice an understanding of salvation. To put the issue simply, 'Is salvation about the temporal (bodily/material) or the eternal (spiritual)?' Of course, this question should not be answered in a flippant manner. It does, however, illustrate how a theological difference can result in very different religious priorities. If one believes that salvation is merely temporal, then traditional approaches to welfare may be validated without significant reference to a spiritual dimension since efforts are aimed at

improving people's quality of life here and now. If, on the other hand, one believes that salvation is primarily about eternity, then the focus of religion becomes about conversion ('saving souls').

Writing on the doctrine of salvation, John Rhemick in his book, *A New people of God: a study in Salvationism*, describes the theology as being; 'fuelled by its consideration of the life to come, its concern was for the essence of being, the soul whose existence transcended time, its conviction of the ultimate life and ultimate death, heaven, and hell (p.64).

The eternal and ultimate significance of salvation is enhanced here by the removal of any earthly connotations or implications. Rhemick puts it even more bluntly when he says; 'the doctrine of salvation as essentially spirit, a deep inner conviction of the heart' (Ibid.p.69). Presenting a view of salvation which has been relegated to a spiritual realm, and which will be fulfilled at some point in the future and maintained for eternity. This seems to be the popular approach to modern religious practices.

In the world today, the dominant concept of 'spiritual' salvation has become a restrictive frame that has blocked efforts to reconcile the growing divide in the present human's spiritual and material needs. George Lakoff, a professor of cognitive science and linguistics at the University of California, tells us in his book: *Don't Think of an Elephant: Know Your Values and Frame the Debate*; 'that people think in 'frames', 'mental structures that shape the way we see the world. As a result, they shape the goals we seek, the plans we make, the way we act, and what counts as a good or bad outcome of our actions' (p. Xv).

If our perception of salvation influences our actions, then, this is a causal claim about the impact of our beliefs on practices, and the ultimate impact of both on life now and the one to come. In this respect, Weber agrees that ideas act back on interests and shape activities,

especially economic activities. For example, Weber views 'salvation' as a key idea that drives action, noting that his 'concern is essentially with the quest for salvation...in so far as it produced certain consequences for practical behaviour in the world, particularly a positive orientation to mundane affairs' (Weber, 1963: 149).

Weber posits four general approaches to salvation (1963: 166-170). One can either escape from the world or find means of adjusting to it; Weber terms the 'escape' approach 'other-worldly' and adjustment as 'inner-worldly'. Weber then turns his attention to whether one practices resignation ('mysticism') or self-mastery ('asceticism') in regard to the world's temptations. Of the four possible approaches that emerge from this double pairing, inner-worldly asceticism is of the greatest interest to Weber because it leads to the development of modern capitalism. It demands both hard work in the world and abstemiousness. Other-worldly mysticism, of which Buddhism is a good example, requires indifference to the world, which, Weber argues, never leads to the kind of activity that undergirds capitalism. Inner-worldly mysticism (e.g., Taoism) accepts the world, but focuses on contemplative practices rather than strenuous economic activity. Other-worldly asceticism, which is found in monastic Christianity, offers salvation through the mastery of desires, but this takes place away from 'the world', rather than in it. The conquering of desire is important, but not in a way that impacts society more broadly.

No matter what lens it is looked at, the aim of salvation, like shalom, is about our capacity to experience fullness of life, to be whole people. Thus, people can have a variety of salvation experiences as they strive against those elements in life which create barriers to fulfilment and wholeness. John Taylor in *Salvation in the Hebrew Scriptures* illustrates this when he says that; 'Salvation may be experienced as deliverance, as release, as redemption. It may be experienced in ordinary, everyday affairs such as recovery from an illness, the payment of a

debt, the resolution of a dispute, or being vindicated in the courts. The shape of the need determines how it is expressed' (p.21). Here we see it explicitly stated that the context of the particular situation is the defining factor in shaping the salvific response.

The concept of salvation is as old as humanity itself. Every religion and indeed every society has dogma upon an ideal state of being: 'Salvation/Redemption' where humans live life to its fullest. According to the Christian, Islamic and African traditional 'religions' on the notion of salvation, the soul takes precedence over the body. Salvation is contained in the central doctrine of every religion or a religious tradition, as stated in authoritative documents. Salvation as an ideal type is found in all the world's major religions and or beliefs. Salvation is a spiritual goal that may or may not be attained through human effort. If people believe in the possibility of salvation through their own efforts, it makes sense that they are likely to perform the actions that contribute to attaining such an end. Therefore, religious beliefs have implications for behaviour, such as work, effort, saving, and charity (Weber, Writings 270-6[8]). Salvific merit is a matter of degree. Depending on individual behaviour, a religion and its institutions can offer believers zero to high probabilities of attaining salvation.

1.9.1.1 The concept of salvation in traditional religions

The influential theologian John Mbiti published in one of his books with the title *African Religion and Philosophy*, arguing that 'the traditional beliefs and practices amount to diverse religious systems while having a single underlying philosophy' (Mbiti p.1). For Laurenti Magesa in his book *African Religion* replies Mbiti that, by affirming a common philosophy and thinking, has indirectly admitted what he wanted to explain anyway (Magesa p.25-26). According to Magesa, 'the different religious expressions are better compared to the denominations in Christianity'.

The traditional religious practices as well show recognition of life after death in offering sacrifices to appease those in the world of the dead. African traditionalists acknowledge the spirit in sayings like; 'I will starve your body and nourish your spirit' (Kiganda saying) and that; 'Parents give birth to the body not the spirit'. Interrelated, from the earliest periods of Egyptian history, all Egyptians were buried with at least some burial goods that they thought were necessary after death. At a minimum, 'these usually consisted of everyday objects such as bowls, combs and other trinkets, along with food' (Faulkner p.15).

In Mbiti's *Eschatological concepts' in Africa* (ibid.pp.253-271), the passage to the spiritual world is described as crossing a river. The deceased have to pay admission which is provided by the sacrifices of the community. The proper burial rites are absolutely necessary so that a person can become an ancestor and live in peace. Wrong burials make the spirit return and haunt the community. A widespread conviction is that spirits especially of clan founders and heroes have power over the living and execute God's will. They can possess people, in particular diviners and others who act as intermediaries, and appear to relatives to give orders, to warn and to inquire. All these practices show continuity and transition to and the supremacy of the spirit.

Traditional religious domain especially African, includes relating well with the ancestors and this is widely interpreted to have a bearing on the present and life to come. That's why, in Ancient Africa, and to an extent, in the modern day Africa; it is customary 'when drinking beer, to pour out the last few drops in the calabash for the ancestors'. Similarly, it is believed that, when a pot of beer cracks, it is said to be good for the ancestors are eating (Mönnig 1978:61). Moila (2001:3) contends that the Pedi woman will always dish out food for the ancestors when she is cooking. This is common even among the Kikuyu, the Giriama, the Digo, the Chonyi, the Kamba and the Taita communities of Kenya, not only that, the East African

communities have had a characteristic of pouring anything, including water, tea, or food on the ground before they consume it as a way of seeking blessings from the ancestors before they consume it thereby appeasing them. It is equivalent to prayers offered in the modern African Christianity every time before we take meals. This symbolises a harmonious relationship between the living and the living-dead who are the ancestors? It is the deceased people who become ancestors and still remain part of the community. They are also referred to as the living-dead.

Traditionally, as Healey and Sybertz (1969:211) say, the living dead were remembered in the oral tradition for five generations. Their being remembered or not, depended on how much good they had done on earth, especially hospitality to others. For as Dickson (1984:198) points out that “in African thought those who become ancestors must have lived exemplary lives; it is not everyone who dies who becomes an ancestor, so that the cult of the dead is not to be equated with that of the ancestors.

African beliefs manifest itself through social life, which is also fully permeated by religion. In so doing, it serves for the sustenance of holistic community (Moila 2002a:3). For that reason, activities such as dancing and singing are ‘perceived as sociable activities in that they bind the community together’ (Moila 2002:3). Africans dance to celebrate every ‘imaginable situation – joy, grief, love, hate, to bring prosperity, to avert calamity, in addition, singing and joyful conversation enable African people to minimise tensions within enclosed community’ (Thorpe 1991:116).

Idowu in African Traditional Religion observes that

Songs constitute a rich heritage for the whole of Africa, for Africans are always singing and in their singing and poetry, they express themselves. In this way, all their joys and sorrows, their hopes and fears about the future, find an outlet. Singing is always a vehicle conveying certain sentiments or truths. When songs are connected with rituals

they convey the faith of worshippers from the heart-faith in the Deity, belief in and about divinities, assurance and hopes about the present and with regard to the hereafter' (p. 84).

This shows that African songs are not just a concordance of notes and voices, but each song expresses a general mood and meaning of a given situation. It also shows that dance when being accompanied by song is used to express more than just entertainment in that it becomes a manifestation of the feeling of the individual or a group thus communicating their interior sentiments, expectations and aspirations.

Another common expression of African faith is through community drama. As Njino (1992:7) notes, drama is a play performed by actors based on poetry, legends, myths, past or present events, for either entertainment or teaching moral and social lessons. Thus, it is closely related to song and dance. From time immemorial, it has been used to mock evil or to mock ungodly behaviours; to caricature, to satirize and to conscientize the society on what ought to be taken seriously (Njino 1992:8).

As we have already seen, African practice discourages individuality and is grounded on the fact that no one is an island of himself or herself rather each and every one is part of the whole. Mbiti's summary of African philosophy is that, 'I am because we are and since we are therefore I am' (Mbiti 1969:106). This emphasis on interdependence agrees with Pauline theology on the need to recognise other people's gifts and talents in order to edify the church and the society in general (Ephesians 4:10-12, 1 Corinthian 12).

Proceeding from the above observations, it is only fair to deduce that even before the advent of the modern Christianity, different cultures all over the world from African practices to Taoism, Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism practiced and some still practice the cherished virtues of compassion, love, unity and peace all aimed at promoting wholeness and complete enjoyment

of life while keeping in tandem with the afterlife and the impact on it occasioned by the present conduct of life.

1.9.1.2 The Biblical views of Salvation

Any serious exploration of the biblical texts on salvation is likely to reveal dualities or multiplicities of view. We need to recognise right from the start that ‘there is no uniform Christian doctrine of salvation’ (Hollenweger p.40). There are texts that seem to emphasise salvation as being essentially individual or privatised and others that see it acting in and through communities. In some texts, salvation is seen as something that affects the present and in others it appears to be relegated to the future. There is also a tension between a ‘material’ salvation which is applied in this world and a sense of ‘spiritual’ salvation which is more ethereal or otherworldly in focus.

The diversity of biblical views of salvation is reflective of the various historical contexts in which these writings have arisen. As each variation addresses a distinct need for a particular group of people, we recognise that ‘the canon includes various, often contradictory theological responses to the historical situations of the early Christian communities’ (Durken p.34). We should not therefore be surprised that there will be both commonalities and differences between Hebrew understandings of salvation, and those seen through Jesus and the later writers of the New Testament.

This exploration of scriptural views of salvation is therefore not intended to prove a single, or even to claim a dominant, understanding by the biblical writers. Such efforts would deny the richness and depth inherent in the Bible’s diversity and tend to lead to ineffective and non-contextual ‘proof-texting’. Instead, a reflection on soteriological themes present throughout the scriptures will demonstrate that a broader view of salvation than that which is currently practiced exists throughout the Biblical tradition.

It is not within the scope of this work to attempt a comprehensive analysis of biblical soteriologies. It is important to keep in mind that the current purpose is to recognise a view of salvation that might inform how we see the religious practice of Salvation today. Thus, choices have necessarily been made which draw out certain Biblical writers and themes ahead of others, according to their capacity and natural correlation to the context of religion and poverty 'material need'.

Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza summarises the intention of this strategy when she notes that: 'Such a criterion does not judge the theological validity of biblical texts with relationship to their own communities, but evaluates these texts with respect to the theological insights and questions of the Christian community today' (ibid. p.34). The objective of the exploration of Scripture which follows is not exhaustive exegesis, but instead is intentionally directed towards the questions of 'material' versus 'spiritual' salvation being raised today.

1.9.1.2.1 Salvation in the Old Testament

The character and content of salvation, as understood by the Hebrew writers, is revealed again and again. According to Walter Brueggemann in *Reverberations of Faith: A Theological Handbook of Old Testament Themes*;

The primal story line of the Old Testament is a sequence of events through which YHWH intervenes in the life of Israel in order to effect; rescue, deliverance and emancipation. These actions are nameable, concrete, and decisively transformative, and are termed 'salvation' or 'deliverance' (Brueggemann p.184).

One of the clearest aspects of the experience of salvation in the Hebrew Bible is that it affects the present life. In contrast to the modern emphasis, which has tended to shift the locus of salvation away from this world, this viewpoint offers a helpful perspective for a theology of 'holistic service'. To this, Walter Brueggemann gives a good summary of this theme as follows:

Salvation' in the Old Testament is often said to be 'material' – that is, concerned with lived, concrete, socio-political issues [in contrast to] ...frequent Christian claims that salvation is something spiritual and otherworldly. In reality, the Old Testament knows no such dualism as material-spiritual, and regards every aspect of life; personal and public, present and future – as open to YHWH's saving capacity (Ibid. p.185).

The concrete nature of salvation presented in the excerpts above offers a real and present hope to those in trouble, providing grounds for those in dire circumstances to call out to a God who is known to deliver his people. This is reflected consistently in the Hebrew Scriptures, beginning with the Exodus, throughout the monarchical period and also in the prophets. A number of the Psalms attributed to David which call for deliverance from enemies are good examples of the earthly and present nature of this salvation (Psalm 3:7-8; 13:1-6; 18:23,16-19; 37:39-40).

In the Hebrew Scriptures, God's activity in the world is not limited to miracles of nature but instead often depends upon human agency to carry out the divine will. There is no apparent discontinuity noted in the Biblical stories between a call to God for divine intervention in times of trouble and a response which is rooted in human interaction. The Exodus experience is just one example as noted here by Bruce Birch:

When human resources seem defeated by the oppressive and self-serving power of empire (Pharaoh), there is yet the power of God as a source of hope and possibility for new life. Yet, the first signs of hope and life in the story come not from God but from unexpected human agents (Birch p.10).

From the Hebrew midwives to Pharaoh's daughter and ultimately Moses and Aaron, humans are called to work together with God towards the salvific goal.

The human face of God's salvation can also reveal how single-minded and self-serving we can be. The Psalmist notes of his enemies "They cried for help, but there was no one to save them" (Psalm 18:41). Salvation for the Israelites in the Exodus had direct consequences for Pharaoh's army and for the Canaanites. Whilst this may be problematic from a broader point of view, it

does further illustrate the connection between a particular understanding of salvation and the context in which this arises. This divine-human partnership in salvation is played out repeatedly, often with unexpected contributions from people thought to be ‘outsiders’. For instance the role of Rahab in Joshua 2:1-21 and later The Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37).

In contrast to the modern emphasis on the individual and their personal relationship with God, the Hebrew Scriptures provide a helpful correlative with an emphasis on the communal aspect of life. As individuals, we can aim to be better people, but this is meaningless outside of the context of the community in which we live. In *Prophetic Oracles of Salvation in the Old Testament*,

Claus Westermann speaks for this perspective when he says;

It is not possible to have the ‘peace of God’ that is announced here without the effect of that peace on the rest of life and on the life of men and women in community, these Old Testament oracles know nothing of peace of a soul in isolation (p.272).

Westermann’s correlation between the experience of salvation and the ‘peace of God’ or *shalom* leads usefully to the fact that Salvation applies to every aspect of life – it is holistic in nature.

The Exodus story also clearly indicates that God does not work alone in creating pathways to salvation and liberation. ‘God’s power does not operate independent of human agency in the Exodus events... but the courage and faithfulness of Moses reminds us of the human and social struggles through which God is at work to effect the divine saving purposes’ (ibid. p.21).

The partnership between Moses and God is just one of many which illustrate the co-operative nature of salvific work. A number of human relationships including those of Moses with Aaron, Jethro and Joshua also play a significant part in delivering Israel from Egypt into the Promised Land.

We are reminded then, that the story of the Exodus is not just a story about Moses but a story about the people of Israel; all are involved in some way in their own liberation. The cry to which God responds, through Moses, is the cry of an oppressed people; a cry which, interestingly, is not directed explicitly to God but to which God responds in compassion for those who are suffering.

God's practical response through human agency to the call of the suffering that don't even appear to acknowledge God's presence represents an interesting point for the development of a theology of social service. This may provide a helpful theological framework for understanding God's presence and purpose in the interaction between service users and social workers who may not be Christians.

Israel's outcry is recognition that even slaves are not resigned to things as they are and refuse to accept oppression and suffering as the final reality of their lives. The outcry is a public expression of hurt that directs criticism toward the dismantling of oppressive power and begins to suggest the hope of a new reality (Birch p.11).

The Exodus experience also stands as an example of holistic concern. God does not simply lead people out of Egypt but ultimately into the Promised Land. The tension between a place of belonging, a 'home' and a sense of actual experience of dislocation is played out repeatedly in the Hebrew Scriptures. From the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden to the Babylonian exile and return, the connection between land, people and God is explored through images of nomadic life, conquest and settlement. The temple may serve as a theological metaphor telling us that just being in the right place can be an experience of salvation.

It is not enough simply to be removed from the point of desperate circumstance. Full salvation must include a connection to place, to people, to community, to a real sense of belonging. This is indicative of the holistic concern of the Hebrew Scriptures as illustrated by Brueggemann that;

Israel's testimony to Yahweh as deliverer enunciates Yahweh's resolved capacity to intervene decisively against every oppressive, alienating circumstance and force that precludes a life of well-being (Brueggemann p.174).

He drives the point home by stating emphatically that;

We should resist softening the importance of this dimension of God's saving work by spiritualizing the text, making it a metaphor for God's overcoming of spiritual enemies or even death. God is at work to bring wholeness to those who are broken and dehumanized in the socio-political order, to bring hope to those broken of body and not just of spirit (p. 21)

The Exodus must be seen in this wider context if it is to provide the fullest example of salvation.

The story must go beyond the exit from Egypt and take into account water, manna and quail in the desert, human companionship and settlement in the Promised Land to fully account for the completeness of salvation.

Salvation in the prophets continues to represent a holistic view of life. The prophets acknowledge the need for salvation to touch every aspect of human existence. Westermann notes that; the salvation proclaimed in the oracles of the exilic and postexilic period is in itself, the wholesome relationship with God, together with the wholeness and healing in all areas of life (p.271).

This includes the most tangible and basic necessities of the community, as Taylor in *Salvation in the Hebrew Scriptures* recognises when he says that; Salvation, blessing and peace are all conceived in terms of a concrete and tangible prosperity, with abundant crops, fertile soil, a plentiful water-supply, long life, well-being and freedom, including freedom from war (p.20). The holistic hope of the prophets expressed here is analogous to that seen through the Promised Land image of the Exodus.

Despite God's providence power, scriptures show that He deliberately balanced physical and spiritual needs of and declared that a human being does not live on bread alone rather the word;

‘So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD’ (Deuteronomy 8:3).

Whereas this is the closest it comes in acknowledging the duality of a human being, it remains obscure as to the isolation or existence of the two.

The current shift to a holistic approach to theology is in tune with the Hebrew understanding that; “Salvation is concerned with the conditions in which people live in this world as well as with their everlasting well-being. It will actively seek that; physical, mental and spiritual health which make life enjoyable here and now” (Taylor p.24).

This holistic approach implicitly includes the social relationships that make up human community. Having recognised that salvation often comes through human agency, this also highlights the need for right relationships and social justice. Salvation in the Hebrew Bible is not a personal achievement but a state of *shalom* which needs to be shared to be experienced fully.

1.9.1.2.2 Salvation in the New Testament

The writings of the New Testament proclaim the impact of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus upon his followers in the early church. For these first Christians, the saving presence of God was found in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Because much of the experience and meaning of the Christian life was interpreted against the background of the Hebrew Scriptures, the points made earlier about salvation continued to inform the development of Christianity as well.

In the New Testament, a sense of eschatological anticipation flavours much of the soteriological content. Belief in resurrection as a symbol of the culmination of time was a part

of the apocalyptic Judaism of that era, including the teaching of the Pharisees. For the Apostle Paul and other early Christians, Jesus' resurrection is the 'first fruits' (1Corinthians 15:20) which symbolised something greater that had already begun – God was actively involved in transforming the world towards its final purpose.

In the New Testament, as in the Hebrew Bible, there is no single dominant interpretation of salvation. Salvation encompasses a variety of experiences and meanings including physical healing and wholeness as well as reconciliation with God. These various understandings of salvation are rooted in the different historical contexts from which they emerge. Like the Exodus story, salvation is experienced from a particular situation of need to its corresponding resolution.

The following segment looks at Jesus through the eyes of the gospel writers for concepts of salvation which might contribute helpfully towards developing a theology of holistic service today. Luke's gospel has been used primarily, though not exclusively, in order to reflect consistency and as a reflection of the necessary limitations of the scope of this work.

