



BİNGÖL ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI

MODELS FOR NATIONAL EMANCIPATION IN
NGUGI WA THIONG'O'S WORKS

Mehmet KAYA

YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

Danışman
Yrd. Doç. Dr. Ahmet KAYINTU

Bingöl – 2016

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(NGUGI WA THIONG'O'NUN ESERLERİNDE
MİLLİ KURTULUŞ MODELLERİ)

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BİLİMSEL ETİK BİLDİRİMİ

Yüksek Lisans tezi olarak hazırladığım “**Ngugi wa Thiong’o’nun Eserlerinde Ulusal Kurtuluş Önerileri**” adlı çalışmanın öneri aşamasından sonuçlanmasına kadar geçen süreçte bilimsel etiğe ve akademik kurallara özenle uyduğumu, tez içindeki tüm bilgileri bilimsel ahlak ve gelenek çerçevesinde elde ettiğimi, tez yazım kurallarına uygun olarak hazırladığım bu çalışmamda doğrudan veya dolaylı olarak yaptığım her alıntıya kaynak gösterdiğimi ve yararlandığım eserlerin kaynakçada gösterilenlerden oluştuğunu beyan ederim.

...../...../2016

İmza
Mehmet KAYA

BİNGÖL ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜNE

Mehmet KAYA tarafından hazırlanan “**Ngugi wa Thiong’o’nun Eserlerinde Ulusal Kurtuluş Önerileri**” başlıklı bu çalışma, **30/09/2016** tarihinde yapılan tez savunma sınavı sonucunda **oybirliği** başarılı bulunarak jürimiz tarafından **İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı**’nda Yüksek Lisans tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.

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Enstitü Müdürü

PREFACE

In this study the suggestions of Ngugi wa Thiong'o on the emancipation of a nation from any foreign imperialist country have been handled predominantly. The idea for the thesis subject belongs to Asst. Prof. Dr. Ahmet KAYINTU, the then head of the department. The subject is an original one as it highlights Ngugi's views on the use of indigenous languages of Africa, culture, economy, and the necessity of resisting against imperialism, imperialism itself, (neo) colonialism, teaching literature, and how to nationalize a country. Within the postcolonial writers and literary figures Ngugi has still got a remarkable position. His uncompromising stance regarding the native languages is praiseworthy. It seems to me that his views guide us in our studies about literature to a great extent.

No work can be written alone and I would like to express my gratitude first to Allah, the merciful, the compassionate for protecting us, to my thesis supervisor, Assist. Prof. Dr. Ahmet KAYINTU for his valuable support, my wife for her extraordinary help during my writing the thesis, and to my sons, Ebubekir and Osman for their love, understanding, and tolerance.

Mehmet KAYA

Bingöl 2016

Bingöl Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Yüksek Lisans Tez Özeti

Tezin Başlığı	: Ngugi wa Thiong'o'nun eserlerinde Milli Kurtuluş Modelleri
Tezin Yazarı	: Mehmet KAYA
Danışman	: Yrd. Doç.Dr. Ahmet KAYINTU
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Kabul Tarihi	:
Sayfa Sayısı	: 7 (ön kısım) + 84 (tez)
<p>Bu araştırmada, Kenyalı yazar, filozof, şair ve oyun yazarı Ngugi wa Thiong'o'nun özel olarak Kenya genel olarak da bir ulusun kolonyalizmden kurtuluşu ve bağımsızlığı bağlamında edebiyat, dil ve kültür konusundaki görüşleri ele alınmıştır. Bu görüşler genel olarak Thiong'o'nun <i>Homecoming</i>, <i>Writers in Politics</i>, <i>Moving the Centre</i>, <i>Globalectics</i>, <i>Something Torn and New</i>, <i>Decolonizing the Mind</i>, <i>Detained: A Writer's Prison Diary</i> ve <i>Barrel of A Pen</i> adlı denemeleri incelenerek ortaya konulmaya çalışılmıştır. Halen California Üniversitesi'nde Edebiyat dersleri veren Ngugi aynı zamanda milli bir entelektüeldir. Ngugi edebiyat ve yerel dillerle ilgili olarak birçok Afrikalı yazarın İngilizceyi yazı dili olarak tercih etmesine karşın Kenya'nın ve diğer Afrika ülkelerinin yazı dilinin o ülkenin dili olması gerektiğini cesurca ifade etmiştir. Yine bu ülkelerde üniversitelerde yaygın olarak okutulan ve bölüm düzeyinde programlarda yer alan İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı bölümündeki öğretime karşı çıkarak bunun yerine daha milli ve daha evrensel bir içerik ortaya konulması gerektiğini savunarak dünya edebiyatından örnekler de içerecek şekilde bir edebiyat bölümü kurulmasını önermiştir. Aynı zamanda ihmal edilen hatta yok sayılan Kenya yerel dillerinin ve edebiyatının Batılı edebiyatlarla yan yana ve eşit statüde okutulmasını da amaçlamıştır. Ngugi'nin entelektüel düzeyde yaptığı bu mücadele kendi ülkesinde maruz kaldığı baskılar, gözetim ve tutuklanmalar ve Batıda yaşamak zorunda bırakıldığı sürgün hayatıyla sonuçlanmıştır.</p>	
Anahtar Kelimeler: Bağımsızlık, Emperyalizm, Kolonyalizm, Edebiyat, Dil	

