

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

Representation of Wangari Maathai's *Unbowed* as a Metaphor for Defiance

Angela Njeri

MA Candidate, Department of Languages, Literature and Communication,
The Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Kenya

Selline Oketch

Senior Lecturer, Languages, Literature and Communication,
The Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Kenya

Ouno V. Onyango

Lecturer, Department of Languages, Linguistics and Literature, Pwani University, Kenya

Abstract:

Contemporary writers are using literary platforms to voice socio-political concerns. Women writers are fast emerging as the strongest section of civil society. Women writers, just like their male counterparts, question institutional abuse of political latitude by persons in positions of authority. At the same time, these women writers create feedback loops that have the potential to redirect and reshape strategies of governance and administration. These women writers develop women characters that exhibit a peculiarly courageous or risky act of resistance. They defy authoritarian political leadership and stand for what they believe in, yet their works remain largely unexplored. It is in this context that this study examines the depiction of Wangari Maathai's *Unbowed* as a metaphor for defiance against oppressive socio-political systems. The analysis of this autobiographical text is anchored on Marxist and post-colonial literary theories, as advanced by Tyson (2002) and Spivak (2010), respectively. By unearthing defiant modes of protest, the heterogeneity of resistance is affirmed, and a new domain where art encounters the political is revealed. Maathai's *Unbowed* defies conventional literary traditions, steps over the boundary into the domain of socio-political activism and uses her life stories to demonstrate that the subaltern – women's voices that erstwhile muffled – can now speak and meaningfully contribute to clamour for social justice. The outcomes of this study serve as a key reference point for literary scholarship on social equality, governance and political dissidence.

Keywords: Metaphor, defiance, Marxism, subaltern, socio-political activism, women writing, autobiography

1. Introduction

Wangari Maathai is arguably one of Africa's most distinguished scholars, writers and political activists. Her essays reflect her passion for environmental conservation, social justice and political decency. Some of these essays include: *Replenishing the Earth: Spiritual Values for Healing Ourselves* (2010), *The Green Belt Movement* (2003), *The Challenge for Africa* (2010) and *The World We Once Lived In* (2021). She championed social fairness against the backdrop of a politically repressive regime. The climate of fear during this era stifled political dissent. The autobiographical work *Unbowed* stands out because it is a retelling of her life stories. Using Marxist and post-colonial literary theory, this study presents resistance as a distinctive experience that manifests itself in forms such as defiance, moral fortitude, and revolutionary vision in *Unbowed*. The study interrogates Maathai's *Unbowed* to demonstrate that the protagonist declines to yield or submit to the pressures exerted by an authoritarian political class. We seek to argue that she remains committed to her values, moral principles and convictions in the face of oppression.

2. Metaphorical Representation of Defiance in Wangari Maathai's *Unbowed*

Achebe (2012) believes 'that it is impossible to write anything in Africa without some kind of commitment, some kind of message, some kind of protest' (p. 58). Unlike Achebe, who regards himself as 'a protest writer, with restraint', Maathai writes without restraint. Maathai's story covers two significant epochs in Africa's history: the colonial and post-colonial era. Maathai's *Unbowed* vividly depicts how difficult it was for one to make their way to the top as a woman, especially in African societies, which were controlled by traditional hegemony and colonial administration. Africa was fighting for its independence as a continent, and African countries were struggling to liberate themselves from colonial dominion. The colonial period is not given as much attention as the post-independence African societies. Beyond the cultural hegemony of traditionalism, elite women like the protagonist still found it difficult to navigate their way through the post-colonial African environment.

Maathai trains her gun on the Moi's regime in Kenya. The character had to come up with a mechanism to defend herself and survive during Moi's hostile political regime. She displays an unshakable spirit and declines to submit to an

authoritarian regime. Her indefatigable spirit bore significant fruits. Kenyans are enjoying some of these privileges right now. The title of the text speaks of someone who is not willing to yield to defeat. Maathai depicts this spirit through her defiance of dictatorial regimes and the extreme exhibition of chauvinism. Professor Wangari Maathai admits that after her stay in the States, she developed a completely different view of things. Her experiences in American society strengthened her resolve, especially when dealing with issues affecting women who were marginalised or subalternised. Being herself an African woman, she admits that it meant she had to do more because of the constraints imposed on her as a result of traditional cultural imperialism:

The United States prepared me to be confident not only in reclaiming my original name but also in critiquing what was happening at home, including what women were experiencing. My years in the United States overlapped with the beginnings of the women's movement, and even though many women were still bound to traditional ideas about themselves at that time, I came to see that as an African woman, I was perhaps even more constrained in what I could do or think, or even hope for. This was to come into sharper perspective when I returned to Kenya in 1966, thinking that the sky was the limit for me. (Maathai, 2006, p. 96)

Maathai did not let the fact that she had been away from Africa deter her from reclaiming her original identity as an African when she came back, nor did it deter her from fighting for her kind, who were still victims of a very retrogressive culture and society that was extremely male-dominated. She turned this cultural hostility to her advantage because she had learnt something new in the States and wanted to use it to change her country. This means that she did not let her displacement define who she really was and the fact that no matter where she went, Kenya was always her home. It is believed that whenever someone visits the States, the person is bound to bend to some changes that would interfere with how the person views her own cultural identity and beliefs; however, Maathai stands tall. The Occident does not Orientalise her. She comes out even stronger in spirit, defiant, and spoiling for cultural fights in her country.

Maathai's resilience and belief in fighting for what she believed was right always ensured that she and those who stood with her got what they wanted, irrespective of the hostility of the environment. It is her unbowed nature that placed her in the political limelight. She achieved all the awards she received all over the world and even developed unique survival techniques in male-dominated institutions. She observes:

In the end, however, the university must have decided that to maintain peace, the two of us should be given what we were asking for. From then on, although women colleagues continued to be paid less than their male counterparts and did not receive equal benefits, Vert and I were treated like honorary male professors! We continued to campaign, urging women -especially those married to academic members of staff or civil servants (all of whom received superior terms and incentives)-not to sign discriminatory terms-of-service contracts that would, for example, deny their children medical insurance coverage and deny them the pension granted our male colleagues. (Maathai, 2006, p.116)

Maathai did not let the fact that she was a woman give her male counterparts power over her. Even though this would eventually lead to discrimination of Maathai and her female colleagues at work, she refused to bow to masculine pressure. The culturally hegemonic environment in the 1960s did not permit the progress of women as female elites were seen as a threat to the male-dominated atmosphere. They were seen as defiant, basically because they wanted to be treated as equals to the male colleagues they worked with. It is the strong character that she portrays in the text that landed her most of the privileges she got at the university. Maathai and Vert were female lecturers at the first university in Kenya, the University of Nairobi, and this already meant that their survival in that atmosphere would not be easy. Besides having to fight their way into the system, they had to beat cultural odds to get the benefits the male lecturers received. The fact that she asked for these benefits in the first place was seen as an indication of a defiant woman who wanted to be treated as equal to the men she worked with. It is her strong, unshakeable spirit that enabled her to receive all the benefits other male lecturers got; in fact, they were treated like honorary male professors. Professor Wangari Maathai's challenging attitude is unquestionably seen in her memoir when she challenges even the cultural norms that she felt were oppressive to women. To demonstrate her commitment to change, she defied some of them because she felt they were imposed on people unnecessarily. She posits:

The practice of using the title 'Mrs.' after marriage, followed by the husband's surname, was introduced by the British, and I did not see why I had to adopt it. True, that is what everybody else in the emerging elite class did, and not doing it seemed to suggest that I did not quite love Mwangi and his family. Largely to demonstrate that this was not the case, I agree but put a hyphen between the two surnames. Eventually, I stopped using the hyphen and even dropped my maiden name for day-to-day correspondence. (Maathai, 2006, p.140)

The above illustrations show that she was defiant as she was unwilling to adopt the British ways just for the sake of it. She rejected Western cultural hegemony (Fanon, 1961). Instead, she adopts her own way of dealing with the post-colonial challenges. She was uncomfortable with the uncritical consumption of British norms. She also understood that this would hurt her husband's feelings. She knew just too well what it meant to be an African woman. When a married woman adopted her husband's name and at the same time did what she felt was comfortable for her and did right by herself, the masculine ego of traditional men was severely bruised. Ideally, in the African context, it was viewed as a form of defiance. Refusing to adopt a husband's name and sticking to one's name after marriage was unheard of. That she did this demonstrates that she was 'unbowed' despite knowing that it meant questioning the cultural beliefs and lack of respect for the marriage vows.