The story of Jesus' life as told by the gospel writers is characterised by association with salvation from beginning to end. The name Jesus, a Greek variant of the Hebrew name Joshua, means 'He saves', a point made explicit in Matthew's gospel where the angelic messenger instructs Joseph 'you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins' (Matthew 1:21). Luke's gospel also begins with a series of proclamations of salvation linked to the birth of Jesus (Luke 1:69, 77; 2:11, 30; 3:6).

At the other end of the story, both Jesus' death and resurrection have also been seen as having salvific importance (Lorenzen p.266-295). For the purposes of this study, however, we will focus particularly on an understanding of salvation based on what Jesus said and did as

recorded in the gospels. In doing so, it is acknowledged that all of the gospel accounts are post-Easter records; that is, they are told in the light of Jesus' death and resurrection. The message of salvation which is associated with the Jesus of the gospels arises directly from the experience of salvation in the early church.

Much of the message of Jesus that has been retained focuses on the Kingdom of God. Jesus proclamation of the Kingdom is aimed at changing the present reality and cannot be relegated only to a future, heavenly dimension. When Jesus prays "Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10), we are reminded that God's will needs to be fulfilled here on earth – not just in heaven. Similarly, the reminder that "the Kingdom is among you" (Luke 17:21) challenges us to become aware of and make real the possibilities of God's Kingdom which contrast with the imperfect world in which we live.

The tension which exists between the already and the not yet of the Kingdom is the essence of New Testament eschatology. God's saving work begins with creation but is not yet complete, as is evidenced by examples of oppression, injustice and suffering throughout the world. John Dominic Crossan in *Jesus and the Kingdom* identifies two distinct paths for dealing with this tension. The first is apocalyptic eschatology which announces God's judgement on evil in the world and waits expectantly for God to intervene decisively to deal with this evil once and for all. The second path Crossan associates with Jesus and calls sapiential eschatology. This path anticipates God's redeeming action by living in the present under the 'rules' of God's Kingdom. This statement illustrates the essential difference between the two: 'In apocalyptic eschatology we are waiting for God to act, but in sapiential eschatology God is waiting for us to act' (Crossan, p.35).

There is a consistency which should be noted here with the Hebrew Bible; salvation comes from God, but humans must actively reach out for it and participate in it.

Jesus did not simply speak about the Kingdom, but as he lived the values which he proclaimed, people experienced salvation. When Jesus broke social convention by sharing meals with those who had been defined as sinners and outcasts, he encouraged them to accept themselves as they had already been accepted by God. In his book *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography* Crossan acknowledges the radical nature of this practice when he says;

‘The Kingdom of God as a process of open commensality, of a nondiscriminating table depicting in miniature a non-discriminating society, clashes fundamentally with honour and shame, those basic values of ancient Mediterranean culture and society’ (p.70).

However the result of this open table fellowship is restorative personally and socially for those who were able to share in it. In the story of Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10), Jesus openly declares, “Today salvation has come to this house” referring to both the social and personal implications of Zacchaeus’ change of heart and newfound concern for the poor. The salvation experience described needs to be seen in its wider context, especially including those whom Zacchaeus directly compensated for past wrongdoings.

In addition, when a wealthy ruler comes to Jesus seeking salvation, the message to him is “Sell all that you own and give to the poor” (Luke 18:22). Jesus does not have a single recipe for salvation which is applicable to every person and circumstance. Instead he constantly adapts what is needed for salvation to the circumstances of the individual. In his book, *Salvation and the New Testament*, Frances Young picks up this point reminding us that;

We have lost sight of the fact that the 'content' of salvation depends on what your predicament is. When Peter finds he cannot walk on water and yells, 'Lord, save me!' (Mt. 14:30), he is not concerned about his sins or his ultimate destiny...So to understand salvation means discerning what the human predicament and the rescue plan is (p.30).

The abundance of healing stories that are attached to Jesus also illustrates his concern and practical assistance for those suffering in this world. Neal Flanagan comments on the holistic concern presented in Luke-Acts saying; “Luke’s salvation-vocabulary often includes physical

healing, Healing of the whole person, not merely of the soul or spirit, is part of salvation” (Durken p.205).

When Luke writes of Jesus and later of the disciples who followed him, words and actions work together to meet the spectrum of human need. Thus, ‘Your sins are forgiven’ can be comfortably juxtaposed with the healing of a paralysed man (Luke 5:17-26).

We should also recognise that the healings that Jesus performed had a range of effects beyond curing the physical symptoms of disease. External signs of illness had wide-ranging social implications in Jesus’ time, some of which were based in the cultic rules of Leviticus. Curing disease and disability meant more than physical wellbeing, it reopened access to broader society including cultural and religious observances. When Jesus tells a healed person, “Your faith has saved you” (Luke 18:42), he is not speaking of a future reward in heaven but re-entry into a fuller experience of life in the present.

The message of Jesus about God’s Kingdom, told through parables and illustrated by his life amongst the poor, speaks of an alternative reality which is firmly based in this world. It echoes a concern for the whole person and their place in the community. In the gospels, people experienced salvation through Jesus as he lived out the values of the Kingdom restoring people to wholeness. Jesus’ feeding and healing of the multitudes as recorded in (Luke 9: 11-17) need no elaboration as to the focus of this intervention.

In conclusion of this section, we should not be surprised that the writers who contributed over a number of different centuries, places and contexts to the books which make up the Bible should have a variety of views on the definition of salvation. However, a strong correlation exists through the Hebrew Bible and the Gospels of the New Testament which presents

salvation as the gift of God meeting humanity at the point of our deepest need. According to Green in his *Salvation and Evangelism*;

If we take the Bible as our guide, salvation is a very broad and deep river that fertilises all it touches...And since salvation is as broad as human need, it should not surprise us that God gets through to different people in very different ways with his good news of salvation (Green p.104).

This view of salvation represents a positive contribution to the current interpretation of salvation and a development of a theology of holistic approach which can inform the practice of theology today. While from the preceding discourses we have witnessed a number of incidences where salvation is invoked to mean deliverance from immediate threats that are more worldly than spiritual, we are cautioned not to be blinded by pursuing the earthly needs at the expense of our souls. 'For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?' (Mark 8:36). This calls for salvation praxis.

1.9.2 Marxism

'Marxism' is a terminology derived from the collective ideologies held by the legendary writer Karl Marx who wrote widely on various subjects affecting society of his time but his views have wide ranging effects even to modern day society. Two important ideas which developed bear mentioning here: first, that economic realities are the determining factor for all human behaviour; and second, that all of human history is that of class struggle between those who own things and those who do not own things but must instead work to survive. This is the context in which all human social institutions develop, including religion. It should be noted that through most of his life, Marx did not work alone; he had the help of Friedrich Engels. The two were of like mind and worked exceptionally well together - Marx was the better philosopher while Engels was the better communicator.

1.9.2.1 Karl Marx and Economics

For Karl Marx, the basic determining factor of human history is economics. According to him, humans even from their earliest beginnings are not motivated by grand ideas but instead by material concerns, like the need to eat and survive. This is the basic premise of a materialist view of history. At the beginning, people worked together in unity and it wasn't so bad. But eventually, humans developed agriculture and the concept of private property. These two facts created a division of labour and a separation of classes based upon power and wealth. This, in turn, created the social conflict which drives society.

All of this is made worse by capitalism which only increases the disparity between the wealthy classes and the labour classes. Confrontation between them is unavoidable because those classes are driven by historical forces beyond anyone's control. Capitalism also creates a new misery: 'exploitation' of surplus value.

For Marx, an ideal economic system would involve exchanges of equal value for equal value, where value is determined simply by the amount of work put into whatever is being produced. Capitalism interrupts this ideal by introducing a profit motive; a desire to produce an uneven exchange of lesser value for greater value. Profit is ultimately derived from the surplus value produced by workers in factories.

A labourer might produce enough value to feed his family in two hours of work, but he keeps at the job for a full day; in Marx's time, that might be 12 or 14 hours. Those extra hours represent the surplus value produced by the worker. The owner of the factory did nothing to earn this, but exploits it nevertheless and keeps the difference as profit. To this, he recommends communism. In this context, Communism thus has two goals: First it is supposed to explain these realities to people unaware of them; second it is supposed to call people in the labour

classes to prepare for the confrontation and revolution. This emphasis on action rather than mere philosophical musings is a crucial point in Marx's program.

Economics, thus, are what constitute the base of all of human life and history; generating division of labour, class struggle and all the social institutions which are supposed to maintain the status quo. Those social institutions are a 'superstructure' built upon the 'base of economics', totally dependent upon material and economic realities but nothing else. All of the institutions which are prominent in our daily lives; marriage, church, government, arts, etc.; can only be truly understood when examined in relation to economic forces.

Marx had a special word for all of the work that goes into developing those institutions: *ideology*. The people working in those systems; developing art, theology, philosophy, etc.; imagine that their ideas come from a desire to achieve truth or beauty, but that is not ultimately true. In reality, they are expressions of class interest and class conflict. They are reflections of an underlying need to maintain the status quo and preserve current economic realities. This isn't surprising; those in power have always wished to justify and maintain that power.

Marx's overall thesis about the workings of society, this thesis, developed over the course of his lifetime with his collaborator Friedrich Engels, can be summed up for our purposes as follows:

Material needs and desires, and the production of goods, represent the foundation of society. Ideas play a secondary role.

The necessities and comforts of life must in some way be produced: key historic 'modes of production' include hunting and gathering, agriculture, and industrial production; over time, different people take on different tasks in producing material goods.

Within this division of labour, certain 'relations of production' develop between people carrying out different tasks; the scaling up of commercial activity and the profit motive that comes with modern capitalism leads to even greater disparities in wealth and power between classes, as well as to the exacerbation of a particular form of inequality that Marx terms 'exploitation'.

The introduction of private property, in which some come to own the 'means of production' (land, factories, machinery) and others to own only their personal capacity to provide labour, also introduces the separation of classes by power and wealth, and thus sets up essentially permanent social conflict. The ultimate result of this conflict will be a large-scale revolution on the part of the 'proletariat' (workers) in which capitalism is overthrown. Marx' and Engels' *Communist Manifesto* states this point as follows;

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles [between] freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes (*Communist Manifesto*: 1848 and in Tucker 1978: 473-474).

Thus, for Marx, the central drama of history is class struggle, and the central institution underlying social life and social change; the 'base' or 'substructure' of society is the economy. Economic facts provide the independent variables of any given social situation. Non-economic facts are society's dependent variables. All other spheres of social activity; law, politics, the arts, literature, morality, religion are understood by Marx to make up a 'superstructure', which essentially rests on the economic base of the society.

1.9.2.2 Karl Marx and Religion

While Karl Marx did not publish a specific monograph on religion, his impact on the sociology of religion is significant; indeed, Marx can be thought of as the first sociologist of religion.

According to Marx, religion can only be understood in relation to other social systems and the economic structures of society. In fact, religion is only dependent upon economics, nothing else; so much so that the actual religious doctrines are almost irrelevant. This is a functionalist interpretation of religion: understanding religion is dependent upon what social purpose religion itself serves, not the content of its beliefs. Marx conception of religion is one of the most important aspects of his notions.

As early as 1842, he wrote:

I desired there to be less trifling with the label 'atheism' (which reminds one of children, assuring everyone who is ready to listen to them that they are not afraid of the bogy man), and that instead the content of philosophy should be brought to the people (Letter to Ruge, November 24, 1842).

According to Karl Marx, religion like other social institutions is dependent upon the material and economic realities in a given society. It has no independent history; instead it is the creature of productive forces. As Marx wrote, 'The religious world is but the reflex of the real world'.

To put it into perspective, let's explore the foundation of his irreligious criticism:

Man makes religion, religion does not make man. Religion is indeed the self-consciousness and self-esteem of man who has either not yet won through to himself or has already lost himself again. But man is no abstract being squatting outside the world. Man is the world of man, state, society. This state and this society produce religion, which is an inverted consciousness of the world, because they are an inverted world. Religion is the general theory of this world, its encyclopaedic compendium, its logic in popular form, its spiritual point d'honneur, its enthusiasm, its moral sanction, its solemn complement and its universal basis of consolation and justification. It is the fantastic realization of the human essence since the human essence has not acquired any true reality. The struggle against religion is therefore indirectly the struggle against that world whose spiritual aroma is religion. Religious suffering is at one and the same time the expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people. (*Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*: Introduction, 1844)

Opium, of course, provides only temporary relief for suffering, and does so by blunting the senses. In making suffering bearable, Marx argues, religion (like opium) can actually be said to be contributing to human suffering by removing the impetus to do whatever is necessary to

overcome it; which, for Marx, is to relinquish religion and turn to revolutionary politics. Hamilton in *Sociology of Religion* points out the ultimate practical outcome of religion's palliative function, from a Marxian perspective: 'Religion offers compensation for the hardships of this life in some future life, but it makes such compensation conditional upon acceptance of the injustices of this life' (Hamilton 1995: 82-3).

Beyond its functions in keeping the disempowered in their place with 'pie in the sky when we die by and by', religion, according to Marx, assists those in positions of power by offering divine justification for the status quo, thus serving a legitimating function. When the current distributions of power, status and money appear, not just natural but God-given, authority becomes sanctified and social control becomes easier. Marx's opinion is that religion is an illusion that provides reasons and an excuse to keep society functioning just as it is. To this Marx recommends that;

'...the abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of [people] is a demand for their real happiness...' [Tucker, *Marx-Engels Reader*, 1978: 53-4]. To eliminate a symptom is not to eliminate the disease. '...The struggle against religion is therefore indirectly the struggle against that world whose spiritual aroma is religion...' (Marx 1844).

Religion's ideological function is, for Marx, related to the idea of reification. Reification occurs when the social character of labour becomes objectified and obscured by ideologies in which 'divine law' (rather than human beings with particular interests) is viewed as the true author of social relations. Reification thus conceals that which is actually arbitrary and socially changeable by representing it as immutably given. As such, reification is an excellent form of social control, since the workers control themselves rather than forcing the owners to control them in visibly unjust or brutal ways (which could lead to rebellion or revolt). He argued that much as capitalism takes our productive labour and alienates us from its value, religion takes our highest ideals and aspirations and alienates us from them, projecting them onto an alien and unknowable being called a god.

Marx embraced Feuerbach's ideas of projection and alienation; indeed, they appear frequently in his early writings. But he saw that Feuerbach's critique of religion touched only the theoretical side of alienation; for him, it was necessary to address the practical side as well. Because of their own fixation on metaphysics, Hegel and Feuerbach just saw the half picture of the human condition. 'Thus the criticism of heaven turns into the criticism of the earth... the criticism of theology into the criticism of politics' (Marx 1964, 42). Thus Marx moved from the criticism of heaven to the criticism of earth, from religious alienation to political and economic alienation (Norris, 19).

Marx explores the real origin of religious alienation itself and finds it in the dehumanized praxis of real social life. Marx's criticism of religion is primarily related to social conditions, that is, to the economic and social alienation of man in a class society as the source of religion. He perceives the sources out of which religion stems as being society and inhuman class conditions.

In this, Marx follows Moses Hess' analysis, which was the first to transform Feuerbach's concept of alienation into a critical analysis of the economic and social system of capitalism. Hess had established that what Feuerbach proclaimed to be a religious alienation was only an ideological expression. He argued that the real alienation of man's essence was based on the economic and social level. The influence of Hess is most pronounced in *The Jewish Question*. Marx understood a similarity between the alienation produced by the capitalist religion and self-alienation produced by Christianity (Livingston, 191). In Marx's understanding, Christianity and Judaism, which he regarded as typical of capitalism, are the theoretical and practical forms of man's egoistic alienation.

What is the secular basis of Judaism? Practical need, self-interest. What is the worldly religion of the Jew? Huckstering. What is his worldly God? Money. Very well then! Emancipation

from huckstering and money, consequently from practical real Judaism, would be the self-emancipation of our time! (Karl Marx. *Essay, The Jewish Question* 1844).

Marx argued that, throughout history, religion especially Christianity has served capitalism as an 'ideological' superstructure (Livingston, 192). In *Capital*, he shows the affinity of Christianity and capitalism.

The religious world is but the reflex of the real world. And for a society based upon the production of commodities, in which the producers in general enter into social relations with one another by treating their products as commodities and values, whereby they reduce their individual private labour to the standard of homogeneous human labour; for such a society, Christianity... is the most fitting form of religion (Marx 1964, 135).

For Marx, then, religion is always ultimately ideological, and the form it takes will depend on the shape of social life as determined by those in control. Religion may serve as a painkiller for the masses, but it is a painkiller doled out by the oppressors (since, for Marx, 'the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas', Tucker 1978: 136), and religion always serves to benefit the oppressors in the end. Religion, to Marx, will never lead the masses to revolt. As a dependent variable, religion does not have the power to lead to social change.

Religion is an expression of more fundamental unhappiness and symptom of more fundamental and oppressive economic realities. Hopefully, humans will create a society in which the economic conditions causing so much pain and suffering would be eradicated and, therefore, the need for soothing drugs like religion will cease. Of course, for Marx such a turn of events isn't to be 'hoped for' because human history was leading inevitably towards it. He points out that;

The religious reflections of the real world can, in any case, vanish only when the practical relations of everyday life between man and man, and man and nature, generally present themselves to him in a transparent and rational form. The veil is not removed from the countenance of the social life-process, i.e. the process of material production, until it becomes production by freely associated men, and stands under their conscious and planned control. This, however, requires that society possess a material foundation, or a series of material conditions of existence, which in their turn are the natural and spontaneous product of a long and tormented historical development (*Capital*, p. 173).

Marx argues that only a 'praxis' which transforms economic circumstances can free man from his alienated condition. Marx understood that consciousness could not be changed within consciousness alone, but only by changes in material acts. The misery of human being is not caused by metaphysical ideas, but by alienated praxis that one can find in the ideological consciousness. Marx increases the importance of the social dimension of human existence based on the critique of religion as ideology. He concentrates on the social relation as being the point of intersection of political and economic relations, not an abstract relation. Marx concludes;

The struggle against religion is therefore immediately the fight against the other world, of which religion is the spiritual aroma...The demand to give up the illusions about its condition, is the demand to give up a condition which needs illusions. The criticism of religion is therefore in embryo, the criticism of the vale of woe, the halo of which is religion (Marx 1964, 42).

In this light, we can understand the statement: 'The criticism of religion is the premise of all criticism'.

As an atheist, his religion was socialism. Under socialism, he argued that society would be governed by the working class in what he called the 'dictatorship of the proletariat'. He believed that socialism would eventually be replaced by a stateless, classless society called pure communism and this was his vision of 'salvation'. In this level of economic development, basic human needs and wants would be met according to the Marxist principle, '*From each*

according to his abilities to produce, to each according to needs' (Marx 2001c: 87) and everyone would live happily ever after.

1.9.2.3 Modern Imperialism

Marxist theoretical analysis of the contemporary world would affirm the existence of imperialism as an integral part of the global capitalist system. It has been argued that nation states have increasingly become irrelevant in the era of globalisation and thus we need to move beyond the concept of imperialism, which is based on rich nations colonizing and exploiting the poorer nations. The problem with this argument is that it fails to identify the principal class forces which drive world capitalism today and instead confuses the changes in the form and character of imperialism with the disappearance of its essence and content.

Lenin's analysis of imperialism in the early decades of the 20th century was based on the development of monopolies as a result of concentration of capital and the coalescence between banking and industrial capital in advanced capitalist countries giving rise to finance capital. These national blocs of finance capital backed by their nation states resorted to imperialism, controlling the resources and markets of the poor countries. This also led to inter-imperialist rivalries between nation states over the division and re-division of their 'spheres of influence' causing wars like the world wars.

Things have changed since Lenin's time and this can be seen in the development of international finance capital, which while originating in the advanced capitalist nations is no longer national in its form. The transnational banks and other financial corporations have global operations today and move around large volumes of capital across national markets on a daily basis in search of quick speculative gains. International finance capital is globally mobile and fluid, it is not tied to specific industries and it does not serve its interest to divide

the world market into rival blocks. What it wants is a globally integrated market where it has unfettered freedom of movement. This is the force that drives the process of neoliberal globalisation.

Rivalries between imperialist nation states have subdued under the hegemony of international finance capital. However, this does not imply a disappearance of imperialism. Rather imperialism has acquired a particularly vicious form under the imperatives of international finance capital. The major imperialist powers have formed a bloc under the leadership of the US, which ensures that any challenge to neoliberal globalisation and the hegemony of international finance capital is eliminated. In this, the role of the US state and its economy remains crucial.