Bingol Ü niversity Institute of Social Sciences Abstract of Master’s Thesis

Title of the Thesis: Models for National Emancipation in Ngugi wa Thiong’o’s Works	
Author	: Mehmet KAYA
Supervisor	: Asst. Prof.Dr. Ahmet KAYINTU
Department	: English Language and Literature
Sub-field	: English Culture and Literature
Date	:/...../ 2016
<p>This master thesis dwells on - the Kenyan writer, philosopher, playwright and poet - Ngugi wa Thiong’o’s views about literature, language, and culture in the context , in particular Kenya and in general Africa, of emancipation of a nation from colonialism and its independence.Those views, compiled in general from his nonfiction works; <i>Homecoming, Writers in Politics, Moving the Centre, Globalectics, Something torn and New, Decolonizing the Mind, Detained: A writer’s Prison Diary, and Barrel of a Pen</i>, and partly from his novels and plays, are embodied objectively and analyzed to comment about. Ngugi who is currently giving English and comparative literature lectures at the University of California is a patriot and an indigenous intellectual. Although most of the the African writers insist on using English as the language of writing in African literature, Ngugi intrepidly stated that the writing language of African Literature should be the native languages. Again, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, and his friends, Taban Lo Liyong and Henry Owuor-Anyumba, proposed a system of educational upheaval at the University of Nairobi, Kenya, in 1968. Their insistence that the English Department should be abolished and a new Department of Literature should be set up in which a new content of literary texts will be prepared which includes examples from the World Literature. This way, the native literature is intended to be instructed at universities. Ngugi’s struggle with neocolonial administrations as a Kenyan intellectual was resulted in repression, imprisonment, exile, and unemployment.</p>	
Key Words: Independence, Imperialism, Colonialism, Literature, Language	

INTRODUCTION

The history of colonialism goes back to the creation of mankind. First, the brothers, in particular Cain and Abel, the first sons of Adam and Eve, tries to become dominant over each other. That is to say, colonialism is not specific to European countries or USA. It can be seen in almost every country throughout the history. The Roman Empire's expansion from the Atlantic into Armenia. The Mongols' occupation, under Genghis Khan's cruel rule, of Middle East and China; the Aztec empire's foundation together with the subjugation of the other ethnic groups in Mexico; the Ottoman empire's extension from the Arabia into the middle of Europe; the huge Chinese empire expanded more than any other country Europe had ever noticed up to that time. However, European colonialism which began nearly in the 16th century has been operated in a different and sophisticated style as distinct from the abovementioned empires. European's colonial practices changed the whole world in a cruel way as people, goods and other natural resources of countries were brought into their own. It is doubtless that Europeans are more ruthless and organized than the previous ones. Even after leaving the colonized countries, the flow of human and natural resources continued owing to the economic structure they established in those countries. The profit and slave trade implies the colony and large farms in Americas, commercial activities in India, and vast displacement of people. The colonizers made people move as slaves, casual labourers, household servants, travelers and traders and the colonialists as administrators, merchants, travelers, and missionaries and so on.¹ Shortly, the European colonialism opened the way for the foundation of European capitalism at the expense of displacing the Black people from their lands and extracting their goods, natural resources and most important their identities. Preaching continuously that they came to civilize their country, denigrating their customs as primitive, imposing deliberately their protestant way of life, they make the natives to feel inferior against the Europeans.

Africa is an old continent and its various languages also have a long history. Today, universities have a strong influence on the development of art and artists and we can easily express that with the contribution of universities there are lots of writers

¹ Ania Loomba, *Colonialism Postcolonialism*, Routledge, London&New York, 1998, p.3-5.

in the market. Writers, in Ngugi's terms, are regarded as the "surgeons of the heart and souls of a community."² They have a desire to reveal the facts. Of course, if truth is analyzed thoroughly achieving a solution can be possible. Ngugi expresses that he writes not just about his or Africa's problems but his writings concern everybody. The current dilemmas of Africa are not the result of individual choices but they stem from historical conditions. Solving those dilemmas is not possible personally but through a radical renewal of organization of the societal structures by eliminating the imperialism and its domestic neocolonial allies. Imperialists and their neocolonial partners have never aimed to develop the continent. Ngugi complains about the neocolonial conditions in which the European bourgeoisie once more deprives the African people of their gifts and abilities as they have deprived them of their natural and economical resources. For the last two centuries they have stolen the Africans' wealth to embellish their residences and buildings; today they pave the way for a brain drain to enrich their cultures and languages. African economy should be recovered, African culture and languages should be revived and African politics should be democratized, and Africa should regain its national writers.

