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UNIVERSITY OF BURUNDI
FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

THE COMPLEXITIES OF LEADERSHIP IN NGUGI WA THIONG'O'S *THE RIVER BETWEEN.*

By

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Dedication

To my late parents,

To my brothers and sisters,

I dedicate this work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my gratitude to all individuals who assisted me in the completion of this work. First and foremost, I do wish to express my gratitude to Mr Eric Njeng Sipyinyu for his unfailing and wise guidance.

Secondary, I wish to thank all the lecturers at the University of Burundi, particularly those in Department of English Language and Literature for the education I got all along my studies.

Thirdly, my thanks also go to all my relatives and friends without whose help, this work would have been much difficult to complete.

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ABSTRACT

This work sets out to explore the complexities of leadership in colonial African Society. It examines how the very complex task of leadership is made even more complex by the colonial experience. Employing the sociological approach to literature, this work examines the complex responsibility Waiyaki has towards his people and how the colonial experience magnifies it. By trying to reconcile the two rival ridges at the end of the novel – *The River Between*, he meets his tragic fate . He has to give up his freedom and his life to unite his people.

INTRODUCTION

Any contact of two or more communities leads to borrowings at almost all levels such as political, social and educational level. The case of colonised communities is a good example. Africans were forced to accept and borrow most colonialist institutions and ideologies.

As the whole history of the colonialist exploitation of Africa proves, missionaries carried visible signs of colonialism. Before their arrival, African societies had their own way of bringing up their children. In the domain of education, the traditional education that was performed from birth by the parents and close relatives and, later, through stages of initiation, by the elders was systematically cast aside. It was replaced by formal education in schools. The new kind of education touched only the younger generation. This was the case because only children were allowed to go to school. It created then the problem of generation gap because they no longer had the same view of life.

Among the forces operating on African communities is Christianity which is brought by the white men. They came with preconceived ideas that African religious beliefs are primitive, evil, savage and idolatrous. They dismissed and opposed them as something which had to be destroyed and replaced by a higher religion. However, Africans had their own religious systems, with a set of beliefs and practices. Religion in African society cannot be separated from politics because political officers are those who perform the most solemn religious service in their role as elders. To disturb religion implies to destabilize politics and in addition, religion can be regarded as linked to the entire way of people's life. Each activity, such as farming, hunting, making sacrifices, organising festivals, cult worship, in short, every aspect of life and every occurrence may have its religious explanation. Even the heads of communities are said to be given by God.

In the early days of European colonisation, many white men, especially missionaries, settled in Africa having in mind what they will do about the

situation in Africa. They found Africans having some disagreement because of tribalism. They took basis on these problems to gain confidence of some Africans. The situation is then deepened. At this level then, African leaders began to get confused. In the novel *The River Between* by Ngugi wa Thiong'o, the local leaders get more and more troubles in their role as leaders as the white man progressively establishes himself. The internal rivalries are aroused and the old heads of communities are heavily challenged. Joshua, as a convert, is no longer observing tribal taboos and rites on which the welfare of the tribes depended.

As the primary source, this study is going to concentrate on one book *The River Between* by Ngugi wa Thiong'o. It is a fictional novel on the African colonial experience as was the case for the Kikuyu people of Kenya. It is a historical novel depicting the situation of the black man in his own environment which, however, has been subjected to colonial occupation. Ngugi was born in a hostile community and grew up in an environment where white subjugation and domination were at work. He recalls the very poignant moment his society observed during the colonial regime. The secondary source for this study will be found in other works about the colonial and post-colonial periods. We will not forget the precolonial ones which will help in talking about the traditional African societies which had their own way of living according to their needs.

The sociological approach which will be applied in this work, states that any human being is a product of a biological, intellectual, emotional and spiritual influence. Hyppolite Taine was one of the first proponent of this approach. He tried to apply the method of biological science to works of literature. He says that they are products of a time, a place and an individual and that they have the capacity to affect, and perhaps change the world into which they are introduced. According to him, three major factors determine a work of art: *race, milieu et moment*. For the present work, *race* refers to black people in Africa. By *milieu*, we are referring to Ngugi's environment and experience in the Kikuyu tribe. By *moment*, we focus our analysis on the colonial period. This

approach then will help to pick up reasons behind the way leadership became very difficult, especially with the arrival of the white men and the introduction of their culture.

Having realised that a work of art is a product of a time, a place, and an individual and that it has the capacity to affect, and perhaps change the world into which they are introduced according to the sociological approach, the researcher intends to discuss the complexities of leadership in Ngugi wa Thiongo's *The River Between*. In the discussion, the researcher will try to show how Christianity and education, which were supposed to be advantageous to the black man, resulted in uprooting his culture. And a society without a culture is bound to lose its identity and be swallowed by other cultures. After, the researcher intends to clarify the fact that tribes shaken by European occupation of some areas such as the highlands, is another phase of deeper problems. This does not end here, it goes further at the personal level, and examines characters, such as Joshua, who deviate from the traditional culture together with his family. This is to show that, after all, there is no longer unity, problems are becoming numerous and come from all angles. Joshua is no longer obeying the local power, he sees only Christianity and its teachings as the only thing to obey as a word of God. Kabonyi is pretending to be a custodian of traditional African beliefs but, realistically, he only wants to challenge Waiyaki.

This study deals with the fact that leadership should be carefully handled, especially when two cultures come into contact. Hence, the definition of the term "Leadership" will be of great importa:*The Inner Side of Greatness* defines leadership saying that it means "taking charge of how the mind works redirecting how you think and act. It is taking an oath of excellence (6)". He also says that "leadership means control over the mind, it is greatness in all you do" (49). As far as *Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary* is concerned, leadership is the position or state of being in control of a group of people". It also adds that "leadership refers to the qualities that make someone a good leader for example the ability to make decisions, give orders and gain peoples

respect and trust. For Martin M. Chemers in *Leadership Theory and Research* he does not see leadership as depending on one person's mind or only being a position one occupies, he says that leadership means "a process of social influence"(293). He goes on to define effective leadership as the successful application of the influence to mission accomplishment (294). The present study will use the last definition because for Martin M. Chemers, leadership does not depend on one person, the leader, but on the leader and his social environment.

This study is based on the hypothesis that leadership became more difficult and complex in Africa with the advent of imperialism. This work is significant because it intends to show conflicts between christians and African traditional religions and their effects on people, especially on leaders like Waiyaki in *The River Between.* He is a victim of this contact, but, despite the different problems, he goes ahead to achieve his aim. It also intends to show how Africa, in general, failed to choose what is necessary and what is not from the western culture. While Europeans were uprooting the African tradition and introducing theirs, some Africans were adopting the European culture without questioning. They were being given a little training which was calculated to make them loyal instruments of the masters. They were given fragments of Christian doctrine and ethics to make them passive and docile. Most of the time they were concerned with the conversion of the local chiefs to Christianity, the establishments of special schools for the children of chiefs and other influential people. They knew that after a chief's departure, the son was the successor. Thus, the participation in the political, economical and cultural domain would be easy. At the beginning, this process was difficult because as Martin Chemers says, the possibility of being perceived to be a leader and acting as one depends to some degree on validation by those who are to be followers. And at that time, the population will still believe and obey their leaders. It is when the situational context that Chemers believes in was no longer good that the followers lost respect in their leaders and in each other that problems became numerous. According to Chemers, when the relationship between leaders and followers is

not good, there is engendered, uncertainty, stress and anxiety which may hinder the accomplishment of one's task. Waiyaki forgets to mention his plans earlier because he is being challenged by Kabonyi, Joshua and his followers.

Since it is commonly alleged that "no man is an Island" our main concern is to support, enrich if necessary, why not contradict if need be some ideas provided by various authors, which will after all lead to the conclusion according to the researcher. The white men used a gradual progression in implanting themselves and their faith as O.R. Dathorne in *Black Mind : A History of African Literature* believes, the whites used people individually so as to spread their faith progressively. We see Joshua who imposes his faith on his wife and his two daughters. When the ladies refuse or deviate, there then begins the clash in the family what Dathorne says "the clash begins in he family, the disorientation from family and the forced emergence of the individual are consequences of the physical clash of cultures(217)". Joshua is ready to abandon his family if they deviate which implies that he is not coping with traditionalists who are leaders. Robert Serumaga in *Protest and Conflict in African Literature* expresses his view about some causes of failure. He states that :

> Any one who fails to integrate his experience – who is taken over by one side, or sticks to tradition completely – is going to lose. Joshua loses because he is completely taken over and ceases to be himself. He becomes a different human being. The Joshua we knew before he was Christianised is dead. (75)

He believes that, every human being has to learn from his neighbours. He does not have to live in isolation because he chooses a given side. According to him also, not only people who stick to tradition and fail to integrate their experience are going to lose but also those who remain unchanged do not have a chance. He notes that :

> These people too are going to lose because the development of the culture is going to be broken. He says that he holds the view of dynamic cultural development and believes that these obdurate people cannot ultimately succeed.(76)

For example, *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe can illustrate this case above. The rigid people are going to lose. Serumaga explains that Okonkwo hangs himself because he has been unable to maintain a particular faith, and he takes the easiest way out, which according Serumaga is the way of coward. He says that Okonkwo kills himself because he refuses to change and embody both experiences "He is the one who hangs himself, the society goes on(76)". Serumaga realises that Achebe's society is not falling apart because a lot of people are coming in and bringing new ideas.

Barampumba in his work *Christianity and Traditional African Religion* aims at showing how some west African novelists have returned into the past and depicted the encounter between Christianity and traditional African religion. He explains how they attempted to show the image of the traditional African religion disrupted by its contact with the new religion, the contradictions and conflicts

An analysis of this issue is still relevant because, the clarification of the cause of African countries' disturbance in general and African leaders in particular is important. The introduction of European cultures makes African leaders to be confused because the white man did not apply his plans to the needs of the Africans. He was looking for his interests only. Discoveries about the continent and its peoples are still to be made, not geographical exploration as in the past but rather understanding and appreciation of African culture, which early missionaries ignored. The Africans also got the problem of selecting the essential from the western cultures. But Waiyaki, as Larson, Charles in *Panorama du Roman Africain* explains, has the intention of selecting,

unfortunately he is not understood. Larson says that the first intention of Waiyaki is to unite the people of his village, Christians and non Christians against the white man. He works through education which he believes is the best method to unite traditional African culture and western culture. Larson asserts that the more a culture can embody new experiences, the better it can progress.

Apart from tribal or other problems that Africans already had, the coming of the western cultures created new subdivisions in the communities such as traditionalists and non traditionalists. As Larson agrees with Waiyaki, both believe that the synthesis should be the best, provided it is well done. Otherwise, there will always be opposition from one side or the other. The traditionalists will not always be interested in what non traditionalists are doing and vice-versa. We can note that the future of African culture, of religion and of the whole Africans lies with the people of Africa themselves. Waiyaki has realised it in going ahead despite the problems he was encountering. He knew that it was his mission to fight for the future of the Gikuyu people, and die for them if need be. Ngugi here is telling that Africans have their future in hands. He reacted in his society which was at a cross-road and wanted them to know through his society what Award Shorter in *African Culture and Christian Church* says :

> It is important to know how at a given moment what the choices are. Only a serious study of contemporary man of Africa can help to glimpse the way in which Christianity may serve and develop the human values and cultural riches of Africa.(215)

Ngugi's aim is to uncover social wrongs with the aim to have them corrected and go ahead with what is right. They should not insist on going the same way as the western society goes, because individualism will increase, leading to a fragmented society.