This can be seen in the unfolding events under contemporary capitalism. The global crisis of 2007-08 was brought about by the depredations of finance - asset price bubbles created through reckless lending and speculation. In the immediate aftermath of the crisis, the imperialist nations took the initiative to form the G20 and proposed a coordinated expansion of state expenditure as the way towards recovery. But once the big banks and financial companies were bailed out using taxpayers' money, the imperialist powers especially the US, Germany, France, and UK started advocating austerity measures and cutbacks in public spending. The burden of adjustment has been shifted on to the working people across the world through the austerity measures even as international finance has recovered from its losses at the expense of the state exchequer. This could not have happened had it not been for the imperialist nation states acting in unison in the interests of international finance. The possibility of a shift away from neoliberal globalisation and curbing the power of big finance in the backdrop of the crisis is being stymied by imperialism.

The hegemony of the US dollar is a significant aspect of the international finance driven imperialist system. Bulk of the financial wealth and resources across the world continues to be held in dollars owing to the imperialist strength of the US state. This allows the US economy to suck in finance from across the world and sustain the globalisation process. In addition, the role being played by the NATO in the post-cold war era is yet another signifier of imperialist militarism. The operations of NATO have been extended to West Asia, in the name of the ‘war on terror’ or ‘humanitarian interventions’. The purpose is to destroy any regime that asserts national sovereignty and protects the oil and mineral resources of the region from the predatory oil companies based in the West. The wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and most recently Libya and Syria have all been fought to meet these objectives. US militarism is an outcome of the systemic needs of imperialism to maintain its hegemony over the globe.

Therefore, from a Marxist point of view, imperialism continues to be the foremost barrier before all those who seek to create a just, democratic and peaceful world order. Struggle and resistance against international finance driven imperialism comprises the core of revolutionary movements in the 21st century.

1.9.2.4 Marxism and Christianity today

One can say that Marx’s thought is congenial to Christian belief in some senses. Marx’s explanations of ‘alienation and emancipation’ have a quite similar to the Christian ideas of ‘sin and redemption’ (Chopp p.18). The hopeful future-oriented quality of this thought sounds familiar to the hope of the gospel. Yet despite these formal similarities and positive critique of religion, the materialist orientation of Marx’s thinking based on atheism is a particular obstacle to Christian interpretation. Marx’s materialism raises an important challenge to Christian belief. If Marx was one-sidedly materialistic, Christianity traditionally has been one-sidedly anti-materialistic.

Even though it seems to be true that atheism is so essential to Marxism that Marxist goals cannot be achieved without it, if we defined Marxism as a social theory, the role played by his atheism becomes much less important. In the Paris Manuscripts, penned in 1844, Marx explicates this argument as follows:

Since the real existence of man and nature has become evident in practice, through sense experience, because man has thus become evident for man as the being of nature, and nature for man as the being of man, the question about an alien being, about a being above nature and man - a question which implies admission of the unreality of nature and of man - has become impossible in practice. Atheism, as a negation of God, has no longer any meaning, and postulates the existence of man through this negation; but socialism as socialism no longer stands in any need of such a mediation (MECW, Vol. 3, p. 306.)

This is the starting point where Christians and Marxists (or Christian-Marxists) seek the same goal, which is the liberation from any type of human bondage. In this understanding, we can find various connections between Christianity and Marxism in liberation theology today.

Marx's condemnations of religion have a permanent validity and value when it acts to legitimize unjust structures or to pacify the oppressed. These censures have challenged Christianity and encouraged churches to be involved in issues of social justice. Many Christians who are motivated to work for social justice may not opt for Marxist revolutionary change, but they would agree that the theology has only interpreted God, human beings, and the world in various ways; but what matters is to change them as per Marxist view (Selden p.82).

Whatever one's final conclusion about the accuracy or validity of Marx's ideas on religion, we should recognize that he provided an invaluable service by provoking people to take a hard look at the social web in which religion always occurs. Because of his work, it has become impossible to study religion without also exploring its ties to various social and economic forces. People's spiritual lives can no longer be assumed to be totally independent of their material lives.

For this reason, some Marxists could be sympathetic to religion. Karl Kautsky, in his book: *Foundations of Christianity*; wrote that, early Christianity was in some respects, a proletarian revolution against privileged Roman oppressors. In Latin America, some catholic theologians have used Marxist theories to frame their critique of economic injustice, resulting in ‘liberation theology’ (Archpriest p.359). According to Marx, this new form of Christianity was a production of new economic forces as early capitalism developed. New economic realities required a new religious superstructure by which it could be justified and defended.

The Greek philosopher Aristotle said that ‘*Man begins to philosophise when the necessities of life are provided*’ (Anton p.165). By philosophise we mean the ability to think in general, to lift one's eyes, above the worries and immediate pressures of every day existence, to seek a broader horizon, to contemplate life, nature, and the Universe. In present-day society, the minds of men and women are oppressed by the struggle for survival - whether or not they will find work, whether they will be able to pay the bills at the end of the month, find a roof over their heads, obtain provision for sickness and old age.

One can thus assert that Marxist deduction from his anatomy of civil society leading to his religious criticism has essentially led to, pragmatic theology, which, is particularly suitable for drawing on the connections between the ‘spiritual’ and ‘material’ elements of theology. According to Browning, in his book, *A Fundamental Practical Theology*, recognising that God is in the midst of these interactions:

Practical theology focuses on these implicit religious dimensions in its description of situations and seeks to make them explicit and thematic. This is not the same as bringing religious meanings to a situation that is in itself devoid of such meanings; it is making directly and immediately available for reflection what is already there, albeit unrecognised and unacknowledged. (Browning, 1991 p.61)

The reasons for the above submission are obvious. In the first place dismal economic situation that has led to poverty, diseases, unemployment, continue to be prevalent in society today.

Secondly, the religious involvement in the plight of the poor and provision of social services have set the pace for the inseparable relationship between ‘material’ and ‘spiritual’ theology, which the NGOs have followed suit. Thirdly, in view of the fact that religious institutions and NGOs in general are internationally seen as relevant and, therefore, are given support and financial assistance to help mitigate socio-economic and religious-cultural problems in various deprived communities, which these institutions have consistently pursued will continue to be relevant. In the light of the above, Marxist views on religion cannot be judged as misplaced but would rather be looked at as a mirror into religion.

1.9.2.5 Capitalism as an unjust economic system

The subtitle of *Capital I* is *A critique of political economy*. Its implication is an attack on ‘The Trinity Formula’ (Marx 2001f: 801), symbolising the claimed harmonious existence of three classes, that is, capitalists, landowners and labourers, as portrayed in classical political economy. The three of them were said to live peacefully together by receiving profit, rent and wages as compensation for each other’s contribution to the production of commodities.

According to Marx’s contrary account, the wage-relation between capitalists and workers hides the exploitation of working time without any compensation in reality to the workers. Marx, then, absolutely insists that he has thus revealed the ‘secret’ of the capitalist mode of expansion in Capital. His declaration is located at the very end of part five of Capital entitled *The production of absolute and of relative value*, where he completes his account of the ‘secret’ of capitalist production. Capital is therefore not only, as Adam Smith says, ‘command over labour’; it is essentially command over unpaid labour. All surplus value, whatever its particular form (profit, interest or rent) may subsequently crystallise into, is in substance the materialisation of unpaid labour. The secret of the self-expansion of capital resolves itself into

having a power of disposal over a definite quantity of other people's unpaid labour (Marx 2001e: 534).

In another mode of critique, Marx, argues that the system is deceptive by impeaching four major characteristics of the world: 'Freedom, Equality, Property and Bentham' where 'the sale and purchase of labour power goes on' (Marx 2001e: 186). In the above respect, Marx indicates that: Freedom means the fact that both agents with free will in the wage-contract are just a buyer and a seller of a commodity, or labour power; Equality implies that they confront each other simply as commodity owners and so exchange equivalent for equivalent, that is, a realisation of commutative justice; Property means that everybody can 'dispose only of what is his own' (Marx 2001e: 186); and Bentham is thought to be responsible for the identification of private interest with the general interest through his utilitarian felicific calculus. He is also used by Marx symbolically as a protagonist of an eternally harmonised bourgeois society based on transactions motivated by self-interest.

To theorise the point above, I would say that Marx tries to characterise the capitalist economy by analysing it in abstract form as a process of simple commodity circulation founded on the private property system. In this situation, there are socially equal individual economic agents who can buy and sell their commodities freely amongst themselves under contracts of exchange. This is synonymous with the current contract based employment arrangements. Individuals in this process are motivated by self-interest. It would be natural to assume that Marx thinks that there should be something wrong or unjust going on in the ordinary social process where there is an appearance of harmony, produced by a 'free and equal contract' between labourers and capitalists. The point of Marx's core critique of capitalism is that there is an unequal exchange in the quantity of labour, albeit under the veil of an equal exchange of labour power and the wages paid for it. This is the exploitation problem. Marx himself

characterised the unjust situation as follows: “Capital obtains this surplus labour without an equivalent, and in essence it always remains forced labour, no matter how much it may seem to result from free contractual agreement” (Marx 2001f: 806). All these things so far make it clear that Marx judged capitalism to be unjust, unfortunately or otherwise fortunately, this is the case today.

Marx applies the theory of historical materialism and puts a positive value on capitalist economic development. In this theory, capitalistic development itself creates the conditions that emerge to form the new, higher and developed stage, thus his view on development as the result of ‘the great civilizing influence of capital’ (Marx 2001d: 336). However, it also includes his view that the existing social system is not stable and comes to be an obstacle to human development. This is the case for capitalistic society today. Theoretically Marx argues that, depending on newly created conditions or the mode of production, capitalist–labourer relation, present-day human nature, culture and even law, on the whole are relative or progressively changeable.

As is the practice today, encouragement to make money individually through simple, free market trading tends to go hand-in-hand with economic crimes. As commodity trade originated from inter-social transactions, merchant capital tended to raise profit by defrauding and cheating others in defiance of communal regulations within each society. Thus Marx (1894: 448–9) pointed out that:

Commercial capital, when it holds a dominant position, is thus in all cases a system of plunder, just as its development in the trading peoples of both ancient and modern times is directly bound up with violent plunder, piracy, the taking of slaves and subjugation of colonies; as in Carthage and Rome, and later in the Venetians, Portuguese, Dutch, etc.

The current fraud, bribery and corruption scandals all over the world from Brazil, South Africa, Uganda, Kenya, FIFA, China, etc. to mention but a few need no further elaboration.

Today and especially in developing countries, emphasis is being put on agricultural transformation to alleviate poverty. Lavish programs on commercialisation of agriculture are being rolled out every now and then. This is hoped it will revive the ailing economies of these countries. However, considering present ‘world-market relations’ in connection with the ‘real historic transitions’ that have already occurred in Europe.

History shows that agriculture never appears in pure form in the modes of production preceding capital, or which correspond to its own underdeveloped stages. A rural secondary industry, such as spinning, weaving etc. must make up for the limit on the employment of labour time posited here. (Marx 1973: 669)

According to Marx ‘in real history’, that is, with the genesis of capitalism in England, ‘wage labour arises . . . out of the decline and fall of the guild economy, of the system of Estates, of labour and income in kind, of industry carried on as rural subsidiary occupation, of small-scale feudal agriculture etc’ (Marx 1973: 891). At present, this same ‘history’ is repeated globally as the ‘dissolution of the patriarchal or petty bourgeois or other lower stages of production in a foreign country’ by English industry. Why is this so? Because, according to Marx; ‘the tendency to create the world market is directly given in the concept of capital itself’ (Marx 1973: 408).

1.9.2.6 Concentration of Capitalism

It is ironic that, precisely in this epoch, when the entire world economy is dominated by huge multinationals, the apologists of capital try to show that the future lies with small enterprises, or, to use their favourite catch-phrase, ‘small is beautiful’. This wishful thinking is like the day-dreams of a decrepit old libertine who tries to forget his present ailments by recalling the vigour of youth. However, the youthful phase of capitalism is gone beyond recall.

Marx explains how free competition inevitably begets monopoly. In the struggle between big and small capital, the result is always the same: 'It always ends in the ruin of many small capitalists, whose capitals partly pass into the hands of their conquerors, partly vanish'. (K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1, p. 626)

Today, the vast power of the monopolies and multinationals exercises a total stranglehold on the world. With the access to staggering sums of money, their economies of scale, their ability to manipulate commodity prices and even their power to determine the policy of governments, they are the true masters of the planet. This is testified by austerity measures and structural reforms imposed on struggling economies as preconditions for accessing financial aid and loans.

Nowadays, despite the demagogic twaddle of journals like *The Economist* about 'small is beautiful', there can be no question of this general historical tendency being reversed. Quite to the contrary, the last few decades have witnessed an unprecedented tendency towards the concentration of capital. Benjamin Friedman of Harvard University points out that between 1980 and 1989:

Corporations were borrowing not to invest but to finance transactions; including mergers, acquisitions, stock repurchases and leveraged buy-outs that merely paid down their own or other corporation's equity. As a result, the corporate sector's aggregate net worth declined by more than one-fourth compared to the size of the economy.

Marx explains that the bourgeois in the end are dealing in 'phantom figures'; interest and speculative activities which would swallow up the whole production of the world. The statistics show that the fever of speculation vastly exceeds the actual level of production on a world

scale. Marx also warned that this process cannot be prolonged indefinitely, but as we now see in Japan, inevitably leads to a collapse of production, once the speculative bubble is burst.

The destiny of millions of human beings is in the hands of these monstrous monopolies, guided purely and simply by the predatory instinct to make ‘easy money’ by non-productive means. The collapse of the EMS and the permanent instability of world finance markets are a graphic illustration of this power, which is an additional factor for instability, threatening at any time to engulf the world in a new financial crisis, which, given the precarious and unsound state of world capitalism, could end in a deep slump.

1.9.2.7 Marxism and Machinery

In the first volume of *Capital*, Marx explains that the introduction of machinery under capitalism necessarily means a lengthening of the working day. The purpose of employing machinery is to cheapen the product by economising on labour. However, there is a contradiction implicit in this. The profits of the capitalist are extracted from the unpaid labour of the working class. The increase in the productivity of labour made possible by the introduction of machinery is achieved by a heavy initial outlay on costly machinery which in itself adds no new value to the end product but merely imports to it, over a period, bit by bit, their own value: “Machinery, like every other component of constant capital, creates no new value, but yields up its own value to the product that it serves to beget.” (*Capital* Vol. 1, p. 387).

The only way to ensure a greater return on this outlay, is to make his machinery work non-stop, day and night, with no interruptions, while simultaneously squeezing every atom of surplus value from the worker, both by lengthening the working day through overtime, the abolition of tea-breaks, etc. (‘absolute surplus value’), and by enormously increasing the intensity of labour

by speed-ups, productivity deals and all kinds of pressure ('relative surplus value'). This explains the fact that today, factories are made to run almost twenty four hours and the introduction of night work shifts especially for factory workers.

Thus, as Marx explains, 'machinery, while augmenting the human material that forms the principal object of capital's exploiting power, at the same time raises the degree of exploitation'. (*Capital* Vol. 1, p. 395) And again:

If machinery be the most powerful means for increasing the productiveness of labour i.e. for shortening the working-time required in the production of a commodity, it becomes in the hands of capital the most powerful means, in those countries first invaded by it, for lengthening the working-day beyond all bounds set by human nature. (*Capital* Vol. 1, p. 403)

Competition, the constant revolutionising of the productive forces and techniques, the desire to 'corner the market' and get an advantage over others, were the factors which, in the past at least, compelled the capitalist constantly to re-invest in expensive machinery. However, once having introduced new machinery, it is in the capitalist's interest to use it to the maximum. It cannot be allowed to stand idle for an instant, partly because it deteriorates, and partly because it can quickly become obsolete. That is why, under capitalism, the introduction of machinery leads to greater exploitation and an increase in the working day.

The introduction of new technology to a given branch of production means that in that branch, for a time, huge super-profits can be earned. Later, however, the other capitalists catch up and the rate of profit is levelled out. This can well be related with the telecom industry today and the manufacture of other utility devices where the one with the most efficient and latest technology tends to have an edge over others as long as the record isn't broken by a competitor. This is also explained by the fact that today, research and development takes a reasonable part of expenditure by manufacturing firms.

Ultimately, the amount of surplus value obtained by the capitalist depends upon two things: a) the rate of surplus value and b) the number of workers employed. However, the introduction of machinery tends to reduce the number of workers and therefore change the ratio of variable to constant capital. Machinery (constant capital), as we have seen, does not add any new value to the final product above and beyond what is already present in it. Hence, the application of machinery to the production of surplus value, Marx explains, ‘implies a contradiction which is immanent in it’. (*Capital* Vol. 1, p407)

‘Owing to the extensive use of machinery and to the division of labour’, wrote Marx and Engels in the *Communist Manifesto*;

The work of the proletarian has lost all individual character, and, consequently, all charm for the workman. He becomes an appendage of the machine, and it is only the most simple, most monotonous, and most easily required knack, that is required of him. (Marx-Engels, *Selected Works* Vol.1, p.114)

In the days of Ancient Rome, a slave was described as ‘instrumentum vocalis’ - a ‘tool with a voice’. Nowadays, the position of most ‘free’ workers is not much better. Not only the deadly monotony and exhausting work of the production line, but also the soul-destroying nature of the work of many white-collar workers working with computers in large offices which, in effect, increasingly resemble factories. And this is the way most people spend their lives, if they are lucky enough to find work at all!

In a nutshell, an analysis of the third world countries today will undoubtedly uncover that Marxism is as alive today as in 1840s. In his book *Ecumenism and a New World order*, Macos Arruda had this to say;

For the poor and the oppressed of the world the last forty years of growth oriented development have been a ‘lost promise’ and a myth. Their conditions of existence have worsened due to the crippling development policies followed by their own governments and reinforced by international linkages, which have increased poverty and human misery (Arruda P. 59).

1.9.2.8 Marx's 'scientific socialism' and reform today

Marx's analysis of socialism is often labelled 'scientific socialism', following Engels. That label is better suited for expressing Marx's socialist ideas than 'revolutionary communism', which is also quite often used, because, although the two labels are partly compatible, 'scientific socialism' indicates more generally a methodological feature of Marx's socialist thought, while the term 'revolutionary communism' merely alludes to Marx's means of realising a socialist society. In addition, 'scientific socialism' reflects Marx's life-long activities, particularly after the 1850s, when he began to do serious research regarding political economy. He did not necessarily support revolutionary actions in the later decades of his life. In the preface to the second German edition of the *Communist Manifesto* (1872), Marx and Engels said: '*no special stress is laid on the revolutionary measures proposed at the end of Section II*' (Marx and Engels 1872: 174–5). The way of reform thus depends upon the situation of the nation.

Marx foresees socialist society as a necessary result of the conflict between productive forces and relations of production in capitalist society. That conflict or contradiction will come about with a necessity 'which can be determined with the precision of natural science'. Men become conscious of this conflict in legal, political, religious, artistic or philosophic, in short, ideological forms, and fight it out (Marx 1859: 263). Marx viewed periodic economic crises and increasing poverty among workers in every economic crisis as a result of the contradiction between productive forces and relations of production. This can conversely be called the premise on which current occupational associations that are advocating for inclusiveness, better earnings as well as improvements in occupational conditions. We can confidently deduce that workers' unions and marginalised communities claiming better living conditions are precursors to the development of socialist society.

Human consciousness is a reflection of people's social way of existence, particularly of their relations of production, so that workers will revolt in response to the economic difficulties arising from their relations of production. This is reflected in the various miners' revolts prevalent in South Africa, Train and Air transport workers' protests which are happening across Europe on almost a daily basis as some of the pointers to Marxism today. Marx viewed utopian advocacy of socialism as arbitrary, not scientific. What 'scientific socialism' means is that socialist society can be foreseen scientifically, as a necessity.

Marxist ideas have serious implications, which some people have accepted uncritically, while others have denied them completely. In short, these ideas have been subject to comparatively little serious examination, presumably because they are so sweeping and provocative. Marx unequivocally campaigned against caste society, from *The Communist Manifesto*:

When, in the course of development, class distinctions have disappeared, and all production has been concentrated in the hands of a vast association of the whole nation, the public power will lose their character . . . In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all. (Marx and Engels 1959: 482)

This by all intents and purposes seems to be the guiding principle in the promulgation of land rights, decentralisation, civil society advocacy; social services provision by governments, corporate social responsibility by private sector players and the like. The current development efforts are clearly working towards this direction.

The most important role that Marx played in Brussels was as a delegate to the general meeting of the Fraternal Democrats of London on 29 November 1847. At the same meeting of the Democratic Association, they expressed their gratitude to F. Flocon, who had supported the Democratic Association at the banquet in Dijon and they were thus positive about developing international collaboration (Jottrand 1872: 56). Marx attended the congress of Fraternal

Democrats in November, after arriving in London (*Deutsche-Brüsseler-Zeitung* 9/12 December 1847). He spoke as follows:

The fraternity and the cooperation of all nations is an expression of which all parties, particularly the bourgeoisie of Free Trade, profit today. In fact, there is a sort of fraternity among the bourgeoisies of all nations. (Sommerhausen 1976: 188)

Marx thus demanded the same fraternal union between all peoples as was the case with the bourgeois class all over the world.