Language question forms a considerable place in Ngugi's imagination and political outlook and he touches on it almost in all of his works. The facts in Africa have been seen through the eyes of tribes. The traditional enmity between the tribes determines all developments. Also, the religious conflicts affect the attitudes of people. Even literature from time to time is assessed through the tribal source of an author or the tribal structure of a fictional work. The Western media has manipulated this misleading stereotypical reading of the African truth to hide the fact that the basis of many problems in Africa is still imperialism. Unluckily, a number of African thinkers have submitted to that plan and thus they cannot see the traditional divide-and-rule strategy of West to describe any conflicts of intellectual stance. We cannot choose our biological nationality. The differences of opinion and any dispute among people are not possibly explained in terms of fixed truths. If not, the conflicts among people would always remain the same. In addition, one can only solve the conflict in such a condition by transforming the characters biologically.

² Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Decolonizing the Mind*, Harare, Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1994, p.ix.

Ngugi's style is different, of course. He deals with the African truth in two ways; the struggle of two opposing forces: the imperialist tradition and the resistance tradition. Although Kenya became independent in 1963, the international bourgeoisie retained its dominance through the neocolonial native administration. They are dependent on the so-called bourgeoisie economically and politically; They have a police force to carry out what they wish, a gowned clergy and judiciary to decide on the critical issues about the state and what they are dictated and a state intelligentsia spreading their views. On the other hand, the opposition has been achieved by the efforts of the working class, i.e the peasants and workers, with the help of patriotic students, intellectuals, soldiers and the other dissident individuals and civil institutions of middle class. The opposition is presented for their nationalistic support while embodying that the foundation of national culture is based on peasantry and equal status within all the nationalities populating the same region. Any move coming from anybody in this region without regarding its ethnicity and nationality can be regarded as a success against imperialism in terms of all opposing elements from different nationalities. The whole amount of those moves without their weight, scale, size, and point in time and space creates the national heritage.

This thesis primarily dwells on Ngugi wa Thiong'o's views about the emancipation of a nation from its colonial and neocolonial bonds. However, his views on literature and society, literature as a school subject, language of writing, revival of national culture will be presented and his exchange of views with other African writers will be displayed.

The content of the thesis has been constructed primarily on Ngugi's outlook presented in his nonfiction works; *Homecoming*, *Writers in Politics*, *Moving the Centre*, *Something Torn and New*, *Detained: A Writer's Prison Diary*, *Decolonizing the Mind*, *Globalectics*. Also, the works *Ngugi's Novels and African History* by James Ogude, *Ngugi wa Thiong'o', Gender, and the Ethics of Postcolonial Reading* by Brendon Nicholls, *Ngugi wa Thiong'o* by Simon Gikandi, *Postcolonialism in the Wake of the Nairobi Revolution* by Apollo Obonyo Amoko have been taken into consideration during the writing process. The thesis, unlike those writers, is to display the very outlook of Ngugi without any interference. However, Ngugi wa Thiong'o's views have been argued in the light of the criticism of those writers and also Peter

Nazareth, David Cook, Charles Cantalupo, Patrick Williams, and Abdulrazzak Gurnah.

Chapter One introduces the roots of colonialism from the beginnings to the after independence or neocolonial period. Also the ideology of racism and the role of church in colonization are presented.

Chapter Two focuses on the revival of national culture in Africa and in particular in Kenya. According to national advocates of indigenous African cultures, imperialism is not a motto. It is authentic, de facto, and obvious in essence and structure, and in terms of its approaches and consequences. Imperialism has an absolute effect on people. It functions culturally, politically, economically, militarily and psychologically within the society. It could even cause genocide. Ngugi contends that the freedom for western finance capital and for the vast transnational monopolies under its umbrella to continue stealing from the countries and people of Latin America, Africa, Asia and Polynesia is today, protected by conventional and nuclear weapons: Imperialism, led by the USA, presents the struggling peoples of the earth and all those calling for peace, democracy and socialism with the Ultimatum: accept theft or death.