The narrator found strength in her strong, unbowed spirit and kept on fighting and living every day despite all that she went through. The hostilities associated with her home might have broken her completely, but she remained focused on her goals. Her separation from her husband and the imagination of taking care of all her three children, the void Mwangi left in her life were unimaginable then, but how she handled the situation was remarkably unbelievable; in fact, it is this spirit of defiance that keeps her through and gives her the strength to pick herself up from where Mwangi had left and start a new chapter for herself and the children:

Then, a strong force pulled me out of my chair to look for a broom. 'Sweep!' an inner voice ordered me. I obeyed and walked to the kitchen, found a broom, and started sweeping the rubbish Mwangi had left behind. I swept in the kitchen and moved into the living room and then the bedroom. I swept the corridors, and out of the main door, I swept the dust that had been laid bare when Mwangi packed his things. As I swept, I began to realise that this might be it, that he had gone and that he might not come back. And if he did come back, what would I do? As I swept the last bit of dust, I made a covenant with myself: I will accept. Whatever will be, will be. I have a life to lead. I recalled words a friend had told me, the philosophy of her faith. "Life is a journey and a struggle," she had said. 'We cannot control it, but we can make the best out of any situation.' I was indeed in quite a situation. It was up to me to make the best of it. (Maathai, 2006, p.141)

She did not let the sudden separation from her husband wear her out; he displayed her unbowed nature and accepted things the way they were and decided to fight her way through without following the husband to try to convince him that they needed to work out things. She decided she would manage her affairs. She felt it was an opportunity to have a fresh start. This separation gave her a chance to have her independence and chart a new destiny. This kind of stand was not expected from an African woman in a culturally repressive society. However, when she handled things the way she did, it was considered an act of defiance because a woman was expected to submit in the African context. In the 1970s, elite women were despised because they were seen as a threat to the male folks, and so the more defiant they were, the more opposition they faced from their male counterparts and society in general. Ironically, it is their defiant nature that earned them a place in those societies. Their unbowed spirits were never broken despite the ugly experiences they were forced to go through. Professor Wangari Maathai is not exceptional:

At one point, it became clear I was being turned into a sacrificial lamb. Anybody who had a grudge against modern, educated, and independent women was being given an opportunity to spit on me. I decided to hold my head high, put my shoulders back, and suffer with dignity: I would give every woman and girl a reason to be proud and never regret being educated, successful, and talented. 'What I have,' I told myself, 'is something to celebrate and not to ridicule or dishonour.' (Maathai, 2006, p.146)

Even though the entire society resented modern, educated, and independent women, she never let that deter her from performing her duties to her kind. She was ready to be the sacrificial lamb just to ensure she set a good example for future women. She held her head high, irrespective of the hostility of the people she was surrounded with. She portrayed pure dignity. She arguably became the black Messiah for the African women and women in Kenya specifically. The more pressure was applied by external forces to try to deter her from performing her duties and doing what she believed was right, the more resilient she became. She was not easily broken nor bent; she was ready to stand alone even when others were not ready to offer support. She recalls:

Some even said they had been cautioned by their husbands not to vote for me. I realised I had to fight as a matter of principle. It was one thing for women not to elect me but quite another to withdraw before they had had a chance to vote. I also knew that on a level playing field, I would win. When pressure is applied to me unfairly, I tend to dig in my heels and stand my ground - precisely the opposite of what those applying the pressure hoped or expected. (Maathai, 2006, p.158)

These words strongly bring out the defiant spirit in the character; she has strong faith in herself and would not let anything shake her determination. She did all that was within her power to disappoint those who wanted her to fail by doing the contrary. Wangari Maathai would turn the criticism used by her enemies to bring her down into her strength, and the criticism would help her become even stronger. The fact that she was unbowed made her to be branded as a defiant woman. Men did not expect subservient married women to relate with her because it would turn them against their husbands. This was acknowledged even by President Moi, who went as far as asking other women not to talk to her:

Yes, I had and was not going to take those slanders lying down as I read the newspaper headlines - 'MPs Condemn Prof. Maathai' and 'Prof. Maathai Under Fire in Parliament' - I knew that this was just what I needed to stake my ground. What had begun as my attempt to answer the call of a young law student had become a contest between me, asking the government to explain its actions, and the government behaving badly in response? As it turned out, the more the government misbehaved, the worse it seemed in the eyes of the public and, later, the international community. (Maathai, 2006, p. 191)