It is necessary for us to have solidarity of peoples' interests to cooperate. We must break the present condition of property to cooperate in their interests. For it means the exploitation of all people. The immediate interests of all the working class depend on the destruction of the system of property. It is only the working class that should have such means. (Sommerhausen 1976: 188).

As an advocate of developmental theories, Marx declares: 'In broad outline, the Asiatic, ancient, feudal and modern bourgeois modes of production may be designated as epochs marking progress in the economic development of society' (Marx 1987: 263). He continues:

No social formation is ever destroyed before all the productive forces for which it is sufficient have been developed, and new superior relations of production never replace older ones before the material conditions for their existence have matured within the framework of the old society. (Marx 1987: 263)

According to Otsuka, the progressive trade between independent farmers and manufacturers enlarges not foreign markets but domestic ones, eventually promoting a nationalistic bourgeois revolution, which in turn produces an ideal civil society among nations. In the contrary case, the development of trade between landowners and commercial capitalists facilitates foreign trade, which maintains and enforces a typical semi-feudal economy and society in the home country (Otsuka 1982: 27–8). Otsuka reinforces his view by referencing Marx's words:

The transformation from the feudal mode of production is two-fold. The producer becomes merchant and capitalist, in contrast to the natural agricultural economy and the guild-bounded handicrafts of the medieval urban industries. This is the really revolutionizing path. Or else, the merchant establishes direct sway over production. However much this serves historically as a steppingstone . . . it cannot by itself contribute to the overthrow of the old mode of production, but tends rather to preserve and retain as its precondition. (Marx 1975: 332–3)

In the 1840s, when he transformed himself from a young Hegelian and took up his own independent position, Marx insisted on workers' liberation from their depressed mental and material position in capitalist society, labour-alienation, exploitation, oppression, and so on. He often referred to 'general human emancipation' or 'the universal liberation' of 'the labouring class' (Marx 1843: 184–6).

In the so-called Economic Manuscripts of 1857–58, which have hitherto been known as the precursor to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859), Marx sketched the natural course of things as follows:

The further back we go in history, the more does the individual, and accordingly also the producing individual, appear to be depending and belonging to a larger whole. At first, he is still in a quite natural manner part of the family, and of the family expanding into the tribe; later he is part of a community, of one of the different forms of community which arise from the conflict and the merging of tribes. It is not until the 18th century, in 'bourgeois society', that the various forms of social nexus confront the individual as merely a means towards his private ends, as external necessity. But the epoch which produces this standpoint, that of the isolated individual, is precisely the epoch of the hitherto most highly developed social relations. (Marx and Engels 1986: 18)

The first vision depicts communist society as an association or community of free individuals, Marx defines it as: 'an association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all' (Marx 1976: 506); 'a community of free individuals, carrying on their work with the means of production in common, in which the labour-power of all the different individuals is consciously applied as the combined labour-power of the community' (Marx 1996: 89); and 'a higher form of society, a society in which the full and free development of every individual forms the ruling principle' (Marx 1996: 588).

The second vision defines communism in terms of a cooperative society composed of production–consumption cooperatives whose means of production are owned in common by the members. While the first vision focuses on ‘freedom’ and ‘association’, the second focuses on ‘co-operation’ and ‘common ownership’.

Marx then ascends to the higher stage of the communist society. He shows the final principle of distribution:

After the enslaving subordination of the individual to the division of labour, and thereby also the antithesis between mental and physical labour, has vanished; after labour has become not only a means of life but life’s prime want; after the productive forces have also increased with the all-round development of the individual, and all the springs of common wealth flow more abundantly, only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be crossed in its entirety and society inscribe on its banners: From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs! (Marx 2001c: 87)

Here Marx rejects the former principle that each individual producer receives back an equivalent from society in proportion to what is contributed or supplied in the form of labour. Instead, each individual receives in proportion to his/her needs, not in proportion to his/her contribution.

What we are dealing with here is a communist society, not as it has developed on its own foundations, but on the contrary, just as it emerges from capitalist society, which is thus in every respect, economically, morally and intellectually, still stamped with the birth-marks of the old society from whose womb it emerges.

Accordingly, the individual producer receives back from society – after the deductions have been made – exactly what he gives to it . . . he draws from the social stock of means of consumption as much as the same amount of labour costs. The same amount of labour that he has given to society in one form he receives back in another. (Marx 2001c: 85–6)

Exceptionally in his work, Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Program* tries to speak to the distribution problem in future society. First, Marx discusses a distribution principle for the first stage of communist society, - 'to each according to his contribution' and then proceeds to the higher stage, - 'to each according to his need' (Marx 2001c: 87).

First, Marx opposes universalism not only with respect to capitalist society but also with respect to human nature. Marx writes about malleable human nature, noting that: 'by acting on the external world and changing it, he [man] at the same time changes his own nature' (Marx 2001e: 187). Second, Marx separates himself from liberal individualism by emphasising the communal nature of the production process. He writes: 'In order to produce, they [men] enter into definite connections and relations with one another and only within these social connections and relations with nature, does production, take place' (Marx 2001b: 211). Third, Marx is not allied to the scholarship of mere perception but claims instead the necessity of practical action which makes subjective and social factors indispensable for social science. As Marx's famous aphorism puts it: 'The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it' (Marx 2001a: 5).

1.9.3 Life and Criticism

This section looks at the available criticism of the authors of the major study texts of this work. The following is life and criticism of David Mulwa, George Bernard Shaw; and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and Ngũgĩ wa Mĩriĩ in that order.

Not much has been written about David Mulwa, available critical analyses of Mulwa's writings include the works of Kimaro Hugholin (1995) and Chacha N. Chacha (1986) both of whom have examined Mulwa's play *Mwongozo wa Buriani* in terms of its thematic concerns, setting, language and style as well as characterization. Chacha N. Chacha has also done a similar

analysis of Mulwa's other play *Ukame*. The analyses are primarily tailored to help secondary school students understand the plays. Similarly, Alembi uses Mulwa's play *Redemption* as an example to analyze the elements of drama in his book *Appreciating Drama* while Namayi has Mulwa's play *Inheritance* in terms of metaphors of power and change in Kenya. None of the critics above have analyzed any of Mulwa's plays on the theme of salvation. Other references are in terms of reviews of his other various works some of which are reflected below.

Mulwa's works just like fellow writers reflect societal connotations notable were; *Master and Servant*, (1979) that chronicled 'Kituku, a student at Kyambe primary, discovers the realities of adult emotions and political struggle in post-colonial Kenyan society'. *Glasshouses*, (2000) a warning against throwing stones if you live in a glass house. This was largely about morality. He has authored widely and other works include; *Clean Hands* (2000) and *Inheritance*, (2004).

The most outstanding however and the main part of this study is *Redemption* (1990) that treatise the theme of salvation. Mulwa in the play challenges the family, the church splinter groups, politics and the role of the youth in the church. Above all, he explores the centrality and necessity of Christ to a world that reels with problems and uncertainty.

In the absence of such literature, we are guided by Scholars such as Carrol (1980), Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1972), Wellek and Warren (1965), Ngara (1985) as well as Selden (1988) who posit that African literature is functional and places society at the centre of any literary activity. In this regard, literature is viewed as both a product and a representation of the social realities in society.

1.9.3.1 George Bernard Shaw's *Major Barbara*

Major Barbara, written in 1905, is rather a Marxist laden play that addresses issues of classes, poverty, capitalism, religion and its recipe for social redemption by contrasting the Salvation

Army and Undershaft's munitions factory. Shaw sets up the unusual burlesque of English upper class families of the time not least in respect of their religious situation. Shaw uses the misalliance theme in conventional romantic comedy for 'the contrast between the illusions of the misallied couple about the social reality' (Gebler, 1972, p. 65) in *Major Barbara* and describes a critical social condition through English upper class families for dramatic ends.

1.9.3.2 Influences on Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and Ngugi wa Miiri

When one studies Ngũgĩ's plays one finds certain similarities between themes from his work and the experiences of many of his fellow writers and theatre practitioners, just as there are differences, due to influences on him specifically. The theatre practitioner Bertolt Brecht, as well as the Latin American theatre activist Augusto Boal, both made huge contributions to the theatre. Ngũgĩ himself does not claim to be influenced by them, but does admit frequently to the influences of Frantz Fanon and Paulo Freire who are contemporaries of Boal and who share his views.

Ngũgĩ's theatre aesthetics shows however, that he has been influenced by Brecht and Boal's theatre philosophies. Other writers whom he read with appreciation and who influenced his thinking and literary expression were amongst others, Aristotle, D. H. Lawrence, Karl Marx, Tolstoy, Zola, Joseph Conrad, Friedrich Engels, Lenin and Cabral. Though all of these people's influence is important, this thesis does not aim to elaborate on all of them, but only those influences that affected Ngũgĩ's treatises on the theme of salvation.

One common belief that revolutionary activists and theatre practitioners share is that the society must change. The only possible way that it is going to happen is through revolution by the masses. To change the society means a struggle for a new economic, political and cultural order

which is free from imperialism. One of the biggest weapons in the arsenal of imperialism is culture. It is therefore logical that society should fight back by using theatre.

1.9.3.2.1 Joseph Conrad

Conrad was the author Ngũgĩ chose to concentrate on during an assignment at Makerere. ‘For Ngũgĩ, the appeal of Conrad lay not only in his exploration of alienation, self-betrayal, and heroism, and in his writing *a borrowed language*...it also lay in Conrad’s political and economic themes’ (Cantalupo 1995: 38).

The Russian-born Józef Teodor Konrad Nalęcz Korzeniowski became the novelist, Joseph Conrad, who would through his writings speak to the heart and the head. Maybe it was that which made Ngũgĩ aware of him as Ngũgĩ had the utmost respect for the excellent command of the English language that Conrad had.

Chinua Achebe found Conrad’s book, *Heart of Darkness* (1899) disturbing and felt that it was an unjust, racist reflection of the Africans. Words like ‘savages’ and ‘grotesk’ were to him an assault and clearly showed Conrad’s subverted vision of Africa’s people and a colonial text. It is however true that Conrad does succeed in effectively exposing the discrepancies between colonial pretence and reality which appealed to Ngũgĩ. Where both writers were in agreement is in their conviction that colonialism was a scramble for loot and their writing reflected the horrors of that intrusion. Even Christianity was seen by them as bringing anguish to people instead of inner peace. Ngũgĩ paints the European as greedy and heartless; the African as landless (Cook: 1997:191 and Killam 1984:137).

1.9.3.2.2 David Herbert Lawrence

David Herbert Lawrence was known for his eccentricities during his relatively short life. His poems are read by most scholars of English, then and now, and Ngũgĩ too came into contact

with them as a student. Lawrence insisted on the individual's dual and conflicting needs to be separate and to be in communion. Where this balance is not achieved the result is an utter and destructive division. Ngũgĩ stresses in most of his writings that the colonial oppressor caused the destruction of the individual and the community.

Not only was there a stylistic relation between the two writers but also 'when it came to the portraying of the thoughts of women and men and the effect of the environment or setting on their perceptions' according to Jonathan Karaira who read his first story (Cox 1997: 541). The events that happened during his childhood and later years and the people's suffering made an ineffaceable impression on Ngũgĩ. It became the main theme of his work and his writing.

1.9.3.2.3 Ngugi wa Thiongo

Ngũgĩ is one of Africa's greatest writers, and certainly the foremost voice of Kenyan literature, but unlike his Nigerian counterpart Wole Soyinka, he has been somewhat ignored by readers outside of Africa. Like that of so many other African writers, Ngũgĩ's work was critical of the direction his nation took after the exit of colonial powers, and this led to his detention and eventual self-exile from Kenya. David Hellman, *San Francisco Chronicle* (13/8/2006).

The stories about Ngũgĩ have always competed for attention with the stories he writes. Ngũgĩ has long dwelt in the overlapping territories of reality and fiction, where he has attempted to overcome the deprivations of the first with the powers of the second. *Randy Boyagoda, Harpers* (9/2006)

2. 0 Chapter two

Representation of the Economic and Social realities as the determinants of human behaviour in the three plays.

As stated in the second objective of the study, this chapter analyses the representation of economic and social realities as the determinants of human behaviour in the three plays. According to Karl Marx, economic realities form the basis for developing all human social institutions, including religion. This assertion is based on the first Marxist argument that ‘it is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being determines their consciousness.’ By this statement, Marx implies that the wellbeing of the people is determined by their social and economic status. Thus Marx provides a sociological paradigm that attempts to decipher societal problems as essentially economically entrenched and therefore any attempts to address them should be economically founded. This is the stance I take in examining the three plays *Redemption*, *Major Barbara* and *I Will Marry When I Want*.

2.1 Redemption

In *Redemption*, Mulwa paradoxically demonstrates that without money people are beasts but excessive ownership of money equally turns people into beasts. Mulwa presents a conflict that rotates around money and social relations. The play opens when the church in Sector Three is on the verge of collapsing due to apostasy itself prompted by poverty and the outgoing pastors' poor public relations. The former pastor, Mutema is characterized as a poor and rigid Puritan who had a firm belief that salvation is maintaining purity of one's soul. So Pastor Mutema focused on spiritual purity and he ignored the other human aspects of his flock. There is no warmth in his church nor his home. He had no tolerance for sinners. He rescinded those who faltered on God's way, including his own daughter who is chased away from home when she becomes pregnant. As a result, one by one the sinners deserted the church. This strictness is

witnessed at the beginning of the play when he sneers at the new pastor, for associating with Kitaka, a rapist and a thief, in Pata Pata bar.

Furthermore, Mulwa shows the supremacy of the material over the spiritual and moral through the characterisation of people who negate the importance of all other aspects of life but materialism. Prominent among these is the self-styled Archbishop Elton Muthemba and his accomplice and partner Chilulu. To them, amassing material wealth seems to be the sole mission of their living and will go to great lengths to accomplish their mission. The cries of the poor people mean nothing to them and will use both ruthless methods as well as trickery to reach their ends. For instance, the wealth icon Muthemba is so drunk with wealth and unscrupulously presents it as a blessing from God. He thus avers to his wife Millicent that; ‘... I am superior...in all ways. Blessed with riches at home and in the field...’ (p. 41).

As Marx warned, this individual control of capital creates class rivalry leading to disharmony in the society. This is what was essentially happening in the imaginary Sector Three in the play *Redemption*. Thus Mulwa seems on one hand to agree with Karl Marx on the economic necessity. People cannot be moral or spiritual when their material needs are not catered for. They will turn into beasts.

However, Mulwa ironically shows the negative consequences of wealth accumulation and the attendant class disparities as well as exploitation. Through wealthy Elton Muthemba, Mulwa depicts typical capitalists who exploit the poor and ignore the need to keep good relationship with their servants to guarantee production. Mitukaa, who is the servant of Elton Muthemba, remains impoverished despite having walked the full journey with his master. When Millicent, Guthemba’s wife chastises Elton about Mitukaa’s abject poverty, Muthemba is quick to defend it as ‘...a good thing ... A servant was never equal to his master; that way you get no production’

(p. 42). Muthemba is proud and keen to maintain the status quo as Marx succinctly observed as being the practice of the wealthy and propertied upper class.

According to Karl Marx, Religion, politics and law are a creation of the rich as control tools to avoid rebellion from the impoverished of the society as well as the exploited proletariat. Mulwa depicts the corrupt nature of the political and religious leadership in the conversation between Archbishop Muthemba and his sly political accomplice Mr. Chilulu. Thus when Chilulu realizes the growing discontent within the society as a result of their excessive wealth accumulation, he cautions Elton to tread carefully to avoid retribution;

Especially for men like you and I ... You never know when some disgruntled element of mortality might pop up from the darkness and demand retribution. ... My friend, when I used to be a lawyer I used to think it is impossible. And then your good tongue and prayers put this political cane of authority into my hands in that grand alliance... The marriage of the opposites, earthly Caesar hand in hand with The One Above! ... It is not safe to assume that your collar will always protect you. Take that as a warning... (pp. 47-8)

From the conversation between the two characters above, the playwright has been able to create an imagery of the dirty connivance and corrupt activities that goes on between the political leaders and their partners in the religious circles, at the detriment of their political and religious followers. The textual understanding of the conversation and the specific choice of the religious and political personages is that, the social, cultural and political ways of the people in any society are most times controlled by the rich, religious and political leadership found within that society. Therefore, the choice of the prominent institutions (religion and Politics) is a clear pointer to the thematic message in the play as well as a synergy to Marxism.

According to Karl Marx, in the absence of communism or socialism, Capitalism rules the day. In *Redemption*, the face of capitalism is manifested through the character of Archbishop Muthemba who is prepared to stop at nothing to build an empire at the expense of the masses. He doesn't only unscrupulously acquire their land but also unashamedly embezzles the foreign

aid received on their behalf for the irrigation project. As if that wasn't bad enough, he employs on low pay, many of these poor people on his magnanimous farms as well as using a false gospel to get them paying in his church on Sundays. Challenged by his partner Chilulu as to why he did all that especially his true mission in the setting up of the church, Elton replies: '... my reasons were not entirely spiritual [but] Economic! And familial' (p. 50). He set up a church enterprise premised with a mission of making money. He avers adamantly; '... in this battle for the pockets, purse and souls of men, you must allow these fallen creatures certain religious fringe benefits' (p. 43). In essence, the spiritual redemption of his church folk doesn't matter as long as they come to church and pay on Sundays.

Mulwa demonstrates the Marxist view that religion is not for promoting morality rather it is a tool for acquiring wealth. Through the character of Elton Muthemba, Mulwa presents a stark contrast of the conventional Pastor Mutema. Muthemba criticises Mutema's preaching that "He who will follow Christ let him deny himself, take up the cross and follow!" He questions; '*That!* At a time when these poor fellows are always on the narrow path of famine and school fees ...' He boasts that; 'I saw the crack in Mutema's citadel and I moved through the wall and right into the heart of his congregation: I offered them a new spiritual lease!!' (p. 43).

But Mulwa like Marx, shows that capitalism is riddled with contradictions when demonstrates the collapse of Archbishop Muthemba's empire at the end of the play. This empire is brought down by individual awakening inspired by Pastor Manela. The young Pastor organises the people into a cooperative and they stop selling and start cultivating their own lands. Some are even seen resigning their jobs at the rich man's farm. The truth catches up with the deceitful Muthemba who ends up in jail. Thus Muthemba relates to the Biblical foolish man 'like a foolish man who built his house on the sand' (Mt 7:26). The best form of life as Marx puts "it is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social

being determines their consciousness.” By this statement, Marx implies that the wellbeing of man is working together and producing together for the wellbeing of society not mere individuals. The character of Muthemba is a typical representation of the predicament which is widespread in church and wider society today. The misuse of power is one the major concerns in *Redemption*. Archbishop Muthemba connives with the Lawyer turned politician (Chilulu) to rob the poor people in the valley of their lands while hoodwinking them in the name of religious redemption. In essence the playwright used the imagery of leaders who are ready to go the extra mile to acquire excess wealth at the expense of their followers. This excerpt captures the self-styled Archbishop Muthemba’s trickery;

. . . Take this thing about the superstition in this valley. These poor people believe in witchcraft and their infernal traditions. So how do you get them to church? Get them paying? You stand there and encourage them. Let them go to witchdoctors as long as they’re in church tomorrow and singing and dancing in expiation: You see! You let them live their lives and come to you on Sundays for a little spiritual uplift and everybody is happy (p.43)

In *Redemption*, Archbishop Muthemba is presented as being solely pre-occupied with amassing as much wealth as possible so as to secure the future of himself and his family. He is determined to leave a great inheritance to his only son Antoninus and he affirms this by conversely telling his wife Millicent that ‘. . . I will place him far beyond the reach of common men and I must! I MUST! It’s the only thing I live for’. (p. 101) To him, material possession is the sole reason for living and clearly doesn’t care about his spiritual needs as his actions depicts a conscienceless person. It is this kind of behaviour that triggers dissent within his family and consequently the crumbling of his empire when all his dubious dealings are brought to light.

In contrast to Muthemba, Mulwa presents set of characters who believe that salvation is through the fulfilment of both spiritual and material needs of the human being. Essentially, that salvation is a combined achievement in the realm of both material and spiritual desires preferably here and now perhaps as perceived in the Lord’s Prayer as the Heavily Kingdom on

earth. In *Redemption*, Mulwa's choice of Pastor Manela, a graduate of Agriculture and Veterinary Science to deliver redeem Sector Three, is a deliberate attempt to reconcile and answer the question of the day; which way is it to salvation, is it through spiritual, material or both ways? A meticulous analysis of *Redemption* answers the question in the affirmative that ideally; salvation is an alley of the fulfilment of both spiritual and material needs. Using his agricultural skills to better the lives of his flock in the valley, Pastor Manela, lands on the lies of Archbishop Muthemba. His practical gospel wins over the heart of all who had fallen by the wayside and he successfully reunites the families, the church and the community. By tending to both their material and spiritual needs, he was able to redeem sector three. A convert (Kitaka) confesses; 'Many of us can't hear the true voice of Christ on an empty stomach! Your Christ is practical'. (p. 110). This is the kind of salvation that the world cries for, the salvation with eyes to see the problems here and now, practical to deal with them and able to prepare them for the salvation to come. Meaningful salvation should provide for both 'bodily' and 'spiritual' needs.