This work will be structured in five main parts. It will comprise of an introduction, three chapters and a conclusion.

The introduction is made of different parts which will be used in developing the whole text. It comprises the background of the problem after which there will be the exposition of the aim of the study, and the underlying hypothesis that the researcher will use in analysing the text. It offers a scope of delimitation, and exposes the views of different authors about African leadership during the coming of the white men.

The first chapter entitled "History" is going to analyse the traditional way of life of Africans. It will mainly focus on how Africans had their own way of bringing up their children and had their own means of finding the way to the supreme being. It wants to point out that the coming of European colonisation for a so-called civilising and redemption mission was merely a pretext to loot the wealth of Africa.

The second chapter entitled "The Present" makes reference to the primary source to point out how the introduction of the new faith came with different and many problems to disturb an already structured society. It will analyse how the supreme leadership lost its ability to continue exercising control because the disintegration of the old beliefs means also the breakdown of the old institutions.

The third chapter entitled "The Future" will try to predict the future of Waiyaki's tribe or Africa in general. By reference to images and symbols Ngugi wants to tell us that, there is always a way out from all the ills that Africans endured. He shows us that the good will always triumph over vice.

The conclusion will be the summary of the argument raised in this study and it will point out what the researcher has come out with, judging if his hypothesis is proved or not.

CHAPTER ONE

HISTORY

The chapter explores the way Waiyaki is brought up in the traditional African way of life. In addition to this, we intend to see how he receives an education which makes him a character, a "man". His father warns him and gives him sufficient tools to face the problem; that is, the education of the tribe and education in Siriana missionary school to know the secrets of the people he is supposed to fight. The intention here is implicitly to show that Africans were self-sufficient before the intrusion of Europeans in terms of government, organisation, religion and education.

The River Between is a novel about the coming of the white men. At the beginning, Ngugi presents a period characterised by a pure African culture in which people were organised in their way. He uses typical African images which help the reader understand what Ngugi wants to say. He presents the physical appearance of the two ridges as being antagonistic. They are separated by the river called "Honia" which means "cure" flowing in a valley called the "valley of life". He mentions that other ridges and rivers behind Makuyu and Kameno do not have any particular plan. "They were like many sleeping lions which never woke"(1). The description of the two ridges as different from others predicts the coming situation or relationship between them. They are said to be "like two rivals ready to come to blow in a life and death struggle for the leadership of this isolated region"(1).

The prophecy of Mugo Wa Kibiro, a great seer, comes to awaken people, the elders about what will happen in the future. Some believe in him, others do not. Precisely, this mission is given to Chege, a leader, who is said to be related to Mugo wa Kibiro. This man survived from a great famine which took his two wives. Now, he has one son and many daughters born of his only one wife he remained with. Ngugi introduces Chege giving the power to his son Waiyaki as

he himself had been given it by his ancestors. Mugo wa Kibiro warned his kinsmen of the advent of the Europeans, speaking aloud his message as he himself was seeing the importance of this cry. But people did not listen. He said, "there shall come people with clothes like butterflies"(2). Chege, at his turn, is giving examples of what is happening in Muranga, Ngere Kiambu, the villages near the tribe. They still do not believe. As Chege's duty is not fulfilled because of his age, he introduces his son Waiyaki as it must be in African political organisation. The political organisation is that the power should follow a lineage drawn from a precise clan as Ngugi implies it in these words :

> Chege had been young. Now, he was growing old. However, he remembered something in his old age. A light shone in his eyes a flicker of hope. He would guard it and divulge the knowledge to none but the right one.(8)

From childhood to the time of his circumcision (adulthood), we see how Waiyaki grows up in typical African environment, where he is shown as a brave and educated boy. When young, we see where he used to follow his mother to the Shamba to fetch water. He is described as any other child. He would climb trees. He remembers that the mother would ask the older children to take care of the younger ones. It is during this period that children profit from the teaching of their mothers. They may warn them not to walk with their backs so as to avoid bad incidents. In that case, they could not tell them directly the reason. They could for example say that their fathers will die if they go on. It is an education proper to Africans and it is a clever one. Or else because they do not want their children to develop a habit of killing, they could forbid them to kill a frog. Otherwise, their mother's breast will be cut. The effect on the children is that they take it very seriously and consequently avoid it and help their comrades not to do it.

Kenyatta, in *Facing Mount Kenya*, subdivides the stages of a child's education. The stage of a small child is reserved to the mother and nurse. At the stage when he is able to speak, he learns from many things. We see Waiyaki learning from songs that the women sing together with children. Even though it is not clearly said, we know from Kenyatta also that songs contain a message because they very well depict situations and eras. Olivia Vlahos in *African Beginnings* states that the age system of a traditional African is very complex. For him, it is a kind of government. In addition to this, he finds it as a kind of school in which one has to learn one's duty.

Later, we can see Waiyaki as a grown up person. He is no longer following his mother to the Shamba or to fetch water. He can now go with his friends Kamau and Kinuthia to look after cattle, organize raids and hunt. They could not go to hunt alone, they could go at times with some elders to learn from them. There, he begins to show his abilities and impressive character. He is very young and he dares to run after a wild goat, which is running after one of the herdboys, to deliver him, "The goat turns to him and jabs him with its horns, tearing the flesh to the bones"(6). Even though it is his father who saves him, Ngugi says that he is now left as a hero among the other boys. The character of Waiyaki is described as a man, though he is still young. He is said to have a well built athletic body. He is tall and has a voice which sends a quiver of fear to Kamau, one of his herdboys when fighting with Kinuthia, Waiyaki's friend. His voice is not an ordinary one as it is compared to the one's of very important elders. "His voice was like the voice of his father – no. It was likes the voice of the great Gikuyus of old" (96).

Similar description is found in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, where Okonkwo is a big man, tall and strong. This description of Okonkwo and Waiyaki is that of respectable men as far as both are leaders. It is not for the sake of describing that Achebe and Ngugi are found in their works presenting their characters alike and both of them playing similar roles. Abderrahmane Arab in *Politics and The Novel in Africa* observes that physical ability of a character is most of the time coupled with an extraordinary moral authority. He

adds that Waiyaki and Okonkwo reflect characters such as "Chaka who kills a lion while still a child, Sundiata who uproots a baobab tree at the age of seven"(71). All of these people are feared, respected and revered by their people.

Besides the physical ability of his hero, the author of the novel *The River Between* insists on the hypnotic power of his eyes:

> Whenever he looked at someone, his eyes seem to burn bright. A light comes from them, a light that appeared to pierce your body seeing something beyond you, into your heart. Not a man knew what language the eyes spoke. Only, if the boy gaze at you, you had to obey(10).

Waiyaki is an intelligent boy. Anyone who looks at him could find the boy's intelligence. His sight goes beyond what is observable, even his own mother could not stand his eyes, without talking about some women and girls. Waiyaki already knows the ways of the plains. His father's questions about who showed him the ways of plains where he often takes the cattle for him is non-sense. Ngugi allows us to know that "Waiyaki did not like to be thought young for he considered himself able to make decisions like a man" (8). His reply is summarized like "I know all the ways in the ridges" (8), to show his father that he is grown up and does not have reason to fear for him. Chege tries to inform his son who is, however, very confident. In this situation, he does not insist on the plains but warns him not to go there at night because "Danger lurks in darkness"(8). Chege does not leave any detail when he is teaching his son. He wants him to be a full man with sufficient knowledge.

Waiyaki has a remarquable wisdom. It is shown in his reaction in front of the two boys, Kamau and Kinuthia, who are fighting. Kinuthia accuses Kamau of saying that his father is converted, which is a betrayal for the people of the tribe. Kinuthia on his turn, says that Kamau is accusing Kinuthia's father for leaving his son poor. Waiyaki reacts peacefully, though he is younger than the

two boys. He feels he could fall on Kamau but he resists. For his age, perhaps he could have fallen on him and fought, instead, we are told, he takes a blade of grass, and begins to chew it quickly. This peaceful reaction predicts his way of dealing things. The management of the intrusion of the white one, for him, must not be a brutal one. The white men, even though he does not know it of sure, are not the one to fight against with arrows, bows spears and machete. They are more powerful. This way of reaction converge with his father's thought about how to fight the white men.

> He warned people. They had refused to take arms. It might even be too late to take up arms. Luckily, there were other ways of beating the white man. For the prophecy still held good. In its fulfilment lay the hope of the people he learned a lesson and he taught it to his son. It is good to be wise in the affairs of the white man".(38)

Waiyaki is presented with all the characteristics of being a leader as it would be found in Gikuyu society. Kenyatta says that "Amongst these elders, the one most advanced in age and wisdom was elected as judge and president" (194). He has the wisdom. The exception is on his age but we see him carry himself like an adult.

In both novels *Weep Not, Child* and *The River Between*, the idea of story telling appears though not widely exploited. Ngugi does not forget to mention it because it is a good means for a child to choose which example to follow or which is not advisable. Njoroge, *Ngotho's son likes to hear stories from his mother or father. Waiyaki, when grown up still remembers when he used to sit with his mother around the fire far into the night, listening to stories. In stories, the person who is telling the story creates a situation similar to the one he wants to teach about. At the end of the story, there can be found a hero as someone to be imitated. The aim is reached when a child realises his place in relation to the

story and is capable of identifying himself to the hero admired. He may also avoid a kind of behaviour of some characters in the story.

Ngugi draws material for his writings from his society we see him using all means of education that is being given to Waiyaki. Kabonyi tells Waiyaki about Joshua and Muthoni as not an important problem for the tribe. He says indirectly "it is the hidden soul in your body that kills you" (125). He is talking about the love he has towards Nyambura. He chooses very selected words to imply the love. Surely, Waiyaki realises it even though it is not said directly. We are told that Waiyaki is hypnotized whenever he hears Kabonyi speak. He is able to interpret the language, which means that he is educated in a community where proverbs are frequently used. Ngugi himself tells us how the tribe used to keep secrets like in the use of the proverb "Kagutui Ma Mucii Katihakagwo Ageni" which means the oilskin of the house is not for rubbing into the skin of strangers"(3). Basil Davidson in *The Growth of the African Novel* says that there is "a wealth of educational wisdom in proverbs"(41). The speech plays an important role, most of the time for leaders. The latter must be convincing when they are talking to people. Waiyaki is educated in a tribe that helped him receive an education which shapes also his speech. Had it not been for powerful men (because he is aged and has strategies) Waiyaki would have won by his speech. Christopher Heywood in *Perspectives of African Literature* quotes Achebe's assertion about "proverbs being the palm oil with which conversation is eaten among the Ibos"(119) to emphasise the power of speech. Proverbs in most African countries are given much consideration. The ewes, as Christopher says, describe any good speakers who can spice his talks with good deal of proverbs as one whose mouth has aged" (119). Here the good speech is linked with wisdom. These proverbs are always contextualised so that the addressee realise what he is told. Proverbs help to say much in few words.