The people under oppression want to free themselves from abuse and to prevent the imperialists from exploiting their land and resources. However, the primary means employed to dominate the people is the manipulation of culture. At first stage the names of people are changed, i.e Ngugi into James; secondly, they are prohibited from speaking their mother tongues and the defiants are punished; and then their customs, traditions, and religious beliefs are denigrated by way of various practices; people are humiliated and the imperialists make them feel inferior against them. Step by step their plan is in progress and the natives have lost their belief in their religion, in their fight against colonialism, in their history, in their potential, in their integrity, and eventually in themselves. It forces them to view their history as worthless and they should reject it and keep themselves away from it. They should identify themselves with the imperialists' languages and history. Achieving their aim, the colonizers reward the natives who obey and punish the ones who defy them. All the efforts are made to disconnect them from the springs of life. They cast doubts about the ethical aspect of the struggle. Freedom is presented as a far and an impossible concept to be reached. The plan is to make them feel themselves as miserable and depressed and by this way to

demonstrate the imperialism as the mere remedy. So, absolute obedience is the eventual aim; unfortunately, the neocolonial leaders has been carrying out what they are dictated as a consequence of that obedience.

Chapter Three discloses the relationship between literature and society. Ngugi argues that literature functions as the mirror of the society as a part of the culture. He believes that a meaningful national culture could not be established in a colonial atmosphere. A patriotic national culture can only be flowered under the total control of natural and human resources and products of labours. It is a fact that if a culture is dominated by outside forces, everything will be under their control. They will be evaluating their history, their past and present achievements, their future potential, from the standpoint of imperialist foreigners who cannot possibly be wishing those people any uncontrolled prosperity and development. No country, no people can be truly independent for as long as their economy and culture are dominated by foreigners.³

Chapter Four, final chapter, summarizes Ngugi's views about language, culture, fine arts, economy, emancipation, and so forth.

³ Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Writers in politics*, Heinemann, London, 1981.

CHAPTER 1: THE ROOTS OF COLONIALISM

1.1 Historical and Philosophical Background

Colonialism can be depicted simply as “the policy and practice of a power in extending control over weaker peoples or areas”.⁴ The exploitation process of a certain district by a foreign power which is more powerful both politically and militarily than the indigenous people. It consists of a series of uneven affairs among the native people and the colonial force. Colonialism is an unjust rule of a foreign minority, mostly the fundamental power is outside the country, over an indigenous minority. The aim is to profit from the land and people in any case. The rules influencing the lives of native people are established by the British Queen from her Palace and carried out by the local representatives. The colonialists do not strive to reach an agreement culturally with the natives, but they believe that they are superior to them and busy with what they are commissioned.

Today, Kwame Nkrumah argues, the neocolonialism symbolizes the imperialism in its last stage and this stage is perhaps the most dangerous one. In the past it was possible to transform a country which was imposed on by a colonial regime onto a colony; Egypt in the nineteenth century is an example. Today this is not a feasible process. The colonialism, in its conventional sense, is in no way completely ended and still constitutes a problem for Africa. Once a country became independent it was almost impossible to reverse the process. Existing colonies may survive, yet new colonies cannot be created. Today, neocolonialism replaces colonialism as its main vehicle. The core of neocolonialism is that the country is apparently independent, however, its economical, political, and social system is directed from outside the country.⁵

The European colonialism began in the 16th century while they founded colonies in Africa, America, and Asia and it even continues today. Colonial powers did not begin their colonial activities directly; rather, they carried out trade policies to

⁴ <http://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/colonialism>. 02.01.2016

⁵ Kwame Nkrumah, *Neocolonialism*, International Publishers, New York, 1966, p.ix

reinforce their own countries. Hence, the native people were not allowed to trade with any other countries but themselves. In the 19th century this trade mentality changed, especially with the Britain's giving up of its mercantilism and trade restrictions, and the tenet of free trade were launched. Britain's colonial domination in Kenya, officially, continued till 1963.

The British began to enter Kenya first with the commercial activities of a private company alongside the Kenyan cost taking the British East India Company as an example of monopolizing a very profitable trade in India. After a while with the bankruptcy of that British Imperial East Africa company the British administration took over the responsibility of the district in 1895, and within the next ten years step by step seized power almost completely in Kenya. They set up vast plantations before and stimulated white immigrants to move to the fertile high areas where, mostly ethnic Gikuyus, were displaced from their traditional lands to carry out their insidious plans. Of course, the real owners of those lands were forced to work as slaves in their own lands.

Within the next sixty years the white European settlers prospered economically, became powerful politically; however, the social injustices led to an increasing hostility and conflict between the indigenous Kenyan people and settlers. Nearly one fifth of the most fertile land of Kenya were in the hold of Europeans whose population is no more than 3.000. The natives were employed as workers on those huge plantations or they were left to earn their living on the rest of the land that the settlers thought infertile. To crown it all, the indigenous people were regarded as inferior by the British rulers, their customs were scorned as primitive and sometimes they were punished for performing them. They were urged to carry passports to move from one place into another, confined to specific parts of the land, banned from official affairs, and forbidden to vote and possess fair judicial rights.