She was aware of what she had to do and that she needed to stand her ground irrespective of what was being said about her. She was very much aware of how hostile the ruling government could become, but because of her strong, challenging spirit, she questioned how it did things, knowing very well it could lead to her demise. She did this in a very strategic way, and the government could not just deal with her publicly because she knew she had some support from international communities, so the government would be questioned about her whereabouts. Wangari Maathai, very much aware of the criticism, did not deter her from questioning how the ruling party was carrying out its activities. She went as far as questioning the male folk who saw themselves as the rulers of the country at different levels and reminded them to actually accomplish that which they promised the people. She notes:

I'm sure the MPs were amazed that I was willing to tell them to concentrate on what was supposedly between their ears. That quote was found to be way into the press. Even though what had been said about me in Parliament was deeply unpleasant, it was not anything new, either for me or other critics of the government. I had been publicly humiliated during my divorce and denied re-employment at the University of Nairobi because I had dared to challenge the ruling party. Indeed, it was almost the price I had to pay to be free. I knew in this case, I hadn't broken any law or done anything that warranted jail or mistreatment. I had asked a question, which I knew was a right guaranteed in the Kenyan constitution. (Maathai, 2006, p. 193)

The boldness that she publicly displayed is remarkable because, in the 1900s, questioning men who regarded themselves as members of the elite society was a different degree of defiance in the eyes of many in an African country; an African woman would be outstanding because of her submissive nature, unlike the European woman. Wangari Maathai, despite being an African woman, was not willing to submit to obsolescent traditions, and that is why even when she tried to fight for her marriage to save it. She did not have enough backup as she expected. She was branded the enemy in her own marriage, even by the state. She admits that it is her strong belief that she was on the right whenever she felt something was not done right that kept her strong through her struggle. It is from her defiance that she derived her strength. She did not run away from the challenges she faced. She says:

During the course of the struggle over the complex, I felt strongly that I was doing the right thing -popular opinion notwithstanding. So, I didn't experience fear on a daily basis. I don't tend to invite challenges, but I meet them. And once I do, I stick with it. I know the situation is not going to be resolved overnight, and I don't hurry to meet the second challenge until the first is concluded. That, perhaps, has been my strong point. I have seen time and again that if you stay with a challenge, if you are convinced that you are right to do so, and if you give it everything you have, it is amazing what can happen. (Maathai, 2006, p. 194)

She was not only consistent with whatever she started doing, but she was also patient. She emphasised the fact that if one stays unbowed and does that which is right for them, the end results can be surprising. She believes that sometimes, just being defiant for the right course is not all bad. Resistance can be weaponised to achieve social justice, especially if one feels it cannot be delivered on a silver plate. The text not only depicts Prof Wangari Maathai's own defiance as an individual but there are also those that she showed with the help of the small sisterhood that was always by her side because she did not fight all the wars alone. She had some help. She established the spirit of unbowed even in other individuals, especially the women, which helped them to resist and keep fighting the hostile regime of their time. She reveals:

Despite the difficulties we experienced with our office space throughout the early 1990s, we never wavered in our commitment to saving Uhuru Park and fighting for our freedom. By early 1990, despite the resistance of the authorities to any of my appeals, it was becoming clear that the government could no longer ignore the chorus of opposition both inside and outside Kenya to the Times complex. During the last months of 1989, I had written letters to many individuals abroad in Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, and West Germany -politicians, media moguls, activists, and philanthropists and asked them to put pressure on investors to ensure that the complex wasn't built in the park. (Maathai, 2006, p. 202)

It is because of the unbowed spirit that she exhibited in her struggle that earned her a lot of fame all over the globe. This helped her to establish connections everywhere and even for her consistency in doing the right thing by all means, she got full support from various international communities and organisations. They were ready to help her fight without fear, and occasionally, when she was experiencing a hard time, they would come through to support her, especially when she was arrested. These struggles never went in vain. Not only did her unbowed spirit make her who she became, winning all the awards she had, but it also helped in making Kenya a better place socio-political-wise.