Waiyaki and his friends often play at Demi na Mathathi. Kenyatta says that "when children of an agriculturalist are playing with a diggind-stick, they are learning how to use it"(102). Waiyaki and his friends are learning to be like

Demi na Mathathi. The latter were the giants of the tribe who used to clear the dense forests for cultivation. Waiyaki having heard about them feels proud of them. He has in mind that "They must have been great and strong to have braved the hazards of the forests"(10). From then onwards, he is eager to be circumcised. He wants not only to play Demi but also to become one of them, to be brave. The eagerness first shows that he is a courageous boy. When still young, he wants to identify himself with men of reputation. Secondly, it shows the life that he is going to face as a leader. The task is not easy as Ngugi implies in saying that Waiyaki is eager to be like the giants. He is called upon to lead a tribe which has various and complicated problems which can be compared to the forest the giants used to clear. There are many problems one can encounter once in it. Children games are most of the time imitation of the activities of adults. For example, one may find a small girl playing the role of a woman, cooking, cleaning the house. Meanwhile, the boys are building a house, cutting trees like people observed around. In so doing, they are acquiring the skills to take over responsibilities when they grow up. Whatever stage Waiyaki reaches, he sees himself becoming like the people whose courage he admired. During the second birth, he feels as if he is cutting trees, clearing the forest "the whole tribe behind him"(12).

Chege finds that the tribal education is not sufficient for his son as he is going to face problems surely from his tribe and mostly from Europe. He sends his son to Siriana missionary school to learn how to fight the white men. The arms are no longer effective. "Mugo often said you could not cut the butterflies with a panga. You could not spear them until you learnt and knew their ways and movement". Then you could trap, you could fight back(20). This is what pushes Chege to send his son there. He doubts first about his decision because when he sends his son, the leader, to learn from the people whose education they fear, perhaps that he will be contaminated by the new faith. But at last, he remembers that he will follow if all is going well during the holidays time.

Before sending his son to school, Chege wants to equip him with the ways of the land and the secrets of his people. Chege then takes him in the bush. During the whole journey Waiyaki is being taught. When Chege asks his son to leave the cattle to his mother for some teachings in the bush, he feels important and very big. Chege starts teaching him from the simplest to the complex things. Somewhere in the bush, he stops. He wants his son to know almost everything. He shows a tree and explains that: "The bark of that tree is good for a fresh wound. The roots of this plant are good. When your stomach bites you, you boil them in water. Drink the liquid(14)". He does not leave any detail. He says that the fruit are not edible because they are full of poison. No one knows, perhaps he may be in need of the trees that's why he has to know their utility. Not only does his father want him to learn but also Waiyaki himself is eager to know. He wants to understand why the antelopes do not run away from women. He knows from his father that if they see men, they run away. He uses a tale to explain him the weakness of women and thus superiority of men. Even antelopes, he explains, know it. As they used to be their goats, they do not run away from them.

The more they proceed, the more they talk about complex things. It even happens to Waiyaki to quiver from fear. In African society where Ngugi drew inspiration, learning comprises acquiring knowledge about various fields at the same time. One cannot pretend to know religion separately from government. Waiyaki then, at the sacred place, is shown a tree, the Mugumo. It is a sacred tree, very huge, under which sacrifices are offered to Ngai. He is explained its utility. Chege is giving his knowledge to his son as he has received it from his ancestors. This education as E.B. Castle in *Growing in East Africa* tries to point has the following purposes :

> To conserve the cultural heritage of family, clan and tribe, to adapt the children to their physical environment and teach

> them that their community depended on the perpetuation and understanding of their tribal institutions on the laws, language and values they had inherited from the past.(1)

Waiyaki, though, sent to Siriana still remembers why he is sent there. The purpose is learning the ways of the white men, so as to be able to fight against them.

Waiyaki, at the top of the sacred grove, is shown the beautiful land as young and fertile. He is explained that it "is given to the first persons, to the whole people, the children, the children of the children"(18). Chege's voice which was, at the beginning, deep and calm progressively becomes vibrating. He knows what is going to happen to it. For Chege it is important to make Waiyaki know all the reality. He wants him to pay much attention and says :

> Are you here…
> I came with you father
> I know, I know; you understand that
> Gikuyu and Numbi set their footsteps here you descend from those few who came to the hills.(18)

Few people are allowed to go to the hills. Only Waiyaki's clan is allowed. Thus, he is supposed to be taught about the secrets of the tribe; the purpose of that journey. He also has to know who he is. Chege reminds his son that he belongs to the clan of the first persons Gikuyu and Mumbi, the father and the mother of the tribe. For an African, it is important to know one's clan because each clan has a role to play in the society. Waiyaki's clan as Ngugi points out implicitly in calling him a "saviour" is the one from which all Gikuyu know they must get a leader. This kind of clan is believed to know many hidden things, many secrets than others. For example, Chege insists on their importance in telling him that their ancestor Mugo wa Kibiro is believed to have been talking directly with

Murungu or else, he is believed to have been carried up by Murungu after his death. He has not been buried like ordinary people. In some parts of Africa, the leaders are said to be sent by the supreme God straight down from heaven. Beliefs are very important as they strengthen the power of these people. Consequently, they are obeyed.

Chege does not leave out any detail from Waiyaki. He tells him that the blood of Mugo wa Kibiro flows in his vein. It is as if he is telling him that he is Mugo himself. So, he has to know his mission towards the people. He is not like everyone because he is going to play a given role. But, he has to take responsibilities because he belongs to the line. Olivia Vlahos in *Africa Beginnings* gives an example of a similar clan in Bembaland. The crocodile clan was a royal clan, they were the provincial governors, the district leaders, briefly they were called "run everything". Waiyaki, even though still young, has a similar role for his people.

Now, Chege comes to the heart of the matter. He tells Waiyaki the origin of the mission he is supposed to fulfil as a prophecy from Mugo. Waiyaki listens to the chronology and evolution of the problem from Mugo to his father Chege. When the son realises that people did not listen to Mugo wa Kibiro the great seer, the reputed man, he becomes frightened. He could no longer speak. Ngugi says that the word which escaped him is "Ha". He does not believe in what he is hearing. His father realises that he is trembling. He does not react in calming him:

> "no, he tells him. I see you fear, you must learn to fight fear... fear. It was not Mugo whom they rejected. When I told them about Siriana they would not listen. No doubt you wonder why I tell you all this, you are, the last in our line(19).

Waiyaki becomes really frightened. Chege knows that he is the last in their line, he wants Waiyaki to know but, the task is so hard that he does not listen any more. His legs are also trembling. Finally, both are trembling. Chege fears for his country which will be robbed and Waiyaki is afraid of doing what his ancestors failed to do. But, as he is brave and courageous, he succeeds to fight fear. He says to his father: "But-but-they don't know me. I am a child and they rejected Mugo".(21) Chege does not mind, he believes in Mugo's prophecy that the saviour is Waiyaki, he is one and the last in the line. Despite the weather which reigns in them, he goes on. Waiyaki must know the following :

> I could do no more when the white man came and fixed himself in Siriana, I warned all the people. But they laughed at me. Maybe I was hasty, perhaps I was not the one. Mugo often said that you could not cut the butterflies with a panga you could not spear them until you learnt and knew their ways and movement. Then you could trap, you could fight back. (20)

Waiyaki does not believe what he is told. He is still wondering how far he can go with the prophecy. His father says that he has to learn their vices "Be true to your people and the ancient rites"(20). He tells him more than once that he always has to be faithful to his tribe and ancestors.

The three boys Waiyaki, Kamau and Kinuthia are learning in Siriana missionary schools led by Reverend Livingstone. Waiyaki does not have intelligence in his tribe's education only. He is impressing even the white man by his quick progress. The white men are astonished by the boy because they did not expect to get such a brilliant student among black people. What they did not know is that "Men differ in knowledge but are equal in ability to learn; there is no race that guided by reason, cannot obtain virtue" (*Challenge of Africa*, 84).

The age system in Gikuyu society provides a continuing education. A small child is taught by his mother or his nurse. When he is able to speak and walk, he is taught by everybody around him. He is not yet ready for social life, he is trained for it through day-by-day association of the young with the old. Every adult is an instructor of the young. This system links education and government because during childhood, every member of the community is trained for whatever duty he will be given, especially boys. They could be warriors, leaders of families or leaders of the whole community. The time of circumcision is a period which marks the shift from childhood to manhood or womanhood. For Waiyaki, this period is an occasion for him, as a child in the tribe and as a leader, to be prepared for moral and practical knowledge for an adult life he is beginning. It was his boy's ambition to test his courage at the ceremony. He is being taught by Reverend Livingston, but he considers him as stupid "to attack a custom whose real significance in the tribe he does not understand and probably would never understand"(40). It is at this period when he is supposed to begin his task, of "savior".

Then as a candidate to initiation, Waiyaki has to go through many tests to prepare him to support hardships as well as many things that are required for being a good citizen. Kenyatta in *Facing Mount Kenya* summarizes them as follows :

> It is to be noticed that the education given at initiation does not concern only sex, but the youth is taught with equal vividness and dramatized power the great lesson of respect for elders manners to superiors of different grades and how to help his country. The total of circumcision teach the youth

> how a man must bear pain, meet with misfortune and bear himself like a warrior.(109)

As adults, the initiated are supposed to act with discretion. They have to think twice before speaking and they have to know how and to whom they are addressing. Having fully acquired his education, Waiyaki realised that :

> He ought not to show at a man much older than himself... He tried to regulate his voice with difficulty. He wanted to rise and cry, you fools, you fools. But he felt weary. He writhed within and remained stuck to his seat.(126)

He contains himself even though he is being accused unjustly. He is moving to get teachers, but he is accused to be in relation with Joshua.

In Ngugi's works *The River Between* and *Weep Not, Child*, Ngotho and Waiyaki are taught the history and legends of the people. Ngugi's heroes, in both novels have to know about the reality of their tribe. He does not idealise his tribe in pointing out the good as well as the bad side of his tribe. The two boys are told how the tribes men could fight. But, they have to know that anyone outside knows about the quarrels of the tribe. The fact of keeping secrets is emphasised on by saying that: "Kagutui Ka Mucii gatihakangwo Ageni" which means the oilskin of the house is not for rubbing into the stir of strangers"(3). Waiyaki promises not to work against traditional customs, what his father is warning him all along his education. He wants his son to be faithful. He wants to shape his son as a leader in traditional way but not in the western way. The oath made by Waiyaki is like what Kenyatta wrote about. Gikuyu children, at initiation ceremonies, had to promise by an act of oath that "from that day onward, they will in every respect deport themselves like adult and take all responsibilities in the welfare of the community"(41). In addition to this, Waiyaki's ambition is to test his courage at the ceremony. He knows that he will

need it in his life as a leader. The same ambition is in his father's heart who wants to see the son becoming a man before his death. This could be an assurance that the work, begun long ago from Mugo wa Kibiro to himself is being carried on by another one, the right one.

Even though he is a student of the missionaries who are against African rituals, Waiyaki does not forget that he has to go through the very important act. Through the two characters, Muthoni and Waiyaki, we notice how important rituals are. These rituals are not used wildly, they are an indication of a certain period of time, a certain stage in one's life etc. Waiyaki at play feels small when he hears that he cannot be Demi na Mathathi because he is not circumcised. Once at home he does not forget to tell his mother that he wants to be circumcised and know the ways of the tribe. He proves that he could cut trees, like the giants of the tribe, but he sees something missing, the circumcision, the ritual which makes him an African and an adult. Likewise, Muthoni, the daughter of Joshua, the converted man, feels incomplete. She has the envy of being beautiful in the tribe through the ritual. She does not find something else of equal value in her father's religion. She wants to be a Christian but "still be beautiful in the manner of her tribe". She explains her sister that :

> I know it is beautiful to be initiated into womanhood. You learn the ways of the tribe. Yes, the white man's God does not satisfy me. I want, I need something more. My life and our life are here, in the hills, that you and I know.(26)

For her, the life they are going to live is in Africa and so, she wants to live like Africans and not like Europeans. Although her parents are Christians, she sees something important in the African way of life.