Thus beginning from 1600s till now Africa became the sphere from which the European capitalism fed and developed. To put it another way, Europe prospered at the cost of Africa's destruction. The colonialists intend first to get at a land that they did have an eye on and used it for their own benefit. Millions of people were exploited in their plantations to do their jobs. Their languages, customs and traditions were banned under the guise of civilizing them as being primitive. Through education

Europe were dictated as the center of civilization and this way made the native people feel themselves humiliated and hate their own cultures and people gradually. The colonialists control the countries directly as in Kenya, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and South Africa through settler colonies or indirectly as in Uganda and West Africa where the commerce was prevalent through colonial administrations. The effect of direct or indirect administration comes to the same thing: to set up an economic system that the colonialists can control. Profit and money constitute the ultimate goal of all colonialist governments.

The colonial government pursues a multi-faceted policy to consolidate its existence. In addition to the political and economic control, it attempts to dominate the cultural sphere: literature, expression facilities, beliefs and religion, education, language, songs, and poetry. By controlling people's cultural elements they expect to control their selves and world viewpoints. They aim to bring up a slave who thinks not just he is a slave but at the same time believed to be destined that he is a slave to serve his masters in all his life. Thus it is just love and gratitude he must feel against his master for his benevolence in paving the way for him to be a slave to a higher civilization. Unless a slave accepts that he is a slave a slave will not be a slave completely. Amilcar Cabral contends that their historical knowledge and experiences enlightens them that imposition of a rule on a community is fairly easy for a stranger. But history also enlightens them that a foreign rule cannot be sustained without the continuous and systematic domination of the native culture. A physical intervention into the vital part of the colonized people is just a temporary entrenchment.⁶

Undoubtedly, dominating a nation thoroughly is possible either by destroying it through arms or deactivating its culture. Culture is the lifeblood of a community and as long as any section of a populace maintains their cultural life it stays alive. Thus the colonial administrations cannot be sure about their condition. Amilcar Cabral's opinions on culture at this respect are instructive:

“Indeed, to dominate a nation by force of arms is, above all, to take up arms to destroy or at least, to neutralize and paralyse its culture. For as long as a section of the populace is able to have a cultural life, foreign domination cannot be sure of

⁶ Amilcar Cabral, “National Liberation and Culture.” *Transition*, No. 45 (1974): p.12-17.

its perpetuation. At any given moment, depending on internal and external factors which determine the evolution of the society in question, cultural opposition (indestructible) will take on new forms (political, economic, and military) with a view to posing a serious challenge to foreign domination.

The ideal situation for foreign rule, whether imperialist or not, would be one of these two alternatives: either to practically liquidate the entire population of the dominated country, thus eliminating all possibility of that kind of cultural resistance; or to succeed in imposing itself without adversely affecting the culture of the dominated people, that is to say, harmonizing the economic and political domination of these people with its cultural personality.”⁷

Primarily, the holocaust of the native people is hinted, and this makes the foreign domination meaningless in terms of its objectives. Secondly, it is unprecedented through history to be successful in imposing itself without affecting the dominated culture. In other words, it is impracticable to reconcile the political and economic control of people together with its cultural identity.

The colonialists try to create theories, which includes their racist views and expressions, to refrain from this choice. David Hume, in 1735, writes in his essay ‘Of National Characters’ as:

“I am apt to suspect the Negroes, and in general all the other species of men (for there are four or five different kinds) to be naturally inferior to the whites. There scarcely ever was a civilized nation of any other complexion than white, nor even any individual eminent either in action or speculation. No ingenious manufactures amongst them, no arts, no sciences. On the other hand, the most rude and barbarous of the whites such as the ancient GERMANS, the present TARTARS, have still something eminent about them, in their valour, form of government, or some other particular. Such a uniform and constant difference could not happen, in so many countries and ages, if nature had not made an original distinction between these breeds of men. Not to mention our colonies, there are NEGROE slaves dispersed all over Europe, of whom none ever discovered any symptoms of ingenuity; though low people, without education, will start up amongst us, and distinguish themselves in every profession. In JAMAICA, indeed, they talk of one negroe as

⁷ Ibid, p.12-17.

a man of parts and learning; but it is likely he is admired for slender accomplishments, like a parrot, wlt0 speaks a few words plainly.”⁸

A historical figure like Thomas Jefferson, the third president and one of the founding fathers of the United States of America, a country whose people fought against Britain asserting that all men were equal, could imply that :