Alienation and separation can be nauseating. People get tired of begging for justice, especially when it turns out that their pleas fall on deaf ears and initiate a revolt against oppression. This revolution can begin with one person. All they should think of are strategies for mounting serious resistance. During desperate times, people do desperate things, especially for those they love. They are not scared of anything, nor are they shaken by anything. They find strength from anyone who stands and supports them and hold on to hope. The narrator reveals:

The mothers in the tent refused to be intimidated, and they did not run. Instead, they did something very brave. Several of them stripped, some of them completely naked, and showed the police officers their breasts. One of the most powerful African traditions concerns the relationship between a woman and a man who could be her son. Every woman old enough to be your mother is considered like your own mother and expects to be treated with considerable respect. As they bared their breasts, what the mothers were saying to the policemen in their anger and frustration as they were being beaten was, "By showing you my nakedness, I curse you as I would my son for the way you are abusing me. (Maathai, 2006, p. 220)

These mothers did not mind tarnishing their dignity by bravely stripping off in front of the policemen because all they ever wanted was for their sons to be set free and to get that justice. They were ready to go at all costs just to make sure their voices were heard and their loved ones set free at last. They show admirable boldness when they challenge the authorities. Wangari Maathai's presence in their midst gives them hope to keep fighting. Professor Wangari Maathai did not let anything silence her. She was taken to jail on various occasions, yet this did dampen her fighting spirit. She refused to be commoditised or objectified (Tyson, 2006). She is also attacked by hired thugs to deter her from planting trees where others had been cut. It is from this attack that she ends up being hospitalised, but when she is discharged, she comes out even stronger:

When I was sufficiently recovered, I called a press conference. I was unconscious, and I had asked to be given a black eye and a baseball-sized lump on my head. I informed the press that although after what had happened to me, I would have to stay away from 'dangerous ground,' I wouldn't be silenced or deterred from telling the truth, and I wouldn't go away. 'The mothers,' I emphasise, 'had a right to seek the freedom of their sons.' (Maathai, 2006, p. 221)

Wangari Maathai understood that inasmuch as she was unbowed, she was still a woman and, above all, an elite, so this meant that she was a threat to the male elite society who felt like she needed to be dealt with, and so she feared for her life. She says she needed to go low and let the atmosphere cool but insists that she would not be silenced or deterred from telling the truth. She encourages people to come out and fight for their freedom. The spirit of defiance and strong will to do right never dies; Wangari Maathai and her companion never gave up fighting for their rights, and neither did they let circumstances deter their progress. Their weapons were consistency and boldness.

The story of Freedom Corner did not end with my hospitalisation or the dispersal of the mothers. We remained unbowed. The day after the police attack, many of the women, on their own, returned to Freedom Corner. Finding the area guarded by hundreds of armed soldiers, the women decided to seek help at nearby All Saints Cathedral in contacting the other mothers and their supporters. (Maathai, 2006, p. 222)

Mothers, despite being abused by the police, kept coming out and seeking support when necessary to ensure their original motive was met by the government. Wangari did not allow her hospitalisation to set her back; instead, she joined the women in the fight. She was a mother and understood what it meant for these other women to demand the release of their loved sons, so she joined the fight, although her son was not among the arrested boys. The church also supported them in the fight. This was very important for the women, so when the state eventually released their sons, they were grateful and impressed that their resistance had paid off.

There comes a time when nobody feels safe in their homes or in the country they live in. During President Moi's regime, those he felt were opposing his leadership would be detained, so it was not safe to even welcome a police officer to one's house because one was not sure what would happen next. Wangari Maathai, being an elite woman, had a lot of connections from international communities and was seen as a threat to the government because she could not be controlled. She refused to dance to their tunes. She was occasionally on the run from the government because they were looking for any excuse to lock her away, but it was her defiance that kept her out of jail and the fact that she was unbowed. She says:

'Then you can understand my apprehension,' I insisted. 'If you cannot believe me, I cannot believe you,' I responded, and at that, I started to pretend there were men inside because even she wouldn't believe me. 'OK. You men, you can sleep soundly because there are policemen outside,' I said loudly. This went on for some time, with them continuing to ask me to open up and me refusing. Eventually, I just sat down in my living room and stopped responding to them. The standoff continued until the officers got tired and became completely quiet, and I returned to bed. When I woke up the next morning, I saw that the police officers had gone and that my security guard had come back to tell his story of how he had seen everything that had happened -from a good, safe distance behind the fence. (Maathai, 2006, p. 252)

Wangari Maathai understood her situation. She was aware that the government was so obsessed with finding fault with her to find a reason for arresting her, so there was no way she could be fooled by police officers to open her door for them willingly. The fact that she was not ready to open her door to these officers was regarded as defiance of authority. She was not a defiant citizen but had to do what she did to be safe. She was always arrested by other opposition leaders, and the experiences did not turn out well for her. It is her unbowed spirit that helped her survive in the atmosphere she was in. Refusing to open the door for the police officers seemed like the right thing to do at that time because if her security guard had hidden from the police officers, then what would have happened to her? Do not forget she was but a divorced woman and a threat to the state.