Most rituals are accompanied with dances and rituals that Europeans believe is pagan. Geoffrey Parrinder does not see things in this way. He finds in

them something important for the life of a given community as he writes it in *Africa's Three Religions*. He wonders why they are performed and repeated but discovers that: "There are many reasons, and powerful ones are that they express life force, continuity with the past, and unity in the present community"(25). They help to gather people in a situation where they feel they are closer, more united. If one is not among the group, or cannot follow, he feels as an intruder.

The education of Waiyaki follows two main aims. The first is to train the child for the purpose of being a Gikuyu. The second one is to be a leader with a special task he is given by the time he is living in. He has the duty of avoiding settlement of the white men in the hills. This settlement is considered as a compromise which comes to make the promise impossible. The white men are not included in the people Murungu gave the land to, and so, they are impostors. Waiyaki therefore is attributed the task of rescuing African's only hope to life, that is "Land" Chege says to his son: "Salvation shall come from the hills. From the blood that flows in me. I say from the same tree, a son shall rise. And his duty shall be to lead and save the people"(20). He does not say "to recover the land" but to "save the people" because he knows that land is everything; to recover lands equals to save people. The pauses that Chege makes in talking shows the fear he feels in loosing their land, in hearing that their lands will be occupied by the white men. "His face and eyes, were set as if - he was trying to recall something long - forgotten" (20), Ngugi says of him. This reaction shows that the occupation of these lands is like the end of all the tribe. The family land in Africa being the source of economy maintains the relationship between kinship (dead and living included) and it is the field of labour and the source of livelihood.

Jomo Kenyetta finds in land another role. He compares it to one's mother who bears his child in her womb and for a short period of suckling. After feeding him all through life, the earth keeps the spirit of the dead for eternity.

Ngugi finds that in addition to the feeding of the people alive, there is a link between man and a soil which he expresses through Waiyaki's initiation:

> The knife produced a thin sharp pain as it cut through the flesh. The surgeon had done his work. Blood trickled freely onto the ground, sinking into the soil. Henceforth a religious bond linked Waiyaki to the earth as if blood was an offering(45).

There is a strong attachment on land as it is used in everything. Therefore, land cannot be separated from his owner, the African. The land inheritance in Gikuyu society, consequently is organized in a way that all brothers own it and give it to their descendant in whom the same blood flows, not the white men. People refer to their lands collectively as "ours" because they feel there are brothers. Every family has its portion but a Gikuyu can allow another to use it because solidarity is joy.

This sense of solidarity is not only observed in land tenure but also in everyday life. We see that the mission of Waiyaki is not personal but communal. He is meant to secure "their land" from European possession and he has to start it through solidarity which used to characterise Africans among themselves. Unity is his point of departure. The solidarity that Europeans want to break can be found for example in age-groups. People of the same group consider themselves as true brothers and sisters. Jomo Kenyatta gives the example of Gikuyu tribe in the following lines :

> Collectively, he(husband) addresses them (wives) collectively as ladies mine. They address him collectively as elder ours. This address is extended symbolically to each

> member of the husband's age-grade and he too addresses the wives of the members of his age-grade in the same manner as lady or ladies mine.(11)

This behaviour makes relationships between people strong, especially those of the same age-group. This sense of relationship is extended to the whole community through these generations. When members of a group respect each other and respect their elders the result is the unity and order in the tribe.

In a nutshell, the analysis made in this chapter shows that the community Waiyaki lives in is a civilisation of dignity and which has value in its spiritual beliefs, in teaching about good and evil in method of self-rule, in arts such as dancing and singing, in skills that are needed for the solving of the problems of everyday life. It is this civilisation that helps the leader to improve his courage and persevere in the duty of rescuing his people from white domination. The education he receives from the very community helps him to become a character who can adjust perfectly in his community. However, not only the education he receives but also his own innate qualities contribute. D. Killam in *An Introduction to the writing of Ngugi* writes that Waiyaki has conspicuous qualities of leadership: "he possesses drive, initiative, superb intelligence, tremendous enthusiasm, and great organising ability"(16) to fulfil the prophecy.

CHAPTER TWO

THE PRESENT

The River Between is a representation of transition of change, how these changes came about and how they may trap individuals and consequently the whole community. The western people came in Africa firstly as missionaries, bringing the good news of God. But behind, they had many other purposes. With their schools and religion, the purpose was not to teach but to uproot African beliefs, if need be to divide them so that they can settle down without any problem. The consequence as we are going to analyse it ended up in challenging local leaders indirectly through their ideas. As we shall see also the sense of communal society in Africa shifted to an individualistic one inherited from Europe.

With the coming of the white men, the two ridges Makuyu and Kameno referred to in *The River Between* become rivals because Makuyu is led by Christians. Consequently, it cannot be in harmony with Kameno led by traditionalists. Now, Waiyaki is called upon to act as a leader. The task is not easy as he is supposed to maintain the traditional culture confronted with the western culture. He begins to demonstrate his leadership as Edgar Wright in *The Critical Evaluation of African Literature* points out: "Like Moses, he demonstrates his future messianic claim by attempting to establish harmony between Kamau and Kinuthia" (99). He encounters further problems which makes him confused; the first problem is the milieu he is living in which is influencing him very much. The second is the people surrounding him such as Kabonyi, his son, and Joshua together with his followers.

Chege, Waiyaki's father had been an outstanding leader of the tribe, and he had brought his son up strictly along traditional lines, giving him his second birth through circumcision, and initiating him into the myths and secrets of the tribe. In addition, he has sent him to the missionary school at Siriana to : "Arise.

Heed the prophecy. Go to the mission place. Learn all the wisdom and all the secrets of the white men. But do not follow his vices. Be true to your people and ancient rites"(24). Chege, before sending him, did not realise the impact that the western education may cause on the person of Waiyaki. Chege knows that he will follow him in whatever he will be doing so as to see if he may change. He remains true to the tribe despite his years at Siriana missionary school. But very understandably, however, "the more minute trappings of allegiance to the tribe have been worn of him"(156). He can no longer prevent him to help someone in whatever circumstances, for example the case of Muthoni. He could not let her die when he can take her to the hospital. In addition, he cannot accept to be refused a lady he loves, which he thinks is an essential personal liberty. Or else, he is not a man who can allow persecution of another because they do not share the same beliefs. The tension that would arise because of the clash between his faith to tradition and his liberal liaison with a Christian would make his job difficult.

Ezeulu, a chief priest of Ulu in *Arrow of God* by Chinua Achebe, like Waiyaki is a custodian of African religious beliefs but he, too, extends a hand to the Christians. He, too, suffers from the complexity of leadership. He sends his son to learn from the whites but no one agrees with him, even his wives and other children. He is also said to be a close friend to a white man called Winterbottom. After all, Ezeulu loses his grip on his people. He refuses to tell the people the day of harvest and the white men are the ones to receive sacrifices so that people could harvest.

Waiyaki does not take account of the divisions among the people of the ridges. For him, a person is a person regardless of the side on which he has been brought up. Moreover, he knows that people of the hills are comrades because they have sworn to be brothers. For the same reason of frequenting the whites, Waiyaki begins to realise that :

> Not all the ways of the white man were bad, even his religions was not essentially bad, some good, some truth

> shone through it. But the religion, the faith, needed washing, cleaning away all the dirt, leaving only the eternal. And that eternal that was the truth had to be reconciled to the traditions of the people. A people's traditions could not be swept away overnight.(126)

That is why he cannot find any problem in entering Joshua's church. Kabonyi, his arch rival profits from it and makes his task of leading the people very difficult and complex.

Waiyaki then begins to use western tool, education, and unfortunately, it is the only means he counts on as his saving tool for reconciliation. He is consequently taken over by the education of his people which blinds him against whatever may happen:

> The idea of education had come to him like demon, urging him to go on, do more... Kabonyi did not exist. He saw only schools, schools everywhere and the thirst that burned the throats of so many children that looked up to him for the quenching water... Education was life. Let it come!(112)

He is so completely possessed with this obsession for running schools that he does not for once in all his career propose to his people the unity of the tribe, which is his main concern. It is through that same education, as one of the instrument that Europeans used for colonising Africa by formal schooling, that Waiyaki and others are learning to read and write and also to absorb new ideas. In the schools that missionaries and European governments established in Africa, Africans are given the key to new knowledge of natural rights, human dignity and equality. It is ideas like these ones above that lead Waiyaki not to support the persecution of a man for his religious beliefs. Taking Muthoni to the hospital, for him is respecting human rights because Muthoni has the right to

live. Also, Christians and traditionalists for him are equal. What he is seeking is to fight against the white man, but not people who do not share his religious beliefs. He wants to fight the white men with both sides, traditionalists and Christians.

Ngugi deplores the brainwashing and demoralizing colonial education tainted with racial discrimination. In *Homecoming*, he reveals the methods and aims of this education.

> The colonial system produced the kind of education which nurtured subservience, self-hatred, and mutual suspicion. It produced a people uprooted from the masses. Often there was racial discrimination in the allocation of schools, of teachers, of teaching facilities...(14)

This behaviour appears in *The River Between* when Waiyaki is no longer thinking like the masses. He is now thinking in his own way, that is even why Ngugi elsewhere, continues to ridicule the colonial system of education to show that neither the individual member of the elite nor the masses benefited from it :

> Education was not aimed at a knowledge of self and reality of the black man's place in the world. What we did not know was that we were being groomed to become a buffer state between the propertied white rulers and the harsh realities under which the African peasants and workers lived.(49)

The result of the European education is that the children who have been taught under European influence have almost forgotten or disregarded the Gikuyu customary law of behaviour. For Waiyaki who thinks that he cannot betray the tribe, his consideration about the education is somehow changing. He sees the white man's education as an "instrument of enlightment and advancement if

only it could be used well"(119). Instead of using it with care, he forgets everything else, and he thinks only about the schools but for the sake of regaining African lands taken by the white men. Lands in African culture is regarded as a means of communication between the dead and the living. Taking lands from an African means breaking the relationship between him and his ancestor as we will see it in the case of the introduction of Christianity.

Ngugi emphasises on land and education in his two novels *The River Between* and *Weep Not, Child*. Education is everything for Ngotho, but deep down inside his heart, he knows that land is everything. Education is good only because it will lead to the recovery of the lost lands : "You must learn to escape the conditions under which we live, tells Njoroge, it is a hard way. It is not much that a man can do without a piece of land"(17).