“The opinion that they are inferior in the faculties of reason and imagination must be hazarded with great diffidence. To justify a general conclusion requires many observations, even where the subject may be submitted to the anatomical knife, to optical glasses, to analysis by fire or by solvents. To our reproach it must be said, that though for a century and a half we have had under our eyes the races of black and of red men, they have never yet been viewed by us as subjects of natural history. I advance it, therefore, as a suspicion only, that the blacks, whether originally a distinct race, or made distinct by time and circumstances, are inferior to the whites in the endowments both of body and mind.”⁹

Anthony Trollope suggested confidently that Africans imitated whites as a monkey did a man:

“He is idle, unambitious as to worldly position, sensual, and content with little He despises himself thoroughly and would probably starve for a month if he would appear as a white man for a day.!? ... I do not think that education has as yet done much for the black man in the Western world. He can always observe, and often read; but he can seldom reason. I do not mean to assert that he is absolutely without mental power, as the calf is. He does draw conclusions, but he carries them only a short way ...”¹⁰

As for Hegel, he suggests that it is difficult to understand the African character because their appearance is not in harmony with humanity universally. The distinguishing aspect of Negro’s social life is their unconscious condition about any basic objective entity.

⁸ David Hume, *Political Essays*, *Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought*, Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 1994, p.86.

⁹ Eric Williams, *History of the People of Trinidad and Tobago*, New York, Frederick A. Praeger Publisher, 1962, p. 30.

¹⁰ Williams, *Ibid*, p.31.

“The Negro, as already observed, exhibits the natural man in his completely wild and untamed state. We must lay aside all thought of reverence and morality — all that we call feeling — if we would rightly comprehend him; there is nothing harmonious with humanity to be found in this type of character. The copious and circumstantial accounts of Missionaries completely confirm this, and Mahomedanism appears to be the only thing which in any way brings the Negroes within the range of culture.”¹¹

Thus, Africa is not cited any longer and everybody leaves it. It is not part of the history of World. There has been no progress to be displayed. The only progress is in the northern part, an achievement of Asian or European World. Carthage presented a remarkable transitional period of civilization but it is also a Phoenician colony which belongs to Asia. A sophisticated civilization which presents the scope of human imagination was developed by Egypt which still fascinates people today with its pyramids. Yet, Africa had not a share in this, too. Hegel contends that what we properly understand by Africa, is the unhistorical, undeveloped Spirit, still involved in the conditions of mere nature, and which had to be presented here only as on the threshold of the World’s History.”¹²

Quoting similar opinions from some other racist Europeans is possible but those are enough to portray the state of cultural imposition on the colonized people through the employment of the best minds by the European administrators.

The Gikuyu formed the Kikuyu Central Association (KCA) in 1924 and started to organize protests against the occupation of their traditional lands by the British. During the next decade the KCA encouraged the peasants to ask for the abolition of the passport laws, and towards the end of 1930s organized progressively militant demonstrations to stand up to the sale of their farm animals forcibly to the British administration. The KCA was banned by the British colonial administration to suppress the protests in 1940. However, the Kenyan vast spectrum of ethnic groups cooperated with each other on founding the Kenya Africa Union (KAU) in 1944 as a result of increasing indignation against the colonialists to reclaim their rights taken

¹¹ George W.F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, Kitchener, Canada, Batoche Books, 2001, p.110-1.

¹² Hegel, *ibid*, p.117.

away from them inequitably. Jomo Kenyatta, the first elected leader of the KAU, demanded peacefully that Kenyans should gain broader political rights and caught the British colonialist's eyes on him in a short while.

Some factions in the KAU during the early 1950s began to express their views that the only way to free themselves from the oppression of British colonialism was to undertake an armed struggle. In the mean time, the rumours of a secret organization, namely Mau Mau, wandered around and the British were aware of the goings on. They found out that the faction was quickly gaining militants who vowed decisively to drive out the British colonialists and settlers from Kenya. In the first place the British administration prohibited the covert Mau Mau Association, but this only worked the native rebels up. British settlers got more distressed because of the murder of a white farmer in 1951 and soon after the Senior Chief Waruhiu's killing.

Because of the Mau Mau's acts taking place at that time, the then administration took some instant and effective precautions to suppress the uprising upon the demands of the settlers. The colonial government declared a state of emergency in October, 1952, and picked up the leaders of the Mau Mau and prosecuted. Although there was not enough evidence about his support for the Mau Mau violence, Jomo Kenyatta was sentenced to seven years hard labor by the colonial government.

The incarceration of the Mau Mau leaders simply increased cooperation among Kenyans and stiffened their resolve and wish for independence. The members of the Mau Mau organization carried out a guerilla warfare troubling and frightening both the British administration and their local supporters in the next four years. The colonial British government responded to the attacks by exacting suitable and even excessive retribution by consolidating its armed forces, founding restraining areas, imposing curfews, increasing controls, and hanged the Kenyans who were proved to carry a gun or swore the guerilla oath of Mau Mau. As the last hideaway of the Mau Mau guerillas had been found in 1956, the state of emergency came to an end.