From a Marxist perspective, individualism is depicted negatively and instead, Mulwa prescribes unity in wealth creation to overcome poverty and exploitation. A Kikuyu proverb has it that, 'Wealth comes by working together' (Mutugi 2001:21). It means that for society to prosper, cooperation and mutual support is the key to success. In *Redemption*, Pastor Manela puts his agricultural skills to work by mobilising the community members into joint farming activities to address their hunger and overcome poverty through increased production. '...through your program we are all sure to gain! When did we peasants ever start a cooperative?' (P. 110). It agrees with Christ's caution that a house divided cannot stand (Matthew 12:25). It is this cooperative movement that stands in the way of Muthemba and eventually his downfall as one of its consequences.

Marx evaluates co-operative factories 'positively' because they; 'present within the old form, the first sprouts of the new', even though they reproduce 'all the shortcomings of the prevailing system'. He appreciates this potentiality in the sense that it shows that large-scale production can be conducted by 'co-operative labour' without the existence of managers and capitalists.

Nevertheless, he was cautious not to overrate the experiment of the co-operative movement.

For example, Marx writes:

But there was in store a still greater victory of the political economy of labour over the political economy of property. We speak of the cooperative movement, especially the co-operative factories raised by the unassisted efforts of a few bold 'hands'. The value of these great social experiments cannot be overrated . . . At the same time the experience of the period from 1848 to 1864 has proved beyond doubt that, however excellent in principle and however useful in practice, cooperative labour, if kept within the narrow circle of the casual efforts of private workmen, will never be able to arrest the growth in geometrical progression of monopoly, to free the masses, nor even to perceptibly lighten the burden of their miseries. (Marx 1985a: 11–12).

2.2 Major Barbara

In *Major Barbara*, Bernard Shaw corresponds to the Marxist view that man's well-being /salvation entirely depend on material prosperity. Even though the play on the surface may seem to be the romance between Barbara and Cusins, it attacks the crime of poverty and contrasts two ways of redemption represented by the Salvation Army and Undershaft. In the Salvation army the focus is on morality. Major Barbara preaches to the people about the joy of the spirit. The father, Undershaft, teaches the gospel of being rich no matter how. The play shows Major Barbara's dilemma over accepting the morally tainted money donated to the Salvation Army by her father, an armaments millionaire. Barbara's resolves this dilemma through her decision to turn to her father's resources.

According to Valency, *Major Barbara* is concerned not with the eternal life but with the life of the body and it suggests that the service of God (spiritual salvation) cannot be done without money (Valency, 1973, p. 264). In *Major Barbara*, Undershaft, a millionaire who represents

the Marxist's views regards power money and gunpowder as the reality of life. Undershaft taunts Barbara thus: It is cheap work converting starving men with a Bible in one hand and a slice of bread in the other... Try your hand on my men: their souls are hungry because their bodies are full (Act III, pp. 142-3).

Wisenthal in his book, *The Marriage of Contraries*, observes that; "the aspect of *Major Barbara* which Shaw wished his readers to consider, for which he himself saw as the essence of the play, is the economic one" (Wisenthal, 1974, p. 57). With his socialist stand-point in relation to religious ideas, Shaw believed that salvation will be realised through social reform. To Shaw, the idea of economic problems is inextricably bound up with the idea of progress. Valency in *The Cart and The Triumph*, insists that Bernard Shaw embraced Marxism whole heartedly. In the preface to *Major Barbara*, he stressed that; 'the greatest of our evils and the worst of our crimes is poverty ...our first duty, to which every other consideration should be sacrificed, is not to be poor' (p. 15).

The play depicts a Marxist view of the supremacy of the economy represented by a millionaire capitalist who manufactures munitions. He is the unconventional man, the realist who deplores hypocrisy. The munitions works is a model of production, efficiency and harmony among the workers. Shaw suggested to Henderson that he had thought of calling the play 'Andrew Undershaft's Profession'. 'Perhaps a more suitable title for this play save for the fact of repetition, would have been Andrew Undershaft's Profession' (Henderson, 1911, p. 381). This underlines the central doctrine of Shaw's gospel. Just as in *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, to Shaw, single-minded pursuit of money is the only possible way to survive and succeed in a capitalistic society. Watson in *Sainthood for Millionaires* points out that [Undershaft] "is not a man who celebrates murder, merely a realist who calls it by its true name. If his realism makes us

shudder, that is intended to make us shudder at the truth itself, not at Undershaft” (Watson, 1968, p. 242).

According to Marxist anatomy of society, it is essentially made up of classes, that is, upper class, middle class and the peasantry, in short, the haves and the have-nots. The play begins with Lady Britomart, the upper-class matriarch and the estranged wife of Andrew Undershaft. Lady Britomart is based on Rosalind Countess of Carlisle, who went to extraordinary lengths to achieve the succession to Castle Howard that she wanted. As a typical conventional Victorian woman of her class in her time, money is the main reason for being Mrs. Undershaft. Marriage between aristocrats and newly rich were quite a feature of the period, one provided breeding, the other money. One of Shaw’s contemporaries, Slaughter observes how conventional Victorian society seeks the interest of the business of marriage for personal desires and social ambitions among the middle classes. As Slaughter points out; ‘the marriage of Undershaft and Lady Britomart implies the achievement of well-being and security among the higher social classes by their money and lineage’ (Slaughter, 1909, p. 161). For this reason, as Watson in *Sainthood for Millionaires* points out; ‘The central conflict of the play is between the ideas of Andrew Undershaft on the one hand, and the ideas of the whole of society, represented by his whole family, on the other hand’ rightful inheritance was disregarded. Money being the life cord that held the upper class together.

Shaw criticises Victorian society who disguised their need for money in hypocritical moral traditions. Lady Britomart belittles her Undershaft to their son, as a vulgar tradesman though the real contention was the inheritance;

I couldn’t forgive Andrew for preaching immorality while he practised morality. You would all have grown up without any knowledge of right and wrong, if he had been in

the house. You know my dear; your father was a very attractive man in some ways. Children did not dislike him; and he took advantage of it to put the wickedest ideas into their heads and make them quite unmanageable. I did not dislike him myself: very far from it; but nothing can bridge over moral disagreement (Act I, p. 59).

The Marxist view that ‘morality is superficial’, is clearly demonstrated in **Lady Britomart’s** searching money for her children’s marriages. When Lady Britomat who knows very well that her husband earns money by manufacturing guns to kill people, proposes to get money from her husband to fund the weddings her morally rigid children; Barbara and Stephen. The latter responds thus: “We cannot take money from him. I had rather go and live in some cheap place like Bedford Square or even Hampstead than take a farthing of his money.” When his mother tells Stephen, “our present income comes from Andrew.” Stephen is shocked and confesses that he never knew that (Act I, p. 59). In accepting the money from Andrew Undershaft Lady Britomat is confesses that morality depends on material well being.

As Baskin says; ‘Key moral relationships among the characters are dramatized in economic terms’ (Albert, 1971, p. 307). Undershaft ‘who is a sort of demi-god’ (Albrecht, 1989, p. 197), has many of his negative characteristics revealed by Lady Britomart’s description. He was illegitimately born, is a munitions maker of low birth. He is ‘fabulously wealthy, because there is always a war going on somewhere’ (Act I, p. 55), and he proclaims that the munitions factory must be inherited not by his son, but by another foundling as he did. Lady Britomart attributes Undershaft’s success to being ‘selfish and unscrupulous’. Shaw describes the society of Wilton Crescent as one of aimless parasites bounded by conventional morality. Undershaft confronts this bedevilment and his wife’s hostile attitude;

I moralized and starved until one day I swore that... nothing should stop me... neither reason nor morals.....I had the strongest scruples about poverty and starvation. Your moralists are quite unscrupulous about both: they make virtues of them. I had rather be a thief than a pauper. I had rather be a murderer than a slave. I don’t want to be either; but if you force the alternative on me, then, by Heaven, I’ll choose the braver and more moral one (Act III, p. 143).

In the play, Major Barbara devotes herself to the Christian faith of the Salvation Army, founded in the mid-nineteenth century by William Booth as a means of religious redemption and social alleviation. By the end of Act II, she is becoming aware of the Marxist inspired Shavian reality that; the financial problems of the Salvation Army for the mission for the lower classes cannot be maintained without the capitalist's support. When she accedes that the Army must accept the tainted money, she throws up her mission with the cry, 'Drunkenness and Murder! My God: why hast thou forsaken me?' (Act II, 111). Barbara's cry is the emotional climax in this play.

However, by the end of the play, her cry of despair is transferred to a new worldly faith in reality for the betterment of human beings. Barbara's heartbreak is initiated by her realization of the insight gained into reality. She is no longer captured by the spiritual guide the Army emphasised. She now understands that; 'There is no wicked side: life is all one' (Act III, p. 151). Barbara's religion becomes real when she accepts working to save souls of the 'full fed,...uppish creatures...' in Perivale St. Andrews noting that; 'That is where salvation is really wanted' (Act III, p. 152), in other words, where the Marxist materialistic precondition or the economic substructure is already established.

As one of the realistic heroes of Shaw's play and as his mouthpiece, Undershaft's religion influences both his conduct and his social acceptability. Shaw regards Undershaft's attitude as a starting-point for a new moral standard. In his *Collected Letters*, Shaw asserts that; 'To me the sole hope of human salvation lies in teaching Man to regard himself as an experiment in the realization of God' (Shaw, 1972, p. 858). And Shaw returned to this in *Major Barbara*; 'he is only the instrument of a Will or Life Force which uses him for purposes wider than his own' (p. 22).

Just like Karl Marx, Shaw in *Major Barbara*, has serious misgivings about religion and rejects the conventional belief that man can be redeemed by Christianity.

And here my disagreement with the Salvation Army and with all propagandists of the Cross (which I loathe as I loathe all gibbets) becomes deep indeed. Forgiveness, absolution, atonement, are figments: punishment is only a pretence of cancelling one crime by another; and you can no more have forgiveness without vindictiveness than you can have a cure without a disease. You will never get a high morality from people who conceive that their misdeeds are revocable and pardonable or in a society where absolution and expiation are officially provided for us all (p. 32.).

Undershaft, the Shavian spokesman, the wealthy munitions maker, is determined to provide the people with employment, good salaries and good homes and to leave them to choose their religious beliefs on their own.

Barbara's conversion from idealism to realism provides a rider to critics who argue that it was a triumph of Undershaft over Barbara and the Salvation Army and for purposes of this thesis, I argue that it is a triumph of materialism over spirituality underpinning the Marxist notion of the 'economic infrastructure' taking precedence over spirituality.

Shaw argues that poverty does not improve human beings; rather it depraves people into conscienceless inhumanity. The problem of poverty and social redemption are dealt with as the main themes in this play. Even though many critics insist on the variety of themes, the action of the plot can be shifted from economics to the religious theme.

Either way, his primary concern was to demonstrate how humanity can be emancipated from the multitude of problems the greatest of which is poverty. Garner claims that *Major Barbara* was about poverty, but it deals much more fundamentally with power, in all of its forms: Blood and Fire, Money and Gunpowder (Garner, 1985, p. 647).

Major Barbara pursues simultaneous social and spiritual redemption through the union of the material and spiritual purposes. Shaw dramatizes Barbara's religious dilemma and conversion through the conflict between real life and romantic imagination and tries to present his concept of earthly hell and heavenly earth through the action of the play.

The playwright creates a world with three categories of people. First, there are characters who believe that salvation is contingent upon material wellbeing. They work at the expense of morality to accumulate wealth. The second category are the middleclass family and Salvation Army, people both of whom pretend to be moral but survive on the immoral gaining of the capitalists. The head of the Salvation Army Major Barbara and her brother Stephen have grown up on the opulence of Undershaft a gun producer. Major Barbara solicits money from this business man who is her father, to preach morality in the Salvation Army. Her brother Stephen on learning the immoral gains of his father, he pretends to reject the money. His mother has to remind him that he has lived on the money of Undershaft. So it does not make any difference now to renounce the financial assistance. The third category are the vagabonds who want to embrace Christianity but cannot cope with the principals as they do not have the means to live comfortably. Even after their conversion, a convert steals because he is poor. Undershaft teaches that money comes before morality. If a man has food he will not steal and Major Barbara has the guts to speak about morality because she has it all.

The first category are the capitalists. The latter is represented by Undershaft, a millionaire who owns a foundry. This man, as he relates in the play, was a vagabond. He swore to change his life by producing guns and he is happy because the business gives him a lot of financial returns. When his wife invites him to support the family as one is getting married. He gets the first opportunity to preach about the supremacy of material wealth over morality and spirituality. The second opportunity is when he visits the Salvation Army church which his daughter heads as Major Barbara. He donates money to the church and he also tries to convert the head of the church to put money first. The occasion of a poor man who steals a coin immediately after his conversion provides a very neat cause for his discourse about money. Undershaft taunts the Salvation Army bosses on importance of salvation when one does not have even the basic necessities of life? Undershaft tells his daughter that she can now form the church and lead it

because she comfortably rich. Without the financial security which, he, Undershaft has been providing to the family, Major Barbara would not have the power to found a church nor to preach.

With regard to the second category, Shaw presents Mrs. Undershaft who although cherishes money, strongly abhors the manner in which her husband earns the money. She condemns her husband's selling of ammunitions. However, whenever she needs money she invites a donation. Similarly, the Salvation Army preaches against murder, theft and immoral means of earning money. However, they seek for donations from Undershaft who sells ammunitions who swears that he is happy to hear there is a war because this gives him business and above the acquisition of money while the third category is that of pretenders. They condemn dirty means of earning money but they love money and pursue it when the world is not observing. Thus they put on the façade of 'holier than thou'.

Thus Bernard Shaw dramatizes the Marxist view that it is wealth that gives salvation not the other way round. A rich man, Undershaft, father to Barbara seeks to restore the church by converting his daughter from preaching the gospel of Christ to preaching the gospel of wealth; to become fisher of money before becoming a fisher of people. Thus Bernard Shaw embraces the naked Marxist topographical metaphor of the 'infrastructure' versus the 'superstructure' a metaphor that highlights the Marxist's thought that man eats first and the becomes moral. Indeed, it is in Major Barbara where the millionaire Undershaft tell his daughter that it was the money that gave her the power to preach not her internal convictions.

2.3 I Will Marry When I Want

In the Ngũgĩ's in *I will marry when I want*; the characterization focuses on those who represent pure capitalism and its attendant exploitative modus operandi while using theology to trap and

control their victims. The protagonist is Kigunda who is an epitome of poverty: Kigunda owns one room old house, shared by his wife and the beautiful daughter in her prime age. The beddings of this daughter is a heap of rugs. The family does not have enough sauce pans, there is only one broken chair. The family even lacks the basic necessities such as salt. In the play the wife sends a girl to borrow salt from the neighbours. Kigunda wage is 100 Kenyan Shillings per month.

The family of Kioi for whom Kiguunda works for is affluent. We get a glimpse of the Kiois wealth through a description of their dining table. They serve a variety of food and beverages table on a daily basis. Kigunda falls into a theological trap of cleansing his marriage in the church. The Christian capitalists lure Kiguunda into getting a bank loan for purchasing wedding accessories like white gowns, rings, cakes, big chairs in order to have a Christian wedding. Ironically, all this must be bought from the capitalists' shops. This clearly depicts the Marxist observation that "religion is the capitalist tool for exploitation and a sigh of the oppressed creature ... the opium of the people" (Marx, 1964 [1844], p. 42).

Thus the three plays correspond to the Marxist topographical metaphor of the infrastructure and superstructure. This metaphor demonstrates that money or the economy is primary aspect of all other aspects like morality, politics, art. Marx argues that all other aspects secondary. Without money people cannot talk of moral stability. As Bernard Shaw puts it poverty is the crime or evil to contend with. To moralise without money is equivalent to deceiving people. In this regard, the plays depict religious leaders as liars, hypocrites and devourers of people's resources. On the other hand, the theoretical moralists are depicted as harsh and intemperate. But the plays also reveal the contradictions embedded in the excessive accumulation of wealth (capitalistic exploitation). Money without good social relationships makes the owners beasts.

In Redemption however, a successful religious leader is one who combines economic skills with theological knowledge to promote salvation of the people.

3.0 Chapter three

The call for action/change in the three plays

As stated before, the second tenet of Marx is that “philosophers have merely contemplated the world, what is necessary is to change it.” This principal encapsulates Marx’s call to all workers to renounce religion and take action to change the oppressive conditions that have enslaved them. This view has been adopted by all the dramatist under study in different ways as was discussed below.

3.1 Redemption

In Redemption, the playwright illustrates the need to revoke the social and economic crises facing the world today. Apostasy and alienation facing the church is represented by imaginary Sector Three. ‘Sector Three no longer belongs to the Lord’ (p. 6).

When confronted with the crisis in the imaginary Sector Three, the strategies being laid down by The Aged One and Bishop Martin provide a clearest signal of how Mulwa addresses the theme of salvation from a dualistic perspective of materialism and spirituality. The Aged One seeks to change the apostasy in Sector Three by using practical means. He analyses the cause of the problem as being poverty and social relations so he recruits a pastor who will not only preach the word of God but also teach practical skill to put food on the table of the peasants. They apply social, spiritual and financial skills to redeem people from both monetary and spiritual insolvency. The Aged One is able to see that the people are sick from all dimensions of human existence and hence the problem cannot be solved by merely contemplating about it in prayer and preaching. Neither can the problem be solved by accumulating wealth at the expense of people’s lives. The aged one recruits Munela, a pastor who holds a degree in economic agriculture and theology. He teaches people to do cooperative farming where they

can work together and market their produce together however, this limitation doesn't prevent Mulwa from attempting to experiment this practice through the character of Pastor Manela in Sector Three by mobilising the community members into collective farming and production.

Mulwa's *Redemption*, depicts Pastor Manela as a leader with charisma. His influence is felt throughout Sector Three owing to the fact that whoever gets into contact with him is in a way transformed. This transformative leadership sheds a new light to the works of Max Weber. Weber's interest in social change also leads him to be particularly interested in the issue of religious leadership, since social change requires leaders for motivation and for the direction of action. Here, Weber focuses on the prophet as the quintessential religious leader that drives change. Weber identifies two kinds of prophets, the exemplary prophet and the emissary prophet (Gerth and Mills 1946: 284-6; Weber 1963: 55). The exemplary prophet challenges the status quo by living an exemplary life, with an example being Pastor Mutema in this case. The prototypical emissary prophet is the kind found in the Hebrew Bible, who is sent by God to bring a message that people need to live differently. It is, of course, the emissary prophet who calls for change – active ascetic change, according to Weber – and in so doing ultimately leads to production. This role is seen to be played by Pastor Manela in *Redemption*. Weber's sociology of religion, nonetheless, is notable for its claims that religion can be a source of social change, as opposed to merely a reflection of material causes of change.

In addition, whereas, Karl Marx asserts that religion is a control tool used by capitalists to dampen rebellion by proletariats against exploitation, a typical example in *Redemption* is portrayed through the character of self-styled Archbishop Elton Muthemba. Mulwa attempts to reconcile religion and economic production by demonstrating that religion can spur economic development while at the same time providing spiritual nourishment. This view is also held by other scholars. For instance, Weber's *Protestant ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*

main analysis viewed religiosity as an independent variable that could influence economic outcomes. Religious beliefs affect the economy by fostering traits such as work ethic, honesty (and hence trust), thrift, hospitality to strangers and so on. By enhancing these traits, greater religiosity could spur investment and economic growth.

A key point in the Weberian framework is that religious beliefs, not per se participation in organized religion and personal prayer, are what matters for economic outcomes. Religious services and instruction and personal prayer are productive only to the extent that they instil greater beliefs or perhaps shift attention toward types of beliefs that reinforce productive economic behaviour. This attests to the indivisible nature of spirituality and materialism in the attainment of the wholeness of a human being.

Very early in their mission enterprise, [Christians] were committed to holistic mission because they came to the understanding that salvation of the soul is meaningless unless it takes seriously the socio-economic, religious-cultural and political environment that very often enslave the soul. They stressed *Diakonia* which means 'a service of love inspired by the example of the life of Christ and by faith and endurance' (Pobee, 1993 p.1).