Ngugi tells us that Ngotho works on Howland's farm not only for living but also in expectation of the realisation of the prophecy of Mugo. This means the white men will one day be driven out of Kenya. That is why he faithfully works for Mr Howland tending the soil carefully and everything that is in it, yet he and his family are landless. Kenyatta, quoted in *The Making of a Rebel: A source Book in Kenyan literature* gives his point of view about the alienation of African lands :

> I think if you woke up one morning and you find that somebody had come to your house and had declared that house belong to him, naturally you would be surprised and you would like to know by what arrangement slater. (44)

Kenyatta, having realised the importance of the African land as a major source of economy and more, an important element in African tradition, compares it to someone's house, without which one cannot pretend to live happily. Ex-senior chief Koinange expresses in the following lines how painful it is to see one's land taken :

> When someone steals your ox, it is killed and roasted and eaten, when someone steals your land, especially if nearby, one can never forget. it is always there, its trees which were dear friends, its little streams. It is a bitter presence.(45)

This is what angers Waiyaki and leads him to ignore the already existing problems of ethnicity or to put aside divisions based on religions. His wish is to unite people against the white men. Other children who are being taught may be do not look at education in the same way as Njoroge and Waiyaki who are learning the ways of the white men. Perhaps they are acquiring western ways of life and beliefs and they are being "civilised" which may end up in "alienation".

These western schools were most of the time introduced by missionaries. Their aim was not for teaching biology, geography, history, medicine rather, it was for equipping pupils with ideas and religious mentality which will make Africans obedient. The essential aim of school will be then concentrating on religion.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o in *Decolonising the Mind* argues that although Africans have been exploited and oppressed they did not give up, they insisted on maintaining their dignity and values. The imperialist, he says used the biggest weapon, the cultural bomb against that collective defiance. The white men came with their education, religion, why not their technology purely European for the purpose of exploiting the Africans, the effect being : "To annihilate a people's belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves".(15)

When we try to analyse the European religion in Africa, we may find it like a way of exploiting, oppressing, and dividing Africans, yet it is said to be a religion of love. A true religion concentrates in the profits of man. It does not alienate him from his beliefs but fulfils him and directs him forwards to right things and behaviour. For instance, the Christian missionaries who are teaching about the white God in *Things Fall Apart* says that African gods are false, they

are gods of wood and stone as if only whites have a true God. Without any problem, they assume that African gods are "pieces of wood and stone", to make them believe theirs. Achebe in *Tasks and Masks* does not accept this. He says that:

> The trinity in Christian religion is "no more rational than the African worship of the various deities whom the missionaries (unfortunately ignorant of African religions) contemptuously dismiss as pieces of wood and stones(36).

This religion of oppression and exploitation is found in America during the period of slavery. Slaves were taught that a true Christian has to obey his master. In *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*, there is a young woman who is whipped, the justification is that "He who knoweth his master's will and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many trips". Slavery in America finds its "justification" in the holy Bible in Genesis 9:20-27, where the whites say that as Ham is cursed, the blacks are also cursed because they are the children of Ham. So, they are obliged to be slaves.

True religion promotes brotherhood and cooperation. It is directed towards man in community and harmonises with the whole society. Joshua's religion makes him indifferent in front of the death of his own daughter, he does not feel guilty of abandoning her. When someone is converted, it is an individual act but it has social implication. In believing in a new social life, it means that he breaks the previous relationship with his brothers. Joshua is no longer observing brotherhood and cooperation yet it is what his religion teaches. Ngugi, through Nyambura *The River Between* ridicules the "religion of love". He says that a religion which can stand between two lovers:

> ... could never be a religion of love. Never, never. The religion of love was in the heart. The other was Joshua's own religion... if the faith of Joshua and Livingstone came to separate, why, it was not good. If it came to stand between a father and his daughter so that her death did not move him, then it was in human.(134)

Nyambura is wandering why this contradiction. She wishes she could have another religion which she finds in the Bible itself, "in the vision of the leopard lying down with the kid... It was the faith that would give life and peace to all"(135).

Ngugi is in the first instance concerned with the bad methods of Christian practice. His desire is first to distinguish between true and false Christianity (but later, he rejected Christianity by refusing to be called "James" a Christian name). The impact of Christianity on his society is a major theme he treats through his works. For him, Christianity and missionaries are responsible of destroying culture and rendering people rootless. In his essays "church culture and politics" he points out the negative side of the Christian church in Kenya. The coming of Christianity as he realises occasioned a process of social change. These changes disturbed traditional solidarity, leaving an increasing number of African people with little or no foundation at all. There is no way of having foundation because this disintegration of the already existing tribal social norms and values by which people came to base their lives on and their relationship with others were no longer respected. Ngugi is shocked by the fact that the believer was not determined by believing in Christ and accepting the equality of men but :

> The measure of your Christian love and charity was in preserving the outer signs and symbols of a European way of life; whether you dressed as Europeans did, whether you had acquired European good manners, ... whether you had refused to have your daughter circumcised (7).

Ngugi here is blaming this early missionary zeal of destroying traditional society with all the institutions that had rendered it viable, and replacing it with a superficial and stereotyped style of living. Ngugi in the quotation above employs ridiculous examples to invite readers to realise how invalid was the method of establishing the new religion. One wonders how one's manner of dressing could be the basis for being a true Christian. Circumcision, a symbolic ritual act which had deep religious meaning and above all, helped to build the tribe together is denied and attacked by the early missionaries. Breaking the African beliefs such as circumcision should be interpreted as breaking the unity between Africans. Achebe portrays Obierika in *Things Fall Apart* to enunciate the disintegration of a society as a result of foreign intrusion when he says: "The white man put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart"(82). Ngugi, through his novel *Weep Not, Child* shows that polygamy protested by the Christians is not bad at all. He uses Ngotho a polygamist. We are shown Njeri and Nyokabi, two women harmoniously sharing the love, and protection of one man. Njeri has three sons – Boro, Kori and Kamau. All of them contribute to their step-brother's education Njoroge, the only son of Nyokabi. They are like as true brothers. As, Joshua has realised, the men of the old testament used to walk with God and angels and they had more than one wife. How then could the white men dare explain that God does not like polygamous men.

Ngugi in his article "Church culture and politics" interprets later battles between Europeans in Africa. He says that Christian concerns were not engaged in christianisation but in search for their own interests. When Catholics and protestants fought, the purpose was to control the court of Mutesa of Buganda. Ngugi takes it as a struggle between French capitalism and British capitalism for

the control of the whole of Uganda. "Thus Africans in Uganda became the sport of Europeans mercenary greed, under the guise of Christianity and work of God" (33). He continues :

> Often missionaries became landowners and kept cattle on the stolen lands... You know the popular story among our people: that the Mubia told people to shut their eyes in prayer, and when later they opened their eyes, the land was taken. And then, the Mubia told them not to worry about those worldly things which could be eaten by moth; and they sang... (this world is not my home, I am only a pilgrim). (33)

These teachings make new converts more concerned not of their lands and all their culture but concerned more by the everlasting life in heaven. The result of it is the loss of the sense of community. Understandably, Joshua and his followers could not listen to Waiyaki's intention of uniting people of the tribe against the white men, instead, they challenge him. This for them would be looking for worldly things and loosing the everlasting life. And when people are divided everything is possible. George Orwell in "Notes on the way" makes a similar point when attacking Christian teachings. He says that it was already in essence a lie, a semi-conscious device for keeping the rich richer and the poor poorer. The poor were to be contented with "their poverty": what they have. They will have more and better things up in the other world, in heaven. He joins Ngugi's criticism about missionary teachings that the whites used it as a tool for mental enslavement and consequently material of oppression promising the oppressed a better life after death as the they do not have the right to live a better life before death.

Among the problem that Waiyaki has to deal with is Joshua, he is one of the first converted men. He is no longer observing tribal laws and customs. All his family is also converted. Later Muthoni his daughter decides to be

circumcised, what for her is "to be beautiful in the tribe". She does not abandon the Christian religion but she knows that even their parents are circumcised and are still born-again. Muthoni is committed to do what she thinks is right and takes a decision without hesitating. Muthoni convinces her sister saying:

> I have thought and thought again about it. I have not been able to eat and sleep properly. My thoughts terrify me. But I think now I have come to a decision..., Nyambura, I want to be circumcised... Look I want to be a woman. I want to be a real girl.(75)

Nyambura becomes stupefied and wonders what will be her father's reaction towards the decision of Muthoni, but she explains that:

> Why! Are we fools?.... Father and mother are circumcised. Are they not Christians? ... I too have embraced the white man's faith. However, I know it is beautiful, oh! So beautiful to be initiated into womanhood. You learn the ways of the tribe.(26)

Muthoni finds to be initiated in his tribe as a step in learning, especially being trained into womanhood. She has to become in the future a woman, and a woman in the tribe. But after undergoing the ritual, she falls ill. In Waiyaki's tradition it was forbidden to touch a dying person and, worse, someone who is converted. But Waiyaki does not mind about his role, his great role of preserving the purity of the tribe. That is why he takes her to the hospital. After the death of Muthoni, he falls in love with Nyambura. The latter forgets the reaction of his father when Muthoni dies and falls in love with Waiyaki. This does not end here, there is Kabonyi.

Kabonyi has been a member of Joshua's group, but, having fallen, he now characteristically assumes the role of the protector and defender of the ancient rites and customs of the tribe. He profits from Waiyaki's deeds to make him fail. Kabonyi is the only man in Kameno, besides Waiyaki, who knows the secrets and myths of the tribe. He uses them and interprets Waiyaki's efforts to unite the ridges as working on both sides, for Christians and traditionalists. Kabonyi, in a position of civil authority, establishes the "oath of allegiance to the purity of the tribe", the oath that Waiyaki takes without questioning. It is the same oath that Kabonyi uses in front of the Kiama to accuse Waiyaki of working on the side of Christians yet being a traditionalist who has taken the oath of allegiance to the purity of the tribe, and very important, being a leader of the tribe. Not only Kabonyi but also Kamau are making the leader's mission difficult. Eldred Jones in *An Introduction to the African Novel* describes Kabonyi and Kamau as forces that Waiyaki would have neglected. Kabonyi and Kamau make a force that Waiyaki does not mind much because they are supposed to be traditionalists like him. Therefore, they are supposed to help him and not to challenge him. Eldred Jones says about Kabonyi :

> Kabonyi does not really believe in anything, he is capable of drifting just easily from one extremist ideology to another. He must always lead, and if his ambition is thwarted he either crosses to the other side or uses every resource in his power to destroy those who stand in his way.(20)

Kabonyi, in accusing Waiyaki, speaks with a very convincing voice. He adds the argument of the impurity being brought by Waiyaki. All this shakes Waiyaki's position.

Kabonyi can be compared to a comeleon which takes the colour of the place in which it stands. Kabonyi carefully uses the oath to accuse Waiyaki. He

has been moving from ridge to ridge so that people may accept it. The purpose was not to keep the tribe pure, but to challenge Waiyaki's leadership. Kabonyi aims at recovering his lost hope when Chege is introduced to the throne. Kabonyi accuses Waiyaki of touching an unclean body, and Waiyaki replies that, there is something more than the desire to correct him because, if she were not clean, he is not the person who initiated her. This implies that, even the elders touched her. He only touched her when still alive, like the elders. After, he did not touch her. The preoccupation of Kabonyi is to see his son Kamau in the place of Waiyaki. Kamau himself is not sleeping "he always seems to be present, unnoticed, at any incident in which Waiyaki is likely to compromise himself"(20). Ngugi describes this boy, Kamau, in a way that is suggestive of a boy who is not appreciable "two boys emerged from the bush one was tall and his unusually long neck and limbs made him appear older than he really was"(4). Instead of helping the "teacher" to preach unity, Kabonyi and his son are challenging him. They are putting together forces in order to make him lose.