The Mau Mau uprising ended de facto but it accelerated the independence of Kenya with the ensuing events. The British colonial administration were criticized harshly for its policies and tactics within and outside the country while responding to the Mau Mau. The death toll after the war and the practices of colonial government

during the state of emergency enabled the Kenyans to see clearly that the British were responsible for the wrongdoings to a great extent (nearly 12.000 rebels and 600 British army members) and consequently a larger number of Kenyans came together to request for the end of the British colonial administration. The British acknowledged the request and let the Kenyans vote for a new parliament. The Kenya African National Union (KANU), Jomo Kenyatta's party, won the election and came into power; however, since its leader was in jail they declined to inaugurate as long as he was released. At last Kenyatta was released after six months, and became the first president of Kenya in the first elections held after Kenya achieved its independence formally in December 12, 1963.

Kenyan people were hopeful and enthusiastic about the future after a long colonial administration. The positive atmosphere was spoiled by some new matters. In the first months of the independence Kenya waged a war with Somalia, the eastern neighbouring country, because of a border conflict. The new government endeavored to spread the schooling into more people of rural districts and to reallocated some parts of the land and workplaces that had been possessed by the colonialists, their local supporters and east Indians to the Kenyans who struggled for independence. However, most of the Kenyans started to think to an increasing extent that the yield of the independence was not an advantage and improvement in their lives except for the new group of administrators who came to power after the British colonialists. The new administration also tackled the problem of setting up a national unity out of a too many disintegrated social and tribal communities.

Kenyan people struggled to get rid of the tyrannies of the British colonial government for a long time and became independent finally, yet after independence they faced with a native dictator who did not serve his own people but the Europeans, and looked out for their and his own benefits. The wealth and power was at their disposal and in 1969 Kenyatta abolished the Kenya People's Union, a dissident faction established in 1966, pretending that their administrators involved in anti-government acts. Mr. Ngugi's arrest in 1977 also showed clearly the Kenyatta government's concern of opposition. Kenyatta's successor was Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi, the then vice president, and following his death he took over the job. He declared illegal establishing any opposition parties against the KANU. Although the multiparty system

founded again after mass protests in 1991, Moi employed his power to be elected again for a new five year term from 1992 to 1997. The Moi administration has been seriously condemned for its human rights violations, especially against the dissident intellectuals and parties.

1.2 Racism

Racism is an effective and also detrimental ideological vehicle employed by imperialism currently. It subjugates people mentally and spiritually. It functions wrapped up under the guise of religion, arts, values, feelings, media, and culture. It is implied to protect the whole order of exploitation of the masses by a small elite group in a single state and in the world. Ngugi argues that racism is a deliberate doctrine of imperialism and it has some vital aspects. First of all it conceals the actual connection of the prosperity of upper classes and destitution of the masses in a capitalist country and the connection of haves of the West and have-nots within the countries in Africa, Asia, and South America.

In a certain country, racism is part of the whole scheme that masks the genuine reality of the production acquired through the sweat of the masses and the wealth of an elite group disposes. The fact is corrupted by means of mental manipulations so as to display that it is not the labour of the masses but the wealth of an elite group that creates the property of the country. For this reason it is a necessity for the workers to be grateful to the so-called elite class for employing them and in turn, giving their salary.

The capital is generally in the hands of whites and if there is a different segment, namely black or any other recognizable racial or foreign segment, it is anticipated to show gratitude and even submissiveness. The proponents of capital address the masses and write that the source of happiness and wealth are the white owners of the capital and showing gratitude deferentially is inevitable. 'White' also symbolizes the 'whiteness' of capital while 'black' symbolizes 'blackness' of the labour. This is formulated in time as the blacks should be grateful to whites. Thus the production of the black workers has been obscured by means of those racist expressions. Racism masks the reality that the main source of the wealth of Europe

and America is Africa, Asia, and South America. That is to say, it is this wealth that causes the poverty of the people in the Third World countries. There are lots of evidence throughout the history. The slave trade and labour, also colonial labour, are the real source of the wealth of the Western Europe and North America. Through the neocolonial administrations this order is continuing under the guise of mutual interest and partnership. The interests of a small elite class who lives like Europeans are valued above the interests of the whole. The same racist justification is also the case for the international context. Africa and Asia should be grateful to the West. Without white capital African and Asian labour are of no use. If the racist system once recognized the neocolonial upper classes in Africa and Asia act however they wish including killing their own people, repress and threaten the masses when confronts resistance in order to create a stable atmosphere for the Western finance. Black gratefulness to white goodness develops into a principle and an anticipated foundation of relations has been established among nations between the West and the other countries. Neo-colonial administrations help the West advertently continue their system of exploitation along with the slavery and colonialism.