Accordingly, Mulwa responds to this view in the affirmative through the words of the characters especially Kitaka, Pr. Manela and the Asst. Chief. For instance, this conversation between Manela and the Asst. Chief summarises the whole idea. When asked by the ASST-CHIEF..., Manela has this to say: 'We must feed our five thousand here in this valley. It's the only way their ears will be fully open'. By this statement, Manela subscribes to the Marxist view that one cannot convert hungry people. Thus As he confesses: "That's the secret of his being a pastor. He observes that the strength of his church hinges on his feeling for the masses. His predecessor Pastor Mutema believed that salvation of the flock was merely spiritual and the realm of emotions was not relevant. Thus Mutema. He ended up by dragging the church in Sector Three into apostasy. Valdir R. Steurnegal in *Assessment of Mission: a two-Thirds World Perspective* has observed that:

Being faithful to the historic tenets of the evangelical faith, this emphasis stresses that the Church cannot be indifferent to the reality of increasing poverty and injustice. The love of God and the compassion of Jesus have to become an individual and communal reality. Otherwise the Gospel will not have been fully preached... (p. 7).

Bruce Hindmarsh sees this as a common feature of early evangelicals whose 'concerns were broader than soul saving not only in terms of the poor and the body but also in terms of the transformation of society. Their message was narrow, but their vision was wide' (Bruce D. Hindmarsh, 2002 p.56). Therefore, religious mission has to be viewed with a dual lens of materialism and spirituality.

The duality of these human aspirations demands that Christian theologians need to work with social scientists especially economists to analyse the forms of structural obstacles that play a role in this regard. The task of soteriological discourse is to reflect on the Christian message and witness to salvation in Jesus Christ and through the power of the Holy Spirit in this very context. At the same time, these observations may help those engaged in soteriological and ecclesiological discourse to see that God's work of salvation cannot be understood without reference to other aspects of God's work, including creation, providence and eschatological re-creation. Unlike Marx who contends that the economic infrastructure takes precedence over the spiritual and other social aspirations of human beings, Mulwa through the character of the multi-skilled Pastor Manela seems to suggest that the two human needs can be concurrently harnessed through dedication and fair work practices.

Moreover, it often happens that one of these concepts overshadows the other. Then all (human) predicaments are equated with one another. This has happened in the context of evangelical theologies where the notion of forgiveness of sin is often deemed sufficient to address the immediate consequences of sin (through the slow process of sanctification). Accordingly, justification provides the fresh start on the basis of which the sanctification of the lives of believers, the church and the whole earth is based. Through the sanctifying

work of the Holy Spirit, the evil effects of sin may be addressed and inverted, if only fragmentarily.

We need to come to terms with the problem that forgiveness of sins in Christ has not yet brought an end to injustice, oppression, and suffering. Latin American and African forms of liberation theology has reminded us that the message of salvation cannot be reduced to the forgiveness of sins; the gospel also speaks about liberation from the social consequences of sin as manifested in the many evils that thrive in society. However, theologies need not eschew the doctrine of justification since there remains a need to address the very roots of human sin which is poverty, also at an ultimate level.

In the history of the Christian tradition the symbols of the life, cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ were integrated with one another in a narrative whole. It should be clear that this event (and the subsequent narrative) has altered the course of history (for Christians and non-Christians alike), but also that no single concept can ever capture this significance. In the end these Christian symbols were fused with one another. Correspondingly, we have come to use soteriological concepts which are pneumatological in orientation such as redemption, reconciliation, forgiveness, renewal and divinisation to integrate the message of 'salvation'. The mixing of metaphors, symbols and concepts have become fossilised to the extent that the distinctions between them have largely become obscured. However, no matter how one would like to look at it whether as a whole or in isolation, neither of them has proved to transcend the human insatiable quest for salvation. Materialism and spirituality have failed to flourish in isolation and this is a stark reminder to theology practitioner that they have to be treated and practiced equally.

The Christian understanding and theology of Booth and other influential early Salvationists was inevitably and permanently coloured by their engagement with the impact of poverty in

people's lives. Booth eventually came to the conclusion that; "the miseries from which I sought to save man in the next world were substantially the same as those from which I everywhere found him suffering in this (Booth, *Salvation for Both Worlds* p.2). He began to recognise that the poor were already in the midst of hell in this life, despite his efforts to save them from hell in the next.

There was a dramatic change in the later Salvation theology. After 1889 salvation theology evolved to include an understanding of salvation as not only personal but social as well, and that theology provided legitimacy, organisation, and direction for the social ministries which have eventually found their way into the work of theology practitioners. Early Salvationists' interest was not politics or ideology, but in a vision of salvation which encompassed the whole world and human wholeness. Accordingly, Mulwa's views as dispensed through his characters in *Redemption* agrees with these early Salvationists that theology had to be holistic by attending to both spiritual and material needs of human beings.

While analyses of salvation tend to weigh spirituality, materialism or the combination of the two, Mulwa in *Redemption* also emphasises the Christian virtues of love, harmony, reconciliation and forgiveness. In this context, Pastor Manela appeals to his newly converted and previously banished believer - Kitaka to appeal to the soul of a falling Christian – Rebecca; 'It's that must help her . . . you have travelled that road. . .' (p. 112). According to, Sigqibo Dwane, in his book: *Christ and our salvation*, 'healing becomes possible only through the wounded healer' (Dwane p. 17-8). Accordingly, Kitaka who was previously an outcast of the church is portrayed as facilitator in the redemption of Rebecca's soul and ultimately leads to the reconciliation of the whole church folk in Sector Three.

One cannot therefore ignore St. Paul when he rightly says, "Love does no harm to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilment of the law" (Romans 13:10). Forgiveness is the only way in

which a vicious spiral of violence may be broken. It allows both parties to say: Let us start afresh. As Hannah Arendt comments, forgiveness;

... is the only reaction which does not merely re-act but acts anew and unexpectedly, unconditioned by the action which preceded it and therefore freeing from its consequences both the one who forgives and the one who is forgiven (Arendt p. 216).

If God can be recognised as being present in an act of compassion towards someone in need, the inherent salvific significance of these actions may be drawn out through theological reflection on social service. When someone is saved from poverty, homelessness or domestic violence, we can begin to see these transformative moments as sacramental encounters – where the unseen God is made real through incarnation.

The ultimate motive for religion is making every human being realize *Imago Dei* – the image of God which every human being possesses. Thus everyone deserves dignity. This should be the first and foremost principle underpinning religious activities. This conversation captures the gist of how Sector Three is to be saved from the slump. When asked what should be done, the Aged One who is a more pragmatic pastor than the mechanical Bishop Martin responds : “Patience! True soldiers of Christ must never dribble and snifle. It is the surest way to tell the Evil One that he’s had a field day!” The aged Pastor seeks to change the plight of the church by employing a more practical pastor Munela who has agricultural and theological skills. Thus Mulwa is stating it clearly that one needs both the Bible and the hoe as well as social skills to change the situation. (pp. 2-3).

The above conversation alludes to the fact that true salvation goes beyond just faith, prayers and observance of the creed In the Marxist thought, this would be equivalent to “mere contemplation of the world” without active participation in the alleviation of such physical obstacles to spiritual nourishment. No doubt should be left in the mind of any reader as to the

intention in the choice of Pastor Manela with skills in agricultural to be the right candidate for Sector Three.

In the play *Mulwa*, through characterisation, *Mulwa* presents three categories of people. There are some people who believe that spirituality and righteousness alone are enough for salvation. A case in point is Mutema is the symbol of conventional observance of the Christian creed. He corresponds to what Karl Marx people who believe it their consciousness that determine their being. He stands for traditional Christian sanctification. For instance, he praises his daughter as follows;

‘ . . . Rebecca, an obedient child is an honour to its parents and glory to the Lord. You have obeyed me and the Lord has rewarded you with high learning. If you follow my footsteps there will be more, oh, much more, and this whole valley shall know that those who follow the Lord’s narrow path shall never want’. (p. 20).

But the Rebecca that Mutema is praising lives in abject poverty. She is joining the University without decent personal effects. His home lacks the modern social amenities. Besides all at home live in misery as the pastor shouts at the people at home to poverty related stress. In the church the congregation makes demands that the traditional pastor cannot meet because of his beliefs of how people should worship. He is sharply against any deviation from conventional Christian practices. When he is confronted by agitators of change who claim that; ‘We want change! Everywhere the church is changing to meet the present challenges!! And we too must change!’ (p. 20), Mutema responds angrily that;

‘...What!! We want change!! Those people want the Lord’s songs of respect and reverence to change to meet the present challenges of children. Dance the way the heathen do, and in the House of God! They want change – the freedom to challenge even the Holy Word itself ...The killers of the truth, who want to change ... The challenges of the narrow path, the path of thunder ... the path of truth. But they cannot listen ...the weaklings of this age!’ (pp. 21-2).

Through Mutema, Mulwa depicts a section of Christianity today that is still bounded by conventional ethos of repentance and atonement and thus negates all bodily and material connotations as of essence to salvation.

In addition, Mulwa does not only show the above negation but also the consequences of embracing materialism. The Aged One represents this school of thought. For instance, when Bishop Martin, is troubled by prospect of inheriting a crumbled church if nothing is done to restore Sector Three and grumbles about the right candidate to restore Sector Three thus; ‘in this Golden Age. My Lord ...Surely some Fame should accompany him. My Lord, when you pass on to the Great Beyond, I’ll step into your shoes’.

In response, The Aged One has this to say;

This slump, this falling away. In this battle for the souls of men my child, you must take particular care not to sit on Golden Ages, for the fall will be much greater . . . Lucifer himself set the precedent and he has lived to regret it. Take care my child. Stand guard . . . always! Stand guard! . . . Sandals!! Shoes make you comfortable and you forget others own the world too! (pp. 2, 4)

Through this conversation between The Aged One and Bishop Martin, Mulwa makes a paired contrast between conventional creed and abstemious on one hand and materialism and self-aggrandizement on the other respectively. The introduction of Pastor Manela symbolizes a moderation of both extremes.

Throughout the play, Mulwa articulates the views of those who believe that true salvation is through defloration of sin and banishment of sinners. These are depicted through the representative character of Pastor Mutema of Church of the Old Tradition. He held in high esteem Reverend Hardenstein his role model in spreading the Christian gospel;

This man understood the truth about the dark abyss we lived in fear, superstition, ignorance, disease, hopelessness . . . a people pretending to seek their God beneath fig trees. A people without any will and purpose. A people earmarked for eternal fire. And

he said NO! I shall leave the glories and the comforts of England and redeem those people (p. 23).

An orthodox Pastor Mutema detested strongly those people among his congregation that he considered deviants from Christian values. Mutema stood for purity and banished and rebuked sinners represented by Kitaka. His hostility to these kinds of people is captured in his message to Pastor Manela;

Then Pastor Manela, when you are finished with thieves, drunks, liars and defilers of holy sacraments you'll find me in my office. And be quick young man! I have better things to do than stand here and bandy words with the likes of him [Kitaka] (p. 32).

Perhaps, Kitaka's words to Pastor Mutema explains the dwindling numbers of the congregation of the Church of the Old Tradition; 'Mutema! No man can hate as you do and still have people around him' (pp. 32-3).

Mulwa contrasts the utopian views of Pastor Mutema with the realistic Pastor Manela's. Contrary to high moral standards held by Mutema, Manela is able to freely mix with all sections of the society members including the wrong doers represented by Kitaka who is overwhelmed by this unfamiliar conduct that leads him to caution Pastor Manela about his followers' likely reaction thus;

... What sort of Pastor are you anyway? You walk into a bar as easily as into church; you talk to social outcasts and don't care about the consequences. You trust easily Pastor, and that is dangerous (p. 35).

It is this conduct that endears Pastor Manela to the congregation leading to the reunion of the church members in church where Pastor Mutema's approach had created more divisions. Mulwa is in a way implying that theology has to be practical and not merely theorised. Therefore, when Pastor Mutema is surprised by and scoffs at the new found friendship between Pastor Manela and Kitaka and questions 'Your friend! Has it come to that?' (p. 39). Pastor Manela saddened by Mutema's hostility to Kitaka he replies him thus;

Pastor Mutema, do you read the Scriptures?

Then you'll remember the Lord's word:

"It is the sick that need the physician" Retain our congregation!

What are we doing Pastor, preaching for publicity?

What happened to forgiveness? (pp. 39-40).

It is this new approach that turns out to be the redeeming force in Sector Three and can be a new eye opener to theology practitioners today.

3.2 Major Barbara

In *Major Barbara*, this change that takes place involves reawakening to realities of life. The action of the play centres the change that Barbara and Cusin experience from being preachers in the Salvation Army to inheritance of the Undershaft munitions factory and her leaving the Salvation Army and taking up service in the arms factory. Through characterization, Shaw encompasses the power of the munitions maker Undershaft, the spiritual reformer Barbara and the intellectual philosopher Cusins in *Major Barbara*.

At the end of the play, Shaw combines the powers of Salvationist Barbara and intellectual scholar Cusins, who is based on Gilbert Murray, a Greek scholar. It is true that Shaw always seems to combine the spiritual and the intellectual for his purpose of social reform. Most of Shaw's characters who have faith and energy become heroic in the service of their ideas and evolve into something better in their pursuit of societal ends. Barbara develops her role from the domestic spheres into the new stage of participation in public life as a social, political reformer and saviour heroine.

Barbara, representative of the leisured, educated young women at the turn of the century, is a wealthy young lady who sacrifices herself for others. She is vital and direct. She is an individual

trying to fulfil herself. Barbara's faithful devotion to her desire for the salvation of society is embodied in her awareness of the systematic social ills that bind together the individual and society. As Noel, in *Major Barbara and Her Male Generals* points out; In the play, Shaw emphasised that an effective way of reforming society is through the practical power of money. By giving prominence to money and the satisfaction of the basic human needs as the necessary foundation for other philosophies including religion, Shaw entreated the Marxist metaphor of the 'economic substructure' as pathway to social redemption.

According to Shaw, poverty is the primary concern for everyone and has to be overcome by all means. *Major Barbara* can be regarded as Shaw's most direct dramatization of his Fabian socialist purpose. Shaw in *Sixteen Self Sketches* presents his social concerns in the theory of playwriting:

My plays are no more economic treatises than Shakespeare's... It is true that neither *Widowers' Houses* nor *Major Barbara* could have been written by an economic ignoramus, and that *Mrs Warren's Profession* is an economic exposure of the White Slave Traffic as well as a melodrama. There is an economic link between *Cashel Byron*, *Sartorius*, *Mrs Warren* and *Undershaft*: all of them prospering in questionable activities. But would anyone..., infer that all my plays were written as economic essays, and not as plays of life, character, and human destiny like those of Shakespeare or Euripides? (Shaw, 1949, p. 89).

Barbara is led reluctantly from idealism to realism or an idealism based on realistic appraisal of the world (Noel, p. 140).

From a Marxist perspective, true progress of society cannot be accomplished until economic salvation is achieved. Shaw believed that Christianity of the Salvation Army could not satisfy man's practical needs because it was unproductive and it couldn't reform. Throughout the play, Shaw presents his religious and political beliefs regarding social ills, poverty and Salvationism. Shaw attacked institutional religion, in particular the Christian creed and the traditional faith

of Christianity throughout his life. Unlike other religions, Shaw's religion has to be a working religion rather than just a spiritual guide.

The play is focused coherently on radical and religious action. Major Barbara follows familiar Shavian patterns, showing disillusionment from the idealistic faith and ideals of the Salvation Army to a realistic awareness of economic facts. While Barbara's Salvation Army represents spiritual institutionalized Christianity, Undershaft represents the political power to control the wealth of nineteenth-century society. Shaw said that Christianity was a dead idol, an idea which the nineteenth century had almost universally rejected. The value of science permeated society in every respect, whereas the creed of traditional Christianity was regarded as an anachronistic faith. Instead, Shaw conceived of his new religion of money as the answer to a world which he felt could no longer accept Christianity. In the play, Shaw excoriates the traditional Christianity emphasising sin, redemption, penitence, conversion, holiness and self-sacrifice through the mouth of Undershaft. Through Undershaft's religion of money and gunpowder, Butlerian influences on Shaw's thought are revealed. He declares that; 'to love God is to have good health, good looks, good sense, experience, a kindly nature, and a fair balance of cash in hand... the true laws of God are the laws of our own well-being' (Jones, 1915, pp. 19, 26).

To Shaw, as Watson in *A Shavian Guide to the Intelligent Woman* asserts, 'good will and good works are not enough... but must be guided by a realistic understanding of the world as it is' (Watson, 1964, p. 168). Most critics consider *Major Barbara* as religious drama or social drama dealing with economic issues. With the threefold theme of sin, repentance and salvation; money, in Shavian metaphor, can make a moral contribution. Money, represented as new religion in Shavian metaphor, could change traditional religion. Ultimately that could replace the institutional social systems for the sake of the evolution of institutional society. Shaw's relativist morality is based not on any absolute moral ethics but on the needs of particular

circumstances. Wisenthal in *The Underside of Undershaft* opines that 'Undershaft, then, has achieved neither the religious nor the political goals of the play' (p. 61). However, Shaw, describes the millionaire Undershaft as 'a man who has become intellectually and spiritually as well as practically conscious of the irresistible natural truth which we all abhor and repudiate' (p. 15).

Marx regarded religion especially Christianity as an agent of capitalism. That is essentially serves the interests of the powers that be in the society. At one moment Mrs. Baines, Barbara's superior, enters and asks Undershaft for a financial donation with an urgent voice, emphasising that the mission of the Salvation Army is to keep the poor from rebellion. When her appeals are accepted by Undershaft, Barbara is upset to see her superior officer doing this because she has never thought the Salvation Army would accept the tainted money. Mrs. Baines explains that the Army must receive the money contributed by Undershaft as a direct answer to prayer to carry on their work for the poor in a cruel society. Mrs. Baines's acceptance of a large contribution from the owner of a successful munitions works shows how Christian redemption is hypocritical and a vicious cycle of sin and forgiveness without redemption on earth. Unsurprisingly enough, Barbara loses her determined moral stand focused on Christian faith of the Army, at length, Barbara removes the silver S brooch from her uniform and tells Mrs. Baines, 'I can't pray now; Perhaps I shall never pray again' (Act II, p. 110). Her frustration is further made real by both Walker's comment that; 'Wot prawce Selvytion nah?' (Act II, p. 111): and the Army's triumphant parade. In the final moments of Act II, Barbara desperately acknowledges the limitation of the Army's uncompromising methods of redemption. In Act III, she then accepts her new mission to save the souls of the middle class employees in Undershaft's munitions factory. As Valency writes; 'Major Barbara's conversion is... a matter of turning from illusion to reality... the salvation of humanity as it is presently constituted lies not in the rejection of material values, but in their acceptance' (p. 263).

Marxism underscores that control of capital and the means of production ultimately yields the power to control society. In the play, Undershaft's munitions works are seen as the means to the end of improving the controlled economic and political high levels of society. Undershaft claims that his religion is grounded in 'money and gunpowder; freedom and power; command of life and command of death' (Act II, p. 96). To Undershaft, money is the commander of freedom and life as well as defender from social ill. To him, morality exists in the greatest good for the greatest number. Shaw asserts Undershaftian beliefs in his preface to the play:

Undershaft, the hero of Major Barbara, is simply a man who, having grasped the fact that poverty is a crime, knows that when society offered him the alternative of poverty or a lucrative trade in death and destruction, it offered him, not a choice between opulent villainy and humble virtue, but between energetic enterprise and cowardly infamy... What is new, as far as I know, is that article in Undershaft's religion which recognizes in Money the first need and in poverty the vilest sin of man and society (pp. 18, 19, 22).

Undershaft prides himself on saving Barbara's and her family's souls by his money from the seven deadly sins of; 'food, clothing, firing, rent, taxes, respectability and children', which are different from those of conventional Christianity of; pride, covetousness, lust, envy, gluttony, anger and sloth. He insists that; 'Nothing can lift those seven millstones from Man's neck but money; and the spirit cannot soar until the millstones are lifted' (p. 141). Undershaft adds, Perivale St. Andrews provides his workers with a better life and a chance of saving their souls not by conventional redemption of Christianity but by power of money.

While giving his emancipated society as a contrast to the Salvation Army shelter characterised by need, Undershaft challenges Barbara on who is really saving souls, his munitions factory or the Salvation Army? Cusins asks in admiration, 'What drives this place?' and Undershaft remarks, as he proudly displays his cannon factory, 'A will of which I am a part' (Act III, p. 139). Shaw regards power represented by money and gunpowder as the reality of life. Through the mouth of Undershaft, Shaw argues that true progress of society cannot be accomplished until economic salvation is achieved. Because he removed the seven deadly sins, the crime of

poverty has been destroyed in Perivale St. Andrews, and he has done more to save his workers than Barbara. Undershaft accomplishes his own paradise in Perivale St. Andrews. However, Whitman in *Shaw and the Play of Ideas*, argues that Undershaft has failed his religion and ‘...all his money and gunpowder have no purpose, no goal... it carries in itself the seeds of its own destruction’ (Whitman, 1977, p. 227).