While Kabonyi and his son are seeking ways to make the leader fail, Joshua in his teaching is opposed to Waiyaki. Joshua has turned against the traditional religion - which is not primarily concerned with individual interest like the one he embraces, but with the whole community he used to live in. Fearing the revenge of the people he betrayed, he went to live with the white men. After hearing that those who refuse Jesus "will burn and burn for ever more, world unending"(29), he is baptized and became a brave preacher and come back to his village. Really, he is not one of the community he is living in because he is no longer participating in the beliefs, ceremonies, rituals of that community. Waiyaki is concerned about the unity of the people from Makuyu and those from Kameno. For Joshua, he is intensifying the ancient hostility between the two neighbouring villages. He is not at all going to unite with the people from Kameno, or the traditionalists. For him, abandoning his daughter is not a problem because he cannot live with the unclean: "He had, in any case, disowned her. To him, she never existed. What had a man of God to do with the

children of the evil one?" (97). The sinners for him include all the people from Kameno or any non-Christian. He is taken over by the teachings of the white men that he is no longer able to use the common sense. Gachukia, Eddah in *Mau Mau War and East African Creative Writing* says of him: "Christian in him has "killed" Joshua the father, the husband, and Joshua the villager and neighbour. His thinking and action all revolved round this type of Christianity"(60).

Gareth Griffiths in *African Literatrue Today* writes that Dr Amos Wilder and Paul Tillich respectively in their works *Other Worldliness* and *The Shaking of the Foundations*, both agree that a religion which is imposed upon a people from above is not only meaningless, but also destructive. Through the character of Joshua in *The River Between*, we can see that Ngugi joins the two authors above. Joshua is the man who accepts the religion of the white men without questioning. He considers them as his superiors. He does not understand that his wife and daughters may not share the same view. He wants them to accept the same religion as his. He knows that in the white religion, there are beliefs he does not agree with but he has to. One example is the case of polygamy which used to be practiced in the old Testament but which is forbidden to him. He says "But the man at the mission had said this was a sin, and so sin it had to be"(113). He is even puzzled by the fact of living with a circumcised wife. The reason is that of being circumcised only. She is a good wife, she is a Christian and she is obedient, but being circumcised makes the rest null. Fortunately for him, he finds a justification in the Bible which Ngugi expresses in his prayer asking God to forgive him for having married an uncircumcised wife: "God, you know it was not my fault, God, she could not do otherwise and she did while she was in Egypt"(4).

Paul Tillich in *The Shaking of the Foundation* protests against the behaviour like that of Joshua who wants to impose his religious laws on people under his control. He says that many families are disrupted by the way they are treated and that many minds are broken by this attitude of parents (like Joshua), teachers and priests. Joshua's family is an example of the kind where we find

Muthoni, Nyambura and Miriamu in some cases, shocked by the way Joshua is treating them. Muthoni rebels against his father's law and go to be initiated into adulthood. Because of this act, Joshua disowns her :

> Muthoni had turned her head and longed for the cursed land. Lot's wife had done the same thing and she had been turned to stone, a rock of salt to be for ever a stern warning to others"(54).

He does not realise that the family unity is being broken by his behaviour towards the whole family. Muthoni was being torn between two sides. The explanation of Muthoni's situation can be understood through John Mbiti's *African Religion and Philosophy* when he points out that when a list of what should and should not be done is too long, an individual character is confronted with moral demands. Muthoni chooses to join other ladies of her age in initiation thus being an adult, a woman, beautiful in the tribe. For Joshua, this sense of community has gone, he thinks as an individual looking for his eternal life after death. The death of Muthoni makes the two sides find justification of their faith. Joshua is sure that death is a punishment from God because the lady disrespects Him. The elders find that the death is caused by Murungu, who is angry about Muthoni's conversion. These are the interpretations of blacks. They are all blacks but, christians and non-christians are not interpreting events the same way. This pushes a leader to favour one side and not consider another. Since these black people do not understand one another, the leader finds it very difficult to deal with this problem. The whites, then, enjoy this misunderstanding. Jacques Roumains in *La Montagne Ensorcelée* compares the sufferings of blacks to those of Jesus on the cross. Jesus asked his father to forgive his enemies because they do not know what they do. Roumains says that the black people will not forgive the white men because they know what they are doing to blacks by making them suffer. He is sure that the sufferings of blacks results from white savagery(60).

After the death of Muthoni, it is Nyambura's turn to rebel. She loves Waiyaki but, she is converted like her sister. She is being torn by two worlds. John Mbiti comments on how he understands Christianity, especially for black people who have been imposed a faith from another people. He says that : "For many, Christianity is quite superficial, and so has no real answers to life's personal difficulties, or any real influence on the people's social problems"(238). Nyambura is in a similar situation and she chooses to rebel against her father. She does not find in the religion of love what she expected. The fact of being far from the teacher she loves, does not mean anything, she begins to see him in her thoughts. She knows that her father "could control her body, but he could not control her heart"(154). She was always with Waiyaki in her thoughts and dreams. She now puts on the religion which stands between them to be closer to him. Miriamu does not rebel like her daughters but she does not agree with her husband. We are told that she never questions the faith, however "one could still tell by her eyes that this was a religion learnt and accepted; inside the true Gikuyu woman was sleeping"(34).

Ngugi makes us aware that not only their land is being grabbed by the white men but also blacks are undergoing heavy taxation. Even though, he did not take much time to conclude the problem of taxation, there is much to be noticed when Kabonyi is asking if there is someone "who did not complain of the taxation imposed on the men and woman"(147). This taxation has an impact on a person, not only as an individual but also as well as a family. The whites convinced the blacks to go and find jobs in order to be able to pay those taxes. They had to leave their families and, while in town or elsewhere, they may lose respect for their tribal customs and emerge as an individual, losing the sense of community. This case of men can also be observed in the case of women. Raymond Leslie Buell in *The Native Problem in Africa* says that a woman "freed from the many restraints of tribal life, she lacks any standard, and usually becomes utterly immoral"(107). Or, when a man has been absent, he may find that his wife has cheated him when he comes back. The consequence Raymond says is "the disruption of the family". This situation was being deepened by the

whole industrialisation which took people away from their families, searching for jobs.

Briefly, from this analysis, we can assume that the origin of problem that Waiyaki encountered in his duty of leadership originates from Christianity. We have seen how Christianity has a bad impact on Africans. We have seen that the education that Waiyaki received in the missionary school was intertwined with religion. The ideas received there prevented him from questioning some of their beliefs. He reacted the way he thinks it is good. This led to the accusation by the Kiama. We have also seen how the Africans feeling of being inferior led Joshua to accept the new faith, even what he knew to be non-sense. Thus, he ended up by imposing it to his family and that caused the break down not only of the family but also of the whole tribe.

CHAPTER THREE

THE FUTURE

The experience of the past may help people to understand the present and to build the future for a better life. This third chapter is going to analyse the impact of each character in the novel on the future and the contribution especially of these people: Waiyaki, Nyambura, Muthoni and Kinuthia to some extent. We will analyse how Waiyaki is victimized for the sake of unity. We will make reference to historical people who much contributed in the positive evolution of some countries and the world in general. This will help us draw predictions to the future of Waiyaki's tribe. In every society, people's views are not always the same. So, these people, Kabonyi and his son Kamau, and of course Joshua, are going to appear because they have a role to play in the future.

In this novel, we realise that from Mugo wa Kibiro, the great seer to Chege, Waiyaki's father, the prophecy that warns people of the coming of the people with clothes like butterflies is not taken into account. Chege finds that it is too late to use force to fight against these intruders. But, he knows that there are other ways of fighting. He delegates his son to use one of them which is an intelligent and peaceful fight. But still, we see that Waiyaki is challenged in his role by forces mainly from those intruders against whom he is going to fight. In addition to this, he is dominated because the whole people who could help him are also changing.

Ngugi's first draft of the present work we are dealing with was entitled *The Black Messiah*. It indicates the role one of the characters is going to play with reference to the Messiah of the Bible. We are told that Waiyaki and Nyambura are brought to death, even though in *The River Between* it is not said clearly that the two lovers are killed. What we know is that they stand condemned by the Kiama, the Kiama punishes its defaulters by death.

Waiyaki is sometimes compared to Jesus Christ. Both are rejected by the people they are supposed to save. Gachukia in *Mau Mau war and East African Creative Writing* comments on the judgement of Waiyaki :

> And with this, we see history repeated. Yet, one more saviour has been rejected by those he has come to save. Waiyaki, like Jesus, cuts a tragic figure. It is a tragedy of a young man brought down by his own idealism.(55)

Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary defines tragedy as "a medieval narrative poem or tale typically describing the downfall of a great man". Waiyaki has a noble family which is responsible for governing the tribe. He is described as a man more good than bad. In Aristotle's poetics, tragedy is defined as "an imitation of an action that is serious, has magnitude and is complete in itself"(14); it is added that it is an imitation "of incidents that arouse pity and fear"(19). Aristotle says that a tragic hero will most effectively evoke both our pity and terror if he is neither thoroughly good nor thoroughly bad but a mixture of both". *A Glossary of Literary*(322). From his childhood, Waiyaki is an intelligent boy who has a sense of wisdom. The example is when he stopped the fight of the two boys without touching anyone. It is normal for a human being to be attributed mistakes, but we see that Waiyaki is a good man. He becomes bad in the eyes of those who no longer see the world as he does, it is even what makes him fall. D. Killam in *African Writers on African Writings* does not consider Waiyaki as a tragic figure but a "hero in an absurdist drama and not a tragic or even potentially tragic figure"(33). But, in this work the consideration of Waiyaki joins Gachukia's point of view, according to the definition given above about what a tragic hero is. Even though we said that Jesus and Waiyaki are comparable in their roles, the case of Jesus is a little bit different. Jesus cannot be taken as a tragic hero because it was known long ago by prophecy that he will be killed, he will die for our sins. To come on earth like an ordinary man

though he is God, to live with us and to die for humanity, this was the purpose of his coming. Waiyaki is delegated by his father to save the hills, to breach the gap which separates the two ridges. We see him victimised before the accomplishment of his mission. In addition, he is judged unjustly. It is not what we expected him to undergo when we are given his qualities in addition to the education received from his father and from school. He is made helpless in the hands of the Kiama. We expected him to prosper but instead, he is condemned.

As Waiyaki lives in a society which is undergoing changes resulting from a new culture, it would take much time to share the views with the tribesmen. This should be so as Michael Armer in *Social Psychology* points out saying that "Two cultures in a contact situation may bring values to each other but they also hurt each other"(215). The traditional society is being disrupted, as we saw it in the second chapter. We can neither cry over that, nor ignore that this is a fait accompli. Waiyaki, like his father, and Ezeulu in *Arrow of God* realise that there is no going back. According to them, it would not be a solution, the only way open they know, is to go forward for better or for worse. A new sort of society is emerging partly out of the old society and partly in response to the new change. People must be able to correctly face problems from that change. Waiyaki, in trying to face the situation in that angle, is misunderstood. Ezeulu also is not blind to the change as Achebe allows us to realise his decision. Ezeulu knows and sees that the world is changing, he does not like to send his son to the white men but he says :

> I am like the bird Eneke-nti-oba. When his friends asked him why he was always on the wing, he replied "men of today have learnt to shoot without missing and so, I have learnt to fly without perching". I want one of my sons to join these people and be my eyes there.(46)

We see Ezeulu's tactic in searching how he can fight these people. Like Chege, he sends his son to school to learn their wisdom. Ezeulu explains to his wife the reason for sending his son. He says that it is for him to get different people who could dance different music which could be played. By this saying which states that "a man who has nowhere else to put his hand for support, puts it on his own knee"(134), Ezeulu wants to support himself on his son, his own blood.