Racism veils the true link of labour and capital as well as the link that forces capital to cofound a partnership with finance but the revelation of the reciprocal relationships between labour force under the same national and international industrial and financial companies is more important. In this way the labour is forced to see its real place among racial, religious, and national capital.

In a country if a certain group of individuals having the same religious and racial ties are given a privileged status and also job guarantee and security, high pay, opportunities of promotion and housing support, this means that these are provided at the expense of the poverty of the rest of the community and such a condition is a strong indicator of injustice and inequality of opportunity among people. The financing of the so-called privileged status of those people is not ensured from the general income but from the salaries of the poor workers. Because of that discrimination a number of approaches appeared and thus a system of beliefs mirroring the racial feature of the others came into existence. Reciprocal doubts among the people appear, continue and might become a habit. The workmen begin to protect their rights for job assurance against others. They no longer tolerate the demands of some others for unity, since

such a unity might endanger their apparently secure jobs, and this is the case especially at the times of difficulty. This separation among the workmen of differing racial sections became a policy in South Africa in the second half of the twentieth century. The bribe and take policy leads to 'divide and rule' strategies exercised against the working people of a certain country.

However, those strategies of divide and rule and bribe and take are at work internationally. Fundamentally the workers in general often confronts the same companies whose owners are the same. For instance, the companies in Paris, London, Bonn, Tokyo, and Newyork and in Nairobi, Lagos, Manila, Cairo, Seoul, Johannesburg, and Cairo are managed from the same centre, that is, they are the branches of the same company. The same is a fact in commercial and industrial companies. Thus, the companies that employ the labourers in South Africa, the Philippines, South Korea, Kenya, Chile, El Salvador, and Brazil and in North America, Western Europe and Japan were the same ones. While concealing the bonds that bind workers, racism deepens the rifts through securing discrimination in the payments provided for worldwide labour according to race. The huge division between the West and other part of the world is shaped in terms of race. The resources obtained from the African, South American and Asian countries are transferred into North America, Europe and Japan and contribute to raise the life standards of the West. The workers in the West, namely, Europe, North America and Japan mostly, constitute an elite labour class in the international context as compared to the workers in the Third World. There is not an internationalist confrontation between capital and labour. Racism and partly religion and nationalism act in the same direction carrying out the divide and rule policies both on the global and national scale.

The third feature of racism is political domination. The Apartheid (aparthood) system was obvious in South Africa and continued from 1948 till 1994. The white minority can rule the majority of people. This can be achieved only by means of the divide and rule strategies through dividing the people and averting their care from the genuine motives of poverty and misery. A number of western countries go on controlling several countries in Africa, South America, and Asia. The workers in Europe and the Third World countries are natural partners but the Western upper classes are not anxious about their workers to keep them under control. However, the

West has its collaborators within the ruled countries. That is why they raised a neocolonial elite class infused with contempt and self-hatred through years of racist cultural engineering from those countries. In this way racism created an upper class who wishes to identify itself with the West.

Another feature of racism is exploitation. In fact, exploitation is a point of discussion not just for black people but also for white people. The main engagement for the West is just more profit and the allocation and control of the wealth produced by people. This is done both in national and international scale. Racism enables that exploitation through its doctrine and practice.

Oppression is the result of all those features. Even if racism is an ideology it is not perceived as an abstract concept. Its effects are felt clearly during the daily lives of the people. Racism paralyzes human awareness. Awful things could be done to a certain part of the people in a community without being noticed by the others. This can be seen in today's America, especially the White majority's indifference against the cruelty of police forces' against the Black people. In the international context the use of countries in the Third World to conduct experiments for new sorts of weapons and medicines or as places for dump of substances and fallout. German nation was stupefied by Hitler so as not to notice the offences against the people. European countries employed the same means to compel their people not to view the wrongdoings against African countries at the time of slave trade and colonization of Africa. Organized racism influenced the public awareness through pervading social, educational, and political establishments of the West. It also affected individual relationships, values, attitudes, point of view, perception of self and others. Racist principles develop into the norm naively transferred into the family and into other social groups. The history of racism is old and widespread and most people view the West as the source of wrongdoings. Racism has been the partner of slavery, colonialism, and currently, neocolonialism.

Racism is a concrete, economic, cultural, psychological, political truth. To struggle with and overcome the racism it is necessary to enable the victims of racism culturally, economically, politically, and psychologically. Otherwise, the current threat continues to threaten people. Racism is a kind of war waged against the people through

other means. But if it does not succeed in subjugating the masses, then the conventional weapons can be used to get result. The elite neocolonial minority classes and countries are relentless to carry on and preserve their status quo of inequality within communities employing every vehicle at their hands. The economic interests of the West are more important than the economic and social status of the poor Third World countries. Racism