In conformity with the Marxist materialistic view, Undershaft’s materialism wins over Barbara’s Salvationism because of her conversion but he cannot save human society as a whole without Barbara’s and Cusins’ devotion. Therefore Undershaft’s material power has to rely on Barbara and Cusins, who seem to challenge and synthesise both the material and the spiritual. In a sense, Undershaft symbolizes the ‘mechanisms for reconciliation and self-justification’ (Nutter, 1979, p. 89). Barbara and Cusins have to provide their saviour role on the foundation of Undershaft’s earthly power. New idealism related to material realism is symbolized in the union of Barbara and Cusins. They would provide salvation based on the necessary precondition of salvation Undershaft accomplished.

Workers’ exploitation by the capitalist system is depicted alongside religious hypocrisy in the play. In Act II, in the Salvation shelter in West Ham, some of the poor, such as Snobby Price, Rummy Mitchens, Peter Shirley, Bill Walker and Barbara’s colleague, Jenny Hill, are described as the self-served of the Salvation Army. The Army exchanges promises of eternal, individual salvation and hand outs of soup and bread for promises of atonement. The sinner is forgiven again and again; and thus given leave to sin again without ever truly atoning. Shaw judged this to be hypocritical; “I do not call a Salvationist really saved until he is ready to lie down cheerfully on the scrap heap, having paid scot and lot and something over, and let his eternal life pass on to renew its youth in the battalions of the future” (p. 31).

In Act II, Shaw shows the flawed and hypocritical nature of Christian salvation through the episode of Price; who lies about his sins to impress Major Barbara. He claims to have become saved out of his initiative: "I come here on my own. I'm going to be Bronterre O'Brien Price, the converted painter, I blasphemed and gambled and wopped my poor old mother. Price wants the attendants at the shelter to be impressed his sins so they can think they have made a big catch. (p. 77).

Shaw believed that hypocrisy and ethical dualism were the key features of Christianity. Shaw regarded orthodox Christianity as nothing more than lip service in the modern day. In the preface to *The Adventure of the Black Girl in Search of God*, Shaw argued that the Ten Commandments should be abandoned as principles of moral guidance since they were 'unsuited and inadequate to modern needs' (Shaw, 1932, p. 9). Shaw thought that social problems could be solved through economic equality and intelligent reproduction. Shaw believed man can create his own morality and also man can improve himself. According to Shaw, Man's soul can be saved not by conventional creeds of Christianity but by the capacity of humankind related to man's religious sense for further growth and development through creative evolution. Since, to Shaw, the creative power of mind over matter was emphasised to reaffirm man's dignity and responsibility in separation from the moral principles of Christianity. Shaw was opposed to the promises connected with Christianity. Instead he believed that man's intellectual activity might serve a useful purpose for a better future.

The Marxist historical class society is illustrated in the play, *Snobby Price*; the unregenerate petty thief will confess anything in exchange for a hot meal. Shaw thought that only through socialism and through 'the redemption of the whole nation from its vicious, lazy, competitive anarchy' (p. 27) salvation could be achieved. Barbara's West Ham shelter is shown as an unsuspecting collusion in the violence and desperation of the lower class. They are not likely

to eradicate deceit, falsity, scepticism and conscienceless cruelty. 'Whereas Act I presents a view of society from the top of the social scale; Act II presents a view from the bottom' (Dukore, 1973, p. 82). When Undershaft interfaces with the poor in West Ham shelter, he is indignant about idealization of poverty; Undershaft who confesses that his "religion is being a millionaire, [gravely] rebukes Shirley that "poverty, my friend, is not a thing to be proud of" (p. 88). Undershaft adds that being passionate about poverty is not a virtue, but the most unnatural of all the vices. It is only the well-off who can love poverty but he who have been a common man and a poor man cannot be romantic about poverty (p. 97). To Undershaft, 'To be wealthy, is with me a point of honor for which I am prepared to kill at the risk of my own life. This preparedness is, the final test of sincerity' (p. 19).

To proclaim a new mission through the combination of spiritual vision with Undershaft realism, Barbara stops wearing the uniform of the Salvation Army. Undershaftian salvation is disconnected from Christian redemption through the action of the play. According to him, men have to face the reality and transform it in order to progress. Barbara finally confronts her reality embracing Undershaft's view that "When we feed a starving fellow creature, it is with their bread, because there is no other bread; when we tend the sick, it is in the hospitals they endow: if we turn from the churches they build, we must kneel on the stones of the streets they pave. As long as that lasts, there is no getting away from them".

Even though Barbara remains as a saviour of men's souls, she will carry on her mission with a different method of salvation instead of a naive idealist of the Salvation Army. 'Her teaming up with him does not mean that she surrenders to his philosophy; it means she must work with him to temper his energy with her spiritual insight' (Mack, 1971 p. 17). She accepts the redemption of human beings in terms of the Shavian concept of religion.

I have got rid of the bribe of bread. I have got rid of the bribe of heaven. Let God's work be done for its own sake: the work he had to create us to do because it cannot be done except by living men and women. When I die, let him be in my debt, not I in his; and let me forgive him as becomes a woman of my rank... Yes, through the raising of hell to heaven and of man to God, through the unveiling of an eternal light in the Valley of The Shadow. Oh, did you think my courage would never come back? Did you believe that I was a deserter? Never, never, never, never: Major Barbara will die with the colors (Act III, pp. 152-153).

When Barbara loses her confidence in Christian faith, she recognizes the sentimental nature of the salvation in the Army. As a result of her father's preaching, she also slowly awakens to the fact the Army can be maintained only by unconscionable money. Barbara responds to this, 'Yes, through the raising of hell to heaven and of man to God.

The play therefore depicts Cusins' role as being to synthesise Barbara's idealism and Undershaft's realism. Bentley says Cusins is 'the synthesis of Barbara's idealism and her father's realism' (Bentley, 1967, p. 167). Cusins and Undershaft have much in common. Cusins confesses that he is 'a collector of religions; and the curious thing is that I find I can believe them all'. Cusins' 'understanding of the essential part he must play' is to 'manipulate the strongest of powers in an effort to achieve social equality' (Rogers, 1992, p. 270). Cusins is aware that he must sacrifice some of his ethical principles to achieve his goals. Cusins departs from Undershaft's faith into the real world of life.

The marriage of Cusins and Barbara, therefore, transcends mere social progress. To reform society, their spirituality and intellectuality are not enough: rather they must be impacted with the worldly power represented by Undershaft. When Cusins tells Barbara that he has decided to accept Undershaft's offer, because 'I want to make power for the world' (Act III, p. 149), she replies; I want to make power for the world too; but it must be spiritual power' (Act III, p. 149).

They agree to compromise with power beyond their control. They would preach to the well-fed workers and sell armaments to national governments. Barbara and Cusins plan to effect social changes through ‘making war on war’ for benevolent ends not for destroying humankind as Cusins proclaims; I love the common people... I want a power simple enough for common men to use’ (Act III, 150).

The play ends as a comedy. Idealism is tempered by reality, but does not vanish. Barbara leaves the Salvation Army as a sad but wiser woman. She still plans to marry Cusins and settle down in the beautiful countryside near her father's munitions factory. When her husband goes to work in the factory, she will spread the word of God among the well-fed, comfortable workers, who are also in need of salvation. She accepts the fact that poor and starving people are unable to concentrate on spiritual matters; she also accepts the fact that her husband becomes Undershaft's successor and heir to the factory.

Conclusively, Bernard Shaw's literary views were as controversial as they were real. His presentation of the theme of Salvation in *Major Barbara* was either coincidentally or deliberately a re-enactment of Marxist materialistic view of society. However, a deep analysis of *Major Barbara*, presents unique but narrow points of departure from Marxism. For instance, Shaw prefers gradual socialism over capitalism unlike Marx who would rather have a revolution. Shaw too, demonstrates that proper treatment of workers can induce productivity without having the workers feel alienated from their labour. However, this Marx doesn't concur arguing that, provision of material comfort to workers as in Perivale St. Andrews is only a capitalistic attempt to prevent a workers' revolution to which Shaw admits. *Major Barbara* is therefore nothing more than a Marxist narrative of economic liberation, criticism of religious hypocrisy, capitalism, and class rivalries and workers' exploitation with comparable recipes for resolution of the same. Therefore, the prominence given to money as being above

everything else in *Major Barbara* conforms to the Marxist notion of the 'economic substructure' as the hinge on which other societal variables rotate.

3.3 I Will Marry When I Want

Like David Mulwa Redemption and Bernard Shaw, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and Ngũgĩ wa Mĩriĩ's play *I Will Marry When I Want* is committed to the people's revolution and society transformation. The play's tone is revolutionary in its exposure of the ills in society and in its openly advocating the change.

Under reactionary Marxist influence, Ngũgĩ asked himself what his role as a writer was in the African society, and even more so: what would his role be in the future of Africa? He could, as a Marxist, not condone the changes which colonialism had brought to Kenya. He analysed the situation in Marxist terms and came to the conclusion that one class (the Bourgeois), in the pursuing of its own selfish interests, was exploiting another (the peasants and workers): the haves are feeding on the have-nots. Ngũgĩ felt strongly that a new revolutionary order was needed economically, politically and culturally; through struggle if need be. His play offered a reflection of the ongoing struggle for revolutionary change in accordance with Marxist principles. Ngũgĩ hinted in his work of the struggle needed to achieve a democratic society in Kenya and the rest of Africa.

As for Marx the choice for Ngũgĩ too was a simple one: either the politics of Oppression or the politics of Liberation. In true Marxist fashion Ngũgĩ suggested a revolt of the masses in his *I Will Marry When I Want*. He dictated further the purging of the new black elite ruling class and that capitalism is replaced by African socialism. Marx offers a systematic framework for mobilization against capitalism. Ngũgĩ used the themes in his novels and his plays when he conscientised the people of oppression, neo-colonialism and exploitation.

‘Ngũgĩ, like other Marxists such as Biodun Jeyifo and Omafume Onoge, concentrated on a materialistic analysis of African society and actively sought to bring about social change in his plays’ (Wright 2004: 46). He tried to press home his ideology and ideas on social conformity in exploring the difficulties involved in social change in a neo-colonial country in his writings. In *I Will Marry When I Want*, Kĩgũũnda is a victim of such neo-colonialism. Historically, the Capitalism oppressed the proletariat - the workers; and they were seen as the group with the social power to liberate their society. As capitalism was industrialising more of his country each day, Ngũgĩ looked at the world through the eyes of the oppressed people and tried to get them to unite. As Karl Marx put it ‘The proletarians have nothing to lose but chains, they have a world to win; working men of all countries unite’ (Karl Marx).

From Ngũgĩ’s dramatic texts, Marxists recovered the voice of the oppressed. Such an approach argues that the established ‘canon’ of literature was a reflection of the ruling class’ need to marginalise and contain the subversive and the oppressed. Such criticism maintained that the elite controlled the means of production of stereotypes that presented the working class as undesirable or at best substandard. True to Marxism; ‘The dominating ideas in a given society are those of the dominating class’ (Karl Marx). The Marxists, Ngũgĩ included, shouted cry the battle cry ‘Workers of the world, unite!’ in this battle against the oppressing exploiters they claimed: theatre as a political weapon hoping this will finally lead to ‘salvation’. Ngũgĩ’s cultural work was radical Marxist in going to the roots of the problems in Kenya, which were greedy, corrupt men who exploited their workers, for example through giving inadequate pay. In Act 1, we hear Gicaamba complaining: “Today I get two hundred shillings a month, And it can’t even buy insecticide enough to kill a single bedbug (p. 20). As with Marxist criticism, Ngũgĩ’s work ‘...goes beyond a formal and content analysis of artistic works, to a consideration of the very institutional process of art creation and art criticism’ (Gugelberger 1985: x). Ngũgĩ came to the conclusion that art and politics are inseparable.

The class struggle was between the Bourgeois and proletariat. Both Marx and Engels believed in their doctrine that the class struggle between these two groups would lead inevitably to the overthrow of capitalism, thus promoting the cause of social progress. The class struggle was depicted in various ways in *I Will Marry When I Want*. The hypocrisy of the Bourgeois is exposed in the blatantly polarised characterization: Kĩoi' son, John, 'a product of the neocolonial society and Gathoni, Kigũũnda's daughter. Although John makes love to Gathoni, Njooki predicts that Gathoni will not be acceptable as a wife John due to inequality in class. According to Njooki, "rich families marry from rich families, the poor from the poor!" (Act I, p. 32).

The parents of the two young people, moreover of the same age, are set in sharp contrast in their attire, their eating habits, their way of speaking, but most obvious in their way of doing things. Kigũũnda, the peasant farmer and worker, and Kĩoi the rich businessman, who collaborates with capitalist foreigners, represent the different classes through themselves and their families.

Ngũgĩ and many other African playwrights such as Zakes Mda, B. Frederik's 'modern' plays reflect the class structure, conflicts and interests of their societies. The class struggle in itself is not new; playwrights such as Gorky, Ibsen and Chekhov have addressed this many years before. In Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* (1904) the servant is the one who suffers most. Their plays are a protest against the human suffering that continues as the struggle for Freedom never ends in social reform. These Marxist writers exposed the weaknesses of the upper classes that formed the ruling society for the masses to see the conditions of their society.

Marxism calls for a revolt of the masses and the elimination of capitalism and Ngũgĩ in the same spirit calls for the elimination of the black Bourgeois to be replaced with African

socialism. Ngũgĩ reiterated the message so strongly in the play *I Will Marry When I Want* that the Kenyan regime banned its performances.

Ngũgĩ's work reflected two major influences: the traditional African culture and the colonial experience and its aftermath. For them it was easy to use his literature for the purpose of political liberation and become involved in community theatre voicing those aspirations. Just like Marx, the Ngũgĩs never believed that the deplorable status quo should remain, he thus advocated active participation in liberation struggle through revolutionary literature: In the character of Gicaamba, he says "Think about today and tomorrow. Think about our home. Poverty has no permanent roots! Poverty is a sword for sharpening the digging sticks..." (p. 29). The dramatists thus instigate those facing biting poverty to do something about it other than merely lamenting about it under the illusion that it is a God ordained predicament for the sinful humanity.

The concept of equality among human beings, propagated by Christianity and indeed even by early Christianity, was based on the understanding that all people were equally sinful before Almighty God. As the Christian Church became part of the powerful political structures, quasi-humanist ideas, abstract concepts of universal all-reconciling love, patience and meekness developed; and they were used as powerful ideological weapons by the ruling classes to domesticate the oppressed people. AS Marx saw it then, Ngũgĩ sees the same in his society and is depicted through Helen's prayer thus;

Oh, God our Father. Tame the souls of the wicked with thy sword of peace, For we your servants are unable to sleep because of the terror inflicted on us by the wicked. You to whom all the things on earth do belong, Show the wicked that everybody's share comes from Heaven, Be it poverty or riches. Let us all be contented with our lot. (Act I, p. 45).

In different periods in the past, and even today in many parts of the world, the organised Christian Churches use their interpretations of Christian theology to domesticate the oppressed

by declaring; “all vile acts of the oppressors against the oppressed to be either the just punishment of original sin and other sins or trials that the Lord in his infinite wisdom imposes on those redeemed” (Petrosyan p.18-19).

This resonates with Marxist criticism of religious hypocrisy. Ngũgĩ too doesn't spare the wrong theology when he portrays this hypocrisy in the character of Ndugire. For example, in Act 1 when Ndugire a rich farmer and shopkeeper seeks to grab Kigunda's, “land” he urges the latter to get “saved so that the conflict in land would end.” but to the Ngugis this is equivalent to pushing the Kigũndas into ‘passivity’ because It prevents the people from struggling for their rights. (p.44).

Ngũgĩ's resentment of religion expressed in this play was not only manifested in his renunciation of his ‘Christian’ name James but also in his embracing of Marxist potent words that describe religion as an ‘opiate of the people’ he thus transcribes the same tone when in Act 2, he speaks through Gĩcaamba's denigration of religion as “the alcohol of the soul!” and “the poison of the mind!” that brings poverty (p. 61).

He thus instigates people to look beyond the facade of religion to fully comprehend the real causes of their poverty. As Marx pointed out, ‘anatomy of society’ is better taken from the ‘politico-economic perspective’. In Act II, Ngũgĩ reacts to the docile Christian teaching that “Blessed are they that go thirsty and hungry and endure tribulations in their hearts, For they shall inherit the Kingdom of God” (p. 61). Ngugi points out that the point is not delight in poverty. It important to know that the real cause of their poverty and misery is enshrined in the fact that despite being born equal and working very hard, the people remain poor because “the wealth of our land has been grabbed by a tiny group, the Kĩois and the Ndugires in partnership with foreigners” (Act II, p. 62).

Giving prominence to Marxist assertion of the need to eradicate the tools of exploitation, Ngũgĩ speaks through Kiggunda when confronted by a leader of local sect of the poor for a 'haraambe' (Public fundraising) to erect a church, Kĩgũũnda retorts thus; We can hardly afford to feed our bellies. You think we can afford any for haraambe?"(Act I, p. 8).

For Marx, the accumulation of wealth is attributed to the unfair exchange of labour which leads to exploitation and thus concentration of capital in the hands of capitalists. In Ngũgĩ's Kenyan society, this concentration of capital is not only as a result of exploitation of labour but also loot through corruption. He illustrates this through Wangeci's description of the wealthy especially the 'treacherous' home guards who were rewarded land for collaboration. In Act 1, Wangeci blames Kigund for not being calculative and shrewd enough to benefit from the colonialists as most collaborators did that is why he is poor. (Act 1, p. 13).

The exploitation of workers was so rampant that Ngũgĩ boldly agrees with Karl Marx that exploitation of 'surplus' value gives rise to the growth of capital while taking a toll on the side of the labourer. He depicts this through Kĩgũũnda when he says that it is the poor who work very hard to make the exploitative rich people rich (Act I, p. 14).

Marx doesn't call for passivity and heroic lamentations; he calls for action to change the status quo. Ngũgĩ figuratively calls the passive oppressed workers as 'sleeping' when Wangeci replies Kĩgũũnda thus; "Leave me alone, You'll keep on singing the same song Till the day you people wake up. A fool 'walking stick supports the clever." (Act I, p. 15).

Marx envisaged internationalisation of capitalism in contemporary society. With the attainment of political independence, most African societies were now faced with neo-colonialism facilitated by the black bourgeois. In *I Will Marry When I Want*, these elites are represented by Kĩoi Wa Kanoru and Ikuua wa Nditika. These are depicted as the local faces for foreign

interests in the unabated plunder of the African resources. This is highlighted in the conversation between Wangeci and Kĩgũũnda. In this conversation we learn that Ikuua wa Nditika is a rich imprudent fellow who can even dig up forbidden sacred shrines” This man is an agent for some foreigners in Germany and America. He is now planning to buy Kiguunda’s “one and half acres land for a foreign company to build a factory for producing insecticide or killing bedbugs!” Kiguunda’s land is preferred because it is very near a railway line! Ikuua wa Nditika and Kĩoi wa Kanoru Are the local directors of the company. (Act I, p. 30).

According to Karl Marx, product-alienation was a symptom of work-alienation (due to exploitation and dehumanisation) and these alienation types inflamed alienation-from-others, alienation-from-nature and alienation-from-species being. This dehumanization is voiced by Gĩcaamba as he confesses Kĩgũũnda that working for the capitalists is like selling away one’s body, children and ones rights. Gicaamba relates that

Even though we are paid fortnightly

Wages can never equal the work done.

Wages can never really compensate for your labour.

... The owners of these companies are real scorpions.

They know three things only:

To oppress workers,

To take away their rights,

And to suck their blood.

... It’s Sunday.

I’m on my way to the factory.

This company has become my God.

That’s how we live.

(Act I, p. 33)

Ngũgĩ's call for the revolution hinges on the centrality of workers in wealth creation. On top of articulating the despicable working conditions and deplorable exploitation of the workers through Gĩcaamba's narration, he precisely states that "Without workers, there is no property, there is no wealth. The labour of our hands is the real wealth of the country. The blood of the worker, led by his skill and experience and knowledge, is the true creator of the wealth of nations. (Act I, pp. 37-8) In bourgeois capitalism, the privileged rely on the proletariat – the labour force responsible for survival. Marx theorized that when profits are not reinvested in the workers but in creating more factories, the workers will grow poorer and poorer until no short term patching is possible or successful.

At a crisis point, revolt will lead to a restructuring of the system. It's this kind of exploitation of the workers by capitalists that Marx recommends a revolution by the workers, he contends that, unless the workers rise up to claim ownership of the means of production, their plight would never end. Ngũgĩ prescribes the same remedy by speaking through Gĩcaamba;

I'll talk about workers

And also about peasants

For in unity lies our strength.

Foreigners in Kenya

Pack your bags and go

The owners of the homestead have come.