Waiyaki's strategies can be compared to those of Martin Luther King. They are similar firstly in their physical appearance, they both have charisma and command respect. Secondly, these two people, King and Waiyaki have similar aims in fighting for the cause of their people. Ngugi must have been inspired by Martin Luther King when choosing his hero. Their goal is to see people equal, to make people, blacks and whites respect each other so as to live in a peaceful world. This peace they preach is even respected in their way of fighting. In *I have a Dream* by Martin Luther King, reaction against violence is stated like this:

> Face violence if necessary, but refuse to return violence. If, in pressing for justice and equality in Montgomery we discover that those who reject equality are prepared to use violence we must not despair, retreat or fear.(12)

These two heroes are determined to preach and practice unity. They are not men to be afraid and abandon their goals. Waiyaki's and King's societies are both undergoing oppression by the whites. The two people are chosen to lead the fight. From this perspective, we can predict the future of Waiyaki's society on the basis of Luther's own. As we know that most of the time good intentions triumph over bad ones, Waiyaki will be sooner or later understood. Martin Luther King accomplished his aim (that of releasing black people from slavery)

even though at the beginning he was being challenged by very powerful forces. He is killed, but now the white people in America agree on his heroism.

If we try to have a look at both sides of colonisation, we can use the French saying that "A quelque chose malheur est bon" to mean that nothing is totally bad. We cannot deny that Europeans brought in Africa anything positive. We have witnessed what took place in Africa. Now, we know that from the whites, Africa got advantages as well as disadvantages. Achebe in *African Writers Talking*, expresses his own view. Donatus Nwoga asks Achebe about African writers who oppose colonialism while at the sometime enjoying the fruits of it and Achebe replies :

> Well, that is a very stupid comment. I mean, to oppose colonialism does not mean that one does not appreciate the values of western technological civilisation. I mean the two things don't come in as necessarily conflicting and such a comment should be beneath notice.(8)

If we try to analyse the traditional way of life for Africans, we can see why their technological material were not very developed. They were living in an area which was not hostile to their lives. They could easily find food, yet we can assume that sooner or later change would have been necessary. Climatic conditions keep changing and the shift from nomadic to sedentary life was obvious. The result is the need of material for agriculture or any other need because the population also increases. These materials then cannot be refuted, and they are brought in by this contact of different people who bring with them other means for their benefit. Also, we can read and write thanks to Europeans (even though they stole it from Africa). No one can reject modernity but, this should be done for African's benefit not for European benefit only. When the missionary school realise that Waiyaki is intelligent, they want him to work for

them and not for his own society. What we do not agree with is this fact of coming in Africa with European pretext of civilisation while the true goals are different. Europeans see Africans as children who could not be treated as adults; they could not be as mature as white men. To justify colonialism, efforts are made to find theories to establish the supposed innate inferiority of the African. White men managed to convince black leaders that they are not capable, those who refused were forced to resign. In *The Challenge of Africa* Busia thinks that these arguments of the black's inferiority compared to the white are not convincing. He says :

> We have encountered the biological theory of the survival of the fittest race, a theory in which the conquest of Africans in war was cited as evidence attesting their inferiority. Measurement of the black man's head and studies of skeletons and craniums were invoked.(98)

These were only pretexts to convince the world that Africans are inferior. Europeans pretend that African beliefs are full of fear "fear of spirits, ghosts, demons, witches, fear of misfortunes that will be inflected by vengeful spirits and gods"(99). So, the coming with a new faith is justified as they pretend that it is superior thus will help to remove the burden of fear on the Africans. Africans are then changed in their mind by white teachings. Basil Davidson and Antonia Bronda in *Crossroads in Africa* explain the process by which Africans agree that they are inferior : "They have absorbed the culture of the west and accept its "superiority". At the same time, this culture of the west has rejected them as persons as black persons"(31). From here then, whatever a white says or does is accepted without any question even if it is not true or may have negative consequences for Africans.

Ngugi wrote this book in 1965 and is born in 1938. He lived during the period of colonisation and, as a writer, has the role of giving his reader (Africans especially) the way out of the oppression by the whites. In his novel, he gives us

attempts by Waiyaki to reconcile the two conflicting sides, and the races to some extent. As a leader, he has to do all he can to unite his people. Also, having been in one of the white schools, he is supposed to know the two groups of people and can deal with the situation. Through his father's thoughts, Waiyaki is committed to preach unity among Christians and traditionalists. "Waiyaki did not like being identified with either side, he was committed to reconciliation"(125). He wants to dominate these differences that break their unity. He wants first to make the Gikuyu tribes aware of the problem of alienation so as to react against it. Africans have been alienated as we have seen it, then it is thanks to Waiyaki's school which turned the education at school not for alienation but for helping Africans to be aware of their capacity. The alienation done through schools must be broken through schools. By learning in those schools, Waiyaki realises and comes to make others aware of their vices.

Chege had known that his son will accomplish the mission given, though he doubted first about his youthfulness. He believes in his ability to use his knowledge, be it little. He says : "With the little knowledge that he had he would uplift the tribe, yes, give it the white man's learning and his tools, so that in the end the tribe would be strong enough, wise enough to chase away the settlers and the missionaries"(87). Among the educated, we can get people like Waiyaki who save people in the hour of their need, people who can serve a community as a whole. But still, people have to be careful also because people who will ruin or capable of ruining Africa are the knowledgeable people, too. Nowadays, African countries have more educated people but they still have selfish men. These ones are especially educated people and most of the time leaders. Chinua Achebe in *A Man of the People* talks about "men of themselves" through the character of chief Nanga though he, ironically, calls them "men of the people". Chief Nanga is intelligent, educated and is supposed to lead and help the ignorant masses, but instead, he wants everything for him and only him. Another version of these knowledgeable people, is Joshua who is carried by Christian dogma. His behaviour destroys his family. He does not care about his daughter's life because she does not share his views. As a true Christian, he should take care of

others to allow them to live happily on earth as well as in heaven. He develops a sense of individualism as Europeans, which is different from the communal one of Africa. Kabonyi, too, can be taken as a man of himself. What pushes him to challenge the leadership headed by Waiyaki is not for the benefit of the tribe. It is jealousy because he has lost this position of a leader. He is the only man after Waiyaki who knows the secrets of the tribe and who can occupy the position. Having failed, he wants his son to occupy it. Waiyaki's immediate aim is to chase the white men from African lands and he wants first to create schools, education for unity and political freedom. He wants to go slowly but surely by beginning to educate people. But, the lands are being taken by settlers, as a consequence, and as such people are easily being manipulated. For example, people could not refuse to work for the whites, the same people who robbed their fertile lands. They could not do otherwise to get their daily meal and pay heavy taxes. Kabonyi laments saying:

> It was now for the tribe to take action. For Waiyaki was a greater menace than the people realised. He was in league with the white men, who had brought a secret religion to quieten the people while the land was being grabbed by their brothers. And taxation? Who did not complain of heavy taxation imposed on men and women?(147)

People who can not clearly explain the aim in Waiyaki's plan accuse him of delaying while they want an immediate action. The leader realises it later when the gap is already widened.

All Ngugi's novels portray the high mindedness and moral courage that leads men to withstand hardships and sacrifices in the pursuit of excellence above all, for the good of society at large. He is like portraying his situation. We are told that his home is in the heart of the controversial highlands where the white settlers took up land and established themselves in a great number. We are also told that he had been victim of injustice at school. He experienced, says

Kidubuka, the racially and socially discriminating educational system in colonial Kenya. But even though he underwent hardships, he manages, in his novel, not to be an extremist, he reacts as a wise man. He is not radically against western people because he is like preaching a synthesis.

In the novel, we see a harmonious relation between Christians and traditionalists being achieved by Waiyaki and Nyambura. This harmony does not concern christians and traditionalists only but it is extended to white-black relationship in Africa and in America during the period of slavery. Good relations between races can no more be built on grievances or on arrogant sense of superiority or inferiority but on unity and understanding. There should be no religion of the white men as Nyambura rejects it. She sees another religion that could be more unifying and be understood by many people, if not all. It is said she wanted the other religion :

> The other that held together, the other that united (and she remembered), the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain.(134)

In this religion, Nyambura sees peace. She is eager to live with it because she has the same view as Waiyaki : peace and unity. Human and animals are symbols of the two religions which normally cannot live together and cohabit in harmony. We see Muthoni's decision to be circumcised being exercised nowadays in combining traditional marriages to the christian ones. Muthoni says that she is beautiful in her tribe and can still see Jesus. For her, there is no contradiction. They see the two faiths as complementary but not exclusive. Gachukia in *The Mau Mau War and East African Creative Writings* says that : "But even more important to this is the fact that in selecting from both the new and the old (for there must be marriage between the two) neither side is ideal or complete by itself. Yet care must be taken in this selection"(42). These two

ladies try to reconcile and take what they believe is good from both sides. We are told in the novel that Livingstone, the missionary, does not wholly agree with extremism on the circumcision issue, which is an extreme point Christians are against. He stands for moderation. He joins Wilder as quoted by Eldred Jones in *African Literature Today*, that the Bible recognises that God finds his way to us, but the whites pretend to know all about God. We also, they believe, find the way to Him through the common place and personally (as Muthoni does) crucial relationships and experiences of life. God does not reveal himself through things we do not know but passes through what we can find and realise their raison d'être in our environment. God cannot send his message in a language that the audience cannot understand, unless there is someone to interpret. In addition, our way to Him is democratic provided that he is satisfied. We do not have to be taught orders to follow in order to satisfy Him. Besides, man has an innate sense of good and evil. Nobody needs to tell another what is good or bad.

Martin M. Chemers in *Leadership Theory and Research* gives two factors on which leadership effectiveness depends. He says that the first is the degree to which the leadership situation gives the leader control and influence over the group process and group performance. The second is the leader's goal or focus of concern. Because of the change, Waiyaki is no longer coping with the people since his primary concern is school when most people are concerned with immediate action. Waiyaki is a man of extraordinary qualities as Ngugi allows himself the comparison between his hero and Jesus. He says in *Homecoming* that :

> Yet Christ himself had always championed the cause of the Jewish masses against both the Pharisees and Roman colonialists: he could say if Christ had lived in Kenya in 1952, or in South Africa or Rhodesia today, he would have been crucified as a Mau Mau terrorist or a communist(34).

These two people have similar tasks. Jesus is assumed to have accomplished his mission on the cross. He knew that it was a painful action; he even asked his father to help him but he never thought about going back. Waiyaki on his turn, though challenged by those who could help him, thought twice and found that without unity, there is no life. He chooses Nyambura to unify the two ridges rather than choosing a divided tribe. He also chooses to touch and take a dying lady to the hospital instead of reacting in a stupid way. The lady is circumcised by the elders, how could they accuse him of touching an unclean lady when they themselves touched her?

He also knows that Christians led by Joshua do not love him but he is committed to reconcile the two opposing people. He enters Joshua's church to warn them that traditionalists are preparing to invade them. He says for the second time that people are moving towards Joshua's church, but Joshua seizes this as an opportunity to humiliate him: "Go, go out from here get thee behind me, Satan"(136). Waiyaki condemns the elements of the tribe which cry for vengeance against Joshua and his followers. He sees Christians and traditionalists as brothers :

> We are all children of Mumbi and we must fight together in one political movement, or else we perish and the white man will always be on our back. Can a house divided against itself stand?(142)

He knows that there have been rivalries and he is convincing the elders to end the ancient rivalries so as to get the force to drive away the white men.