Wangari Maathai not only fought for change in the political space but is also famous for her fight for the environment. This, too, was not an easy task to achieve. The tree-planting project she initiated faced stiff opposition from the government at some point. She fought to replace trees that were cut in the forest and not agreeing with the government to interfere with Uhuru Park to establish a building that she felt the government was using as an excuse to misuse more resources that could help the citizens. She demonstrates that the subaltern can speak even in a hostile political environment (Spivak, 2010). It is her defiance that helped her plant trees that the government opposed; she stands firm to be able to plant more trees in the forest that the government was busy clearing for its own benefit; she rubs the authorities the wrong way in the process but still manages to plant them as a result of her unbowed spirit:

As we made our way across the marshes, at one point, we had to walk along a log partly submerged by the first flowing river. You had to balance carefully to make sure you didn't fall into the water. Alas, some of those with us did tumble in, but fortunately, the water was not that deep. It was only after many of us had crossed the river and were inside the forest that the police realised we were there. They were astonished to see me watering the seedlings in the nursery. The police thought they had the forest completely covered, and yet we had crept in. We beat them to it! (Maathai, 2006, p. 265)

Wangari Maathai and her environmentalists group do not allow anything to deter them from making the country green by planting trees anytime they get a chance. She risks her life and that of her companions to sneak into the forest guarded by police officers with an order not to allow them in, just to water the trees they had planted earlier. Their unbowed spirit was remarkable. Few women were able to do what Wangari Maathai did in an extremely male-dominated society. The struggles she went through to achieve what she achieved were unimaginable. She believed she was doing the

right thing, and her boldness helped her conquer all. Her strong spirit, the desire to do that which is right, and her boldness took her through all she faced:

Many people assume that I must have been inordinately brave to face down the thugs and police during the campaign for Karura Forest. The truth is that I simply did not understand why anyone would want to violate the rights of others or ruin the environment. Why would someone destroy the only forest left in the city and give it to friends and political supporters to build expensive houses and golf courses? For me, the destruction of Karura Forest, like the malnourished women in the 1970s, the Times complex in Uhuru Park, and the political prisoners detained without trial were problems that needed to be solved, and the authorities were stopping me from finding a solution. What people see as fearlessness is really persistence. Because I am focused on the solution, I don't see danger. Because I don't see danger, I don't allow my mind to imagine what might happen to me, which is my definition of fear. If you don't foresee the danger and see only the solution, then you can defy anyone and appear strong and fearless. (Maathai, 2006, p. 272)

3. Conclusion

The foregoing discussion demonstrates that Wangari Maathai's *Unbowed* is a metaphor for defiance. By unearthing defiant modes of protest, Maathai affirms the heterogeneity of resistance and reveals a new domain where art encounters the political. Maathai defies conventional literary traditions, steps over the boundary into the domain of socio-political activism and uses her life stories to demonstrate that the subaltern – women's voices that were erstwhile muffled – can now speak and meaningfully contribute to clamour for social justice. In the words of Spivak (2010), she demonstrates that the subaltern can speak and her voice can be heard.

4. References

- i. Achebe, C. (2012). *There was a country: A personal history of Biafra*. Penguin Publishing Group.
- ii. Fanon, F. (1961). *The wretched of the earth*. Routledge.
- iii. Maathai, W. (2006). *Unbowed: A memoir*. Arrow Books.
- iv. Maathai, W. (2010). *Replenishing the Earth: Spiritual values for healing ourselves and the world*. The Crown Publishing Group.
- v. Maathai, W. (2003). *The Green Belt Movement*. Lantern Publishing and Media.
- vi. Maathai, W. (2010). *The challenge for Africa*. Anchor Books.
- vii. Maathai, W. (2021). *The world we once lived in*. Penguin Classics.
- viii. Spivak, G. (2010). 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' In R. Morris (Ed.), *Can the Subaltern Speak?: Reflections on the History of an Idea*. Columbia University Press.
- ix. Tyson, L. (2012). *Critical theory today: A user-friendly guide*. Routledge.