I'll defend my fatherland

With the sword of revolution As we go to the war of liberation. Poverty!
Poverty!

Nobody can govern over poverty

For poverty is like poison in the body.

Exploitation and oppression have poisoned our land.

(Act I, pp. 41-2)

Just like Marx, the Ngugis have no sympathy for passivity which is induced by religion. Ngũgĩ too doesn't miss to expose the double standards used by the rich to exploit the poor on false religious grounds. He speaks through Jezebel when she says;

That tractor driver is very mature He does not argue back.

He does not demand higher wages.

He just believes in hard work, Praising our Lord all the time.

He is a true brother-in-Christ.

(Act I, pp. 43-4)

The religious hypocrisy is further revealed through the character of Gĩcaamba who wonders why Kĩoi and Jezebel only came to talk about religion and proper weddings rather than give Kĩgũũnda a wage raise, which is what he actually needs. Religion certainly faces Gĩcaamba's ire, which is part of the Marxist critique as well. Marx famously called religion 'the opiate of the masses', and while Gĩcaamba is not excoriating all religion, he is making a distinction between both religion and spirituality, and Western/foreign influences and native ones. He explains, 'Religion is not the same as God' and that 'All the religions that now sit on us / Were brought here by the whites' (p. 56). Missionaries preceded soldiers, and religion was used to make Kenyans drunk while Europeans were 'mapping and grabbing our land' (p. 57).

The goals, as Gĩcaamba sees it, were to 'completely soften our hearts / To completely cripple our minds with religion!' (p. 57). In explicitly Marxist language, he cries, 'Religion is the alcohol of the soul! / Religion is the poison of the mind!' (p. 61). As if he had rightly concluded that the whole scheming by the Kĩois was up to no good, Gĩcaamba cautions the Kĩgũũndas, 'Take care you don't lose four / While running after eight.' (p. 62).

Furthermore, Kenyan Christians were oftentimes the ones who, during the uprising, advocated ‘Surrender, surrender, confess the oath’ (p. 58), preferring to go along with the whites because they were Christian, rather than support their own oppressed brethren who may or may not have converted to Christianity. Gĩcaamba adds that ‘the same colonial church’ / Survives even today / A kid steals like its mother’ (p. 59); the version of Christianity that Kĩoi practices is a testament to that.

The religion/spirituality and culture of native Kenyans are in contrast to the foreign impositions of capitalism, Christianity, and European social mores and norms. For example, the wedding ceremony of Gĩcaamba and Njooki, while, in the opinion of Kĩoi et al., is considered to be illegitimate, actually appears to be one deeply laden with meaning.

The Kenyan Christians are derided in the characterization of Kĩoi, Jezebel, Ikuua, Ndugĩre, and Helen in the broadest, most obnoxious and cringe-worthy strokes. Their grotesqueness is heightened to the extent that it is comical; they are less like actual individuals and more of a type. First, their version of Christianity is absurd. They utterly ignore the actual teachings of Jesus in terms of his upholding humility, compassion, and support for one’s fellow man, and instead smugly proclaim themselves blessed by God in their wealth and high station in life. They do not consider the sayings of Jesus dealing with rich men having trouble getting into heaven, or how worthy the poor are in God’s eyes. They instead exhibit the most ignorant assumptions that they are God’s chosen people even though their behaviour, thoughts, and words are far from godly.

An apt literary comparison is *The Autobiography of Frederick Douglass* in which, Douglass excoriates the white slaveholders for their hypocritical and inauthentic version of Christianity in where they anoint themselves as saved and blessed but indulge in the grossest of inhumane behaviours. This is what Marx meant when he referred to Christianity as a tool of capitalism.

These rich characters use the rhetoric of religion to suppress workers' rightful demand of salary increment, feign, or actually develop, ignorance regarding the true state of things in Kenya. Thus when Kĩoi laments; that 'Workers cannot let you accumulate! Every day: I want an increment', Jezebel naively responds that "this business of not being satisfied, And of not being contented with one's station in life As clearly ordained by God, Comes from not being a good Christian (p. 78-9), This shows utter negligence of the daily struggles of the impoverished.

This callousness towards the poor is also observed in the conversation about water taken by the dinner guests. After Kĩgũũnda and Wangeci bemoan their lack of water, Ndugĩre, in a superior and self-satisfied way 'takes a glass and fills it with water from the huge jar on the table' (p. 81), goes on about how important water is and how much of it he drinks while Jezebel asks the waiter to 'Go and fetch water from the drum outside, / You know the one near the pig-sty' (p. 81). This is comparable with Ikuua's counsel to Kĩoi; don't forget that business about the insecticide factory. Our foreign friends want to start as soon as possible. As you know...such a factory. Is bound to produce a lot of smelly gases and therefore it cannot be built in an area Where important people live. What we need is a place like Kĩgũũnda's or any other place similarly situated. The poor are many in Kenya. (Act II p. 75-6).

The dramatic irony is hard for the audience to bear. In order to finance his wedding, Kĩgũũnda is going to borrow money from the bank where Kĩoi presides over, using his precious title-deed as collateral. It is very clear that things are not going to end well for Kĩgũũnda, which proves to be the case. Kĩgũũnda's using his deed is a low moment for him, as it is a betrayal of his country, his people, and himself. He has chosen to relinquish the land he worked for so assiduously, the land he cherished so ardently, in order to give in to the whims and schemes of a fat cat traitor. He has accepted their assertion that his original wedding was not valid, that his

religion is sinful, and that his own way of conceiving of and living his life is flawed. Therefore, as Kĩoi had wanted that Kĩgũũnda should be saved; ‘That’s why I think that he should be saved’ (p. 79), the outcome leads to the question of whether or not he is redeemed, but at the end of this act Ngũgĩ has certainly ratcheted up the tension and the stakes. Ruling as Marx put, ‘the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas’ (Tucker 1978: 136), thus, when a disagreement ensues between the Kĩgũũndas and the Kios, and Wangeci declares ‘We shall go to Court / We are all equal before the law (p. 101), Kĩoi adamantly replies; ‘Run. Hurry up / We shall see on whose side the law is!’ (p. 101). On hearing this as if he has been woken up, Kĩgũũnda while pulling out the sword retorts;

This sword is my law and my court.

Poor people’s law court.

... Church, your churches?

Let me tell you a thing or two Mr Ahab Kĩoi.

Even if you were now to give me all the wealth

Which you and your clansmen have stolen from the poor,

Yes, the wealth which you and your Asian and European clansmen

And all the rich from Kenya share among yourselves, I would not take it.

Earthly debts must be paid here on earth.

(Act III p. 101-2)

Finally, when Kĩoi’s scheme comes to fruition and takes ownership of Kĩgũũnda’s piece of land, this stirs up Kĩgũũnda’s home and his frustration takes him to drinking alcohol which sparks conflict with the wife. This bickering calls up Gĩcaamba the voice of reason throughout the play.

With Njooki calling for Ahab Kĩoi to be baptised 'The Oppressor, Son of Graband-Take' (p. 111). Gĩcaamba continues to chide the injustice unleashed by the black elite in collaboration with their foreign counterparts with an inspiring call for revolution;

This has become too much for us. For how long will they continue oppressing us? The European Kĩoi, the Asian Kĩoi, the African Kĩoi, What is the difference? They are clansmen. They know only how to take from the poor. That group is now ready to sell the whole country to foreigners. Ensuring the smooth passage of people's wealth to Europe and other foreign countries. Their religion, their prayer are all one: Oh, God in heaven, Shut the eyes of the poor, the workers and the peasants, the masses as a whole. Ensure that they never wake up and open their eyes to see what we are really doing to them! Wa Gathoni, We too should think hard, let's wake up and reason together, now. Let us unite against our enemies. I only know this: We cannot end poverty by erecting a hundred churches in the village: Development will come from our unity. Unity is our strength and wealth. A day will surely come when if a bean falls to the ground, it'll be split equally among us, (Act III p. 112-5).

The play comes to end with a clarion call for revolution, for a fight against the Kenyan elites and the rapacious foreigners. Kĩgũũnda and Wangeci's humiliation at the hands of the Kĩois (the loss of their land, Gathoni's rejection, the gunshot, the mocking) has finally given them the clarity they need to join with Gĩcaamba and Njooki in their righteous and just class struggle. Gĩcaamba provides much more fodder for this in his diatribes against the rich, and in his reminiscences of his Mau Mau days in which everyone worked together to secure independence. This is an explicitly Marxist ending, and one that offers some hope after all of the deleterious things that the protagonists experienced of late. There is not too much hope that they will succeed, but Ngũgĩ ends the play on an inspirational note and leaves the future of the characters and their struggle open for the audience/readers to imagine.

All the three plays correspond to the Marxist call to transform society. In *Redemption* the call is to end poverty and exploitation. In *I Will Marry When I Want* it is both to fight poverty and to repudiate religion as capitalist's tool for softening them and make them unable to fight for their own. Thus Shaw and the Ngugi's call to transform society excludes Christianity and

brands it as a tool for exploitation whereas Mulwa makes religious leaders winners in promoting salvation.

4.0 Chapter Four

A Comparative analysis of the presentation of the theme of Salvation in the three plays.

The third objective of this study was to do a comparative analysis of the representation of the theme of salvation in the three plays under study. Comparative literature is a noble field of knowledge that deals with the study of the literature of two or more cultural or national groups. Though it is most times seen as a study of two or more literary works from different national origins written in different languages, it can also be a study of literatures written in the same language but from different nations and cultures among which that language is spoken. In this study, we compare the works of Bernard Shaw from the Victorian Society with David Mulwa from relatively modern Kenya Society as well as that of Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o in immediate aftermath of postcolonial Kenya society. These works not only share Marxist overtones but also the theme of salvation though uniquely prescribing intriguing pathways to its attainment.

The interdisciplinary nature of this field of research shows that often times, practitioners study literatures across national borders, across epochs, languages and genres. For most researchers in this field of study, it is the desire to integrate literary experience across borders and continents with other enticing phenomenon like historical change, political and social movements that has endeared them to the field of study. Because of the eclectic nature of comparative literature as a field of study, most critics claim that it lacks a definitive definition. It is inherently a difficult term to define.

The difficulty arises from the vast and uncertain territory the discipline is covering and from the already controversial nature of the two words constituting its name. The two (or more) elements of a comparison can be contained exclusively within the realm of literature, but some of them (not all) can also be part of another field of study. Moreover, each scholar has his own

understanding of 'literary' and 'comparison', determining the final meaning of the concept.

Some scholars such as Oscar James Campbell, (1923) have defined it as;

... Comparative literature ... endeavours, in the first place, to discover general laws which transcend any one literature, such as the development of types and forms under the progressive relationships of different literatures... Finally, through the discovery of similarities and differences by means of comparison, it endeavours to explain the inception and growth of individual works. That is, like all scientific studies of literature, our methods are primarily investigations of the processes by which a work has come into being and appraisals of the forces which produced this result... (p.12)

From the meaning of the above definition, we therefore take the leverage to compare three plays written by accomplished playwrights and how they have been able to utilize their plays to create a template for discussing Social and Political realities that have bedevilled society. African playwrights like their counterparts on other continents have over the years battled with the difficult social, cultural and political narratives that have held the vortex of the society in a firm grip. Different writers have found ways of re-writing the complexities that define society in their written works.

As shown in the previous chapters, the three playwrights: Ngugi wa Thiongo, Ngugi wa Miiri and Bernard Shaw embrace Karl Marx's view indiscriminatively. In *Major Barbara*, an impudent capitalist converts the protagonist, Major Barbara, leader of the Salvation Army into a mogul of a gun factory. He argues that one cannot teach morality without money. So Undershaft who represents the practical Marxist, upholds the view of the supremacy of money over religion. The conversion of Major Barbara to the gospel of Undershaft corresponds to the call to change from idealism to pragmatism.

In *I Will Marry When I Want*, the idea of the supremacy of material well-being over morality and religion is demonstrated in the swindle of land. The capitalists, owners of money, use their machinery: religion, bank loans and the law to confiscate the land of the protagonist Kiguunda. The latter, riddled with poverty succumbs to the temptation of cleansing his marriage in the

church hoping that this will bring him closer to the rich. Kiguunda and his wife think the rich want them to marry in Church so they can be their in-laws. They take a loan from the bank, to buy materials and to make a wedding party. The reality of capitalism dawns on them when the bank confiscates their land title on failure to pay the loan. Like Bernard Shaw, the Ngugis represent a wakeup call in this play. In the character of, Gicaamba, an exploited factory worker who appreciates the plight of Kiguunda calls the peasants to unite and resist the exploitation and to repudiate religion as capitalist's tool for softening them and make them unable to fight for their own. The Ngugi's call to transform society excludes Christianity and brands it as a tool for exploitation.

However, In *Redemption*, Mulwa represents the Marxist arguments in a new way. Whereas Marx recommends repudiation of religion, essentially Christianity, as a revolution of the proletariat to change the status quo, Mulwa's *Redemption* calls for a reconciliation of extreme Marxism and Christianity. It fuses the practical ideas of Marx and the Christian creed to address the salvation crisis the world faces today. For example, Mulwa creates the liberation/revolutionary leader who is a pastor. Pastor Manela uses the pulpit to preach both the Gospel of Christ and of economic development.

Whereas Marxism advocates for either economic fortification or revolution as the springboard for liberation, Christianity on the other hand calls for spiritual preparedness and faith in the omnipotence of the Almighty God with the survival of the soul taking prominence as opposed to the bodily desires that are met through materialism as Marxism has it.

Mulwa's *Redemption* is a confluence that bridges and reconciles all aspects of human life in a realistic, just and holistic manner. It emphasises the ageless Christian virtues of ethics, love and tolerance, concern for our neighbour, mercy, justice and goodwill towards all men as being

part of the redemptive forces in society. Its richness in the Christian virtues needs to be forgiven owing to the fact that it was a brainchild of the church.

Through the characterization of Pastor Manela, David Mulwa prescribes redemption to the imaginary Sector Three. Concerned about the gradual decay of the church, Manela, a young and well-educated pastor is sent to tend the flock at Sector Three. He was assigned to investigate the root causes of the problem and put the area right a task which he successfully does. Mulwa attributes this young pastor's success to his unwavering faith in "Christ the Rock of Ages, his unshakable faith, his life, compassion and respect even for the worst of mankind and his unflinching dedication to the redemption of all that had fallen by the wayside."

In the play, Mulwa uses the pastor's pulpit to preach the centrality of Christ and the pragmatism of Marx in fostering spiritual and human salvation. He comes to dilapidated church in sector three and restores the faith of the people in Christ. He uses the word of Christ to gather the people and preach to them the need to turn to God. For example, he counsels Kitaka a rapist to turn to God. He counsels the young people Antonina and Rebecca both rejected by their parents to their unruly change their ways. But on top of preaching spiritual cleansing, he teaches practical agricultural skills of growing and marketing together to enable the people to overcome poverty.

Furthermore, Mulwa uses research skills to study the past of the people. As Karl Max advises, it is always important to historicise because the problems of today have their roots in the past. If we must change the people or situations we must know where we came from. Mulwa takes time to study the history of the people in Sector Three. His findings include the following: the majority of the people in the area are landless due to the gimmicks of Elton Muthemba a self-styled bishop. Muthemba earns money by preaching what the people want to hear not what Christ wants them to hear. Muthemba gets money from abroad by deceiving the main Church

that he is helping the poor. Mulwa uses this history to change the situation of the landless people. He teaches them to be self employed by tilling their own land.

For instance, Ezekiel Kitaka, the down caste, then finds hope and acceptance from this new pastor. Kitaka's redemption attracts the church youth prominently being the children of the antagonist Pastor Mutema and Archbishop Muthemba. The arch-rival families of Muthemba and Old Mutema come together again, sworn enemies seek forgiveness from God and from one another and the perceived class divide and isolation is obliterated. Mulwa shows that; everyone coming into contact with the new pastor realizes that the greatest is love.

Nonetheless, as Rev. Samuel Kobia states it in the *Preface to Redemption*, Mulwa" clearly depicts the defects of the church today. The presentation of *Redemption* to the public caused a stir in the public domain because of its crystal clear message '... drama critics felt that the church has at last decided to look in the mirror' (Rev. Samuel Kobia, *Preface to Redemption*). Despite this true observation the play mitigates the Marxist extremism we see in Major Barbara and I Will Marry When I Want particularly negating the centrality of religion in the development/salvation.

5.0 Chapter Five

Conclusion

The research aimed to give a Marxist critique of the three writers who have embraced Marxism in their drama. The writers were: Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and Ngũgĩ wa Mĩriĩ, Gerge Bernard Shaw and David Mulwa and the works were: *I Will Marry When I Want*, *Major Barbara* and *Redemption* respectively.

World over, Marxist criticism has been reflected as controversial. His attack on Christianity as being absolutely irrelevant to man's wellbeing is a completely one sided argument. However, there is truth in what Karl Marx says. For instance, Karl Marx statements to unite and fight exploitation an evil that dehumanize people are valid. Poverty makes it hard to pursue spiritual growth. Given this humanistic stance, many writers like David Mulwa, Bernard Shaw, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and Ngũgĩ wa Mĩriĩ have embraced this Marxist stance.

However, there are instances of exaggeration. The three writers are united by their examination of the theme of salvation from the Marxist point of view. The purpose of the study was to establish who of the writers presents a more realistic Marxist view of theme salvation. According to Karl Marx's vision of salvation is premised on the notion of 'economic substructure' (Tucker p.473-4) involving a series of events from the rise of workers whose revolution will overthrow capitalism leading to abolition of private property 'socialism' and finally graduating to 'pure communism' where; in this highest level of development, basic human needs and wants would be met according to the Marxist principle, 'from each according to his abilities to produce, to each according to needs' (Marx 2001c: 87).

Conversely, George Bernard Shaw has whole heartedly embraced the above Marxist stance and even taken it a notch higher by stating that 'the greatest of our evils and the worst of our

crimes is poverty, ...our first duty, to which every other consideration should be sacrificed, is not to be poor' (*Major Barbara* p. 15). Shaw argues that poverty does not improve human beings; rather it depraves people into conscienceless inhumanity.

On the other hand, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and Ngũgĩ wa Mĩriĩ in *I Will Marry When I Want*, did not only embrace Marx's economic argument but also his rejection of religion (Act II, p. 61). They went on to call upon their audience to rise up and liberate themselves from societal injustices through a revolution (Act III, p. 115).

Unlike Bernard Shaw and the Ngũgĩs, David Mulwa captures the best of both worlds. While agreeing that physical needs have to be met '...we must feed our five thousand in this valley it's the only way their ears will be fully open' (p. 93), he departs from Ngũgĩs radicalism as well as Shaw's atheism. He instead advocates for honest work by invoking the Christian principles of compassion and respect even for the worst of mankind.

Through characterisation, Mulwa reconciles the 'materialists' symbolised by Archbishop Methemba with the 'spiritualists' represented by Pastor Mutema through a dualist Pastor Manela. He demonstrates the downside of each extreme and builds a strong pillar of hope through Pastor Manela leading to Salvation of the imaginary community of 'Sector Three'. From the above discourse, I argue that Mulwa offers a more compelling Marxist view of salvation.

As stated before, this research set out to do a comparative analysis of the presentation of a Marxist theme: Salvation in three plays by four playwrights. The study had three objectives: To examine the representation of the first tenet in the plays, to examine the second tenet in the plays and to establish which of the three playwrights present a holistic Marxist stance. The study found out that all plays adopt the Marxist topographical metaphor of the infrastructure

versus the superstructure and they all preach change of the plight of the poor or the wretched of the earth.

In *Redemption* the importance of money is depicted through the main conflict of the play. The writer shows that the major problem facing Sector Three Church rotates around money. People have abrogated from the mainstream church to create their own churches to get money. However, the play also shows that who amass wealth, they are not happy for in order to get money, they disrupt the social fibre which is the source of happiness and satisfaction for it is not the individual conscienceless that determine the social being, rather it is the social being that makes a man happy. The supremacy of economic aspect over other aspects of existence is well depicted.

In *Major Barbara*. The conflict of the play revolves around holding an illusion about life. The leaders of the Salvation Army are brought up opulence which opulence was created by parents who disregarded morality to pursue monetary prosperity. The financial security gives the children an impetus to preach salvation/morality. However, the people she is preaching to are in abject poverty. The play shows the absurdity of teaching salvation theoretically. Thus corresponding to the Marxist views of the topographical representation of the supremacy of money over other aspects like morality and the notion that philosophers have merely contemplated the world. The point is to change it.

I argue that Mulwa like his fellow dramatists subscribed to the Marxist arguments though without repudiating the role of religion, in development/salvation. What is more, his protagonist, Pastor Manela, manages at the end of the play to restore justice, forgiveness, unity and reconciliation of the whole community. Idealistically, this is the kind of salvation the society urgently desires but only dreams of. Thus I argue that David Mulwa, in his *Redemption*, presents a holistic view of salvation.

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