Any human being has qualities and he is sometimes attributed weaknesses. And many times we learn by making mistakes, and over time, we gain some degree of competence and confidence. The hero, too, realises his mistakes. Waiyaki could do more and correct his mistakes if he had been given a chance. We see some instances where he realises that he had committed a

mistake. Somewhere, we are told that he is regretting for not having made clear the aim in creating the schools. "He looked forward to the next day early next year when the parents would gather again, when he would tell then all to unite"(119). Another mistake that Waiyaki realises is that of resigning from the Kiama. This resignation helps Kabonyi to challenge the leadership of Waiyaki. The latter "instantly thought that he should not have resigned from the Kiama. Its power and influence was there, everywhere"(113). Often responsibilities come before we are ready for them. The teacher is very young and Ngugi in A*n Exploration of his Writings* says that "He is asked to solve the problems of society long before he can solve the problem of his own identity"(29). But, as we have seen it in the first chapter, he has many qualities which help us to assume that his qualities exceed his weaknesses. Still, very young he managed to separate the two boys who are fighting in a surprising manner. Even when later, in front of the crowd, he chooses death over life, he is determined to attain the unity in choosing Nyambura (death) for wife. Like Waiyaki, Ezeulu learns a lesson from Oduche's mistake. When Oduche imprisoned the python, it is an offence but it helps him very much. He says that :

> It is good for a mistake like this to happen once in a while, he said. So that we can know the thoughts of our friends and neighbours, unless the wind blows we do not see the foul's rump.(52)

This gives a lesson to Gikuyu tribesmen and leaders to come. When someone errs, we should not be stuck in blaming him, rather we should learn from it so as to go ahead correctly. It is what should be done by Waiyaki who wanted perfection if he had been given time.

Kinuthia is a character who stands by Waiyaki. He always wants to help him in paying attention because he knows that to be a leader is not something easy. What makes him different from his friend is that he could not speak

publicly, even when it is necessary. People, individually, differ from one another. That is why a leader has to be chosen according to the qualities required. The reason is that there are people who are able to do or say what others feel, but do not dare put them in practice. In *King Remembered* we find the words of Reverend C.T. Vivian about Martin Luther King Jr : "Martin was saying what I wished I could say and he was in fact enunciating my deepest understanding of what it was all about"(66). Surely, many people do agree on leader's views but, not all of them can dare cry aloud about their views. But when they happen to get an opportunity, they can do something. This is seen in *The River Between*. The end of the Story is a good account of the way tribesmen are "obliged" to send the teacher to the Kiama. Some people are forced to agree as Ngugi shows it in the following passage :

> An elder stood up... (he says) Waiyaki and Nyambura would be placed in the hands of the Kiama, who would judge them and decide what to do. It was the best thing and the crowd roared back "yes" as if the burden of judging their teacher were removed from them.(152)

The crowd is happy because many people would not know what to do to the teacher as they still believe in what is being done for them. Perhaps later in the future, there will be another who would awaken them and pursue the mission of Waiyaki. There is Kinuthia who has been warning him and who, even at the end, does not betray him. He is very close to Waiyaki and understands him. Ngugi makes us know that the teachers will not give up the work: "There was a soul, a heart, where at least what Waiyaki had done had taken root. And the teachers who were coming! They would carry on the work"(136).

Ngugi, by drawing inspiration from the milieu surrounding him, provides us other elements which symbolise unity for the tribe. Even though he does not

give the end of the story, we can see through his words and images that he is not pessimistic. We are given the river called "Honia". The word Honia means "cure" or "bring back to life". It is placed in a valley that Ngugi calls a "valley of life" separating the two ridges in conflict. It separates them but not completely. There is a place where the river does no longer appear to show that, sooner or later, these conflicts will be over and the two ridges will be connected to each other. "They had merged into one area of beautiful land, which is what, perhaps, they were meant to be"(16). Around the river, rituals happen at the same time as another sign of unity. The initiation day coincides with Christmas day. One side of the river, while celebrating rites of circumcision, on the other side there are celebration of Christmas. Both ridges representing christianity and tradition share the same river. They drink their cows there, fetch water there. In addition, these two faiths are not very distinctive. What differs is the way each perceives the way to the Almighty. If we try to analyse some elements from both parts, we see that there are similarities which allow us to conclude that they are not exclusive and can cohabit. Both worship a supreme God and they have intermediaries. Some have churches other have the Mugumo, the big sacred tree. The logic, from the African point of view, as John Mbiti in *African Religions and Philosophy* points out, is that "since missionaries belong to so many denominations why should Africans not have their own churches founded and led by fellow African Christians"(23).

Ngugi tackles the issue of love in his two novels *The River Between* and *Weep not, Child*. He does not introduce love for the sake of love. But his aim is to show that the contact and apparent understanding of the children between themselves is an indication that whereas the parents are not ready to understand one another, the hope lies in the children who are innocent of hatred and who cannot be suspicious. They do not have ideas like their parents who have never been to school, Waiyaki allows himself to love Nyambura considered as unclean because she is not circumcised. Christians consider circumcision as a great sin. Nyambura also does not run away from Waiyaki because he is circumcised or is

a traditionalist. She had seen what his father had done to her sister who went to be circumcised, but she is committed to live with Waiyaki. Njoroge in *Weep not, Child* goes further. He does not find any problem in falling in love with Jacobo's daughter or in being friend of Stephen Howland's son. Coming from a traditionalist family, he sees no problem in courting Mwihaki from the modernised African family or Stephen from the white settler family. We may also find hope in children, from the song Ngugi used to hear when he was about ten or eleven. In his article "The Writer on Changing Society", women, who were forced to leave their fertile lands used to sing that :

> And you our children
> Tighten belts around you waist
> So you will one day drive away from this land
> The race of white people
> For truly, Kenya is a black man's country.(48)

These children are those who are learning. Those sent to school in whom peasants believe, those who are considered knowledgeable and capable, people like Waiyaki, Njoroge, Kinuthia etc. Their task is not easy as they are going to work between two opposing parts where the environmental situation is not full. Waiyaki realises later that in the Kiama there is a political implication which may end up in making him fall. He sticks to his schools and minimises religion. Religion in Africa must not be isolated from life.

The analysis of Waiyaki's attempt to reconcile the two ridges, though still very young, shows that the forces he encounters are too much for him. He ends up by being judged because leadership is difficult and complex. He is challenged by forces he does not fully understand. In addition, he is being challenged by forces originating from where he does not expect them. This work does not consider Waiyaki as having totally failed. We assume that he failed in sticking on power, but his deeds and idealism are still going ahead. They are

being carried on partly by those he himself initiated and partly by some others who realise later that he was pursuing a good end. Eldred Jones does not see the novel *The River Between* as a novel of despair but as a novel of challenge. As we can see now in present societies, christians and non-christians are no longer exclusive. Blacks and whites are now equal. They can live together despite some slight problems because people like Kabonyi, Kamau and Joshua will always play a role in every society. In *The Patterns and Significance of Culture Conflict in East and West African Novels in English*, Michael Okenimkpe says that :

> For Ngugi, revolution succeeds, not because there are no obstacles, but because the leaders of revolution are of such calibre as to subdue obstacles of any magnitude and complexity, and because success entails essentially the breaking down of obstacles.(157)

CONCLUSION

The novelist, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, returning into the past has sought to demonstrate the paramount importance of traditional religious beliefs of Africans at the point of contact with the western civilization. He has shown to what extent the contact shook the community. Besides, most men find the meaning and purpose of their lives in membership of a community; and the chief function of their religion is to keep that community intact. But the coming of the new faith, came to break down the structure. Employing the sociological approach to analyse the novel, this study did not make an accurate reproduction of the historical truth. Rather, its main concern was an attempt to draw the picture of the meeting of the whites and blacks in Africa, not as a faithful anthropological documentation but in the way Ngugi, as a novelist, interprets it.

The analysis in the first chapter pointed out that the Africans were organised according to their beliefs. It shows the way people had their own way of preparing citizens from childhood to adulthood, in shaping a character who would be able to fulfil any task he is attributed. Waiyaki is taken to the sacred grove after initiation for this purpose. In addition to the qualities we are given about Waiyaki, his father kept warning him of the advent of a new force which he had to fight against. In order to rule wisely, he chose to send him to school to learn the wisdom of the white men. We also discovered that the community was organised to the extent that, when they happened to quarrel, they could resolve the problem among themselves. It is what Waiyaki reminds the two boys who were fighting "Didn't we swear that we of the hills were comrades?"(5). Besides, the leaders were respected, thanks to the beliefs that leaders are sent by the Almighty.

As far as the second chapter is concerned, the focus was on the coming of the whites and the consequences on people they found on the African continent and leaders like Waiyaki in particular. We realised that problems of great

importance came with the new faith, when society gets bad people like Joshua, Kabonyi and Kamau. Joshua does not cope with his brothers or his own family. Kabonyi, embodies both faiths and is taken over by individualism and selfishness. Kamau is corrupted by his father. There is also a problem of generation gap: those who have been to school and those who did not. In addition, heavy taxes are being imposed on people while some of them are being cheated of their lands. The old beliefs are lost, one person after the other rebels against the ancient beliefs and causes others to rebel. Joshua forces his family to embrace and obey the new faith. The new faith, as we have seen, is mainly used for oppressing, alienating and destabilising. The situational context as Martin Chemers notes it, is important. When Waiyaki sees himself in a situation like the one described above, he becomes stressed. Thus, his mission becomes difficult to pursue. We realised in this chapter that W.E. F. Ward in *A History of Africa* is right when he says that "The African Kingdoms rose without European help" because Africans were developing without the presence of Europeans. But when he says that "they (African Kingdoms) fell again without European interference"(33) he is equivocally wrong.

The analysis in the third chapter came up with the assertion that Waiyaki is victimised for the sake of unity. "When the white man came, jealousy stood between Makuyu and Kameno"(149). Waiyaki is determined to unite them in warning christians about the vengeance by Kabonyi and his followers. He creates education for unity. From childhood, he hated to see people fighting. Even when it was time to choose life or death (Nyambura or the tribe) he chose death rather than a divided tribe because a divided house cannot stand. Ngugi lets us know that there is always hope and what is needed is determination. The images he uses, and mainly, the river which closes the book, as it keeps flowing: "Down through the valley of life, its beat rising above the dark stillness reaching into the heart of the people of Makuyu and Kameno", (152) are like saying that "where there is a will, there is a way".

In this work, the researcher hopes to offer a contribution to the understanding of our contemporary society which is being destroyed. The researcher wants Africans, like Waiyaki from the top of the sacred grove, to have a wider vision and see beyond the desire to rule and get money as not the most important thing. The liberation of the whole continent from the western domination should be their main focus. Now, we are facing what researchers have called neo-colonialism. Seemingly, colonisation is over but like during the time of colonisation, people do not realise what is being done. People should help leaders instead of challenging them so as to fight against white domination which has multiple faces.

More areas surely remain unexplored. The present work has focussed on the colonial period in African history. As we still have leaders or races who are being oppressed, future researchers could extend their analysis to unveil different origins of problems that people are facing so as to let them know and fight for their rights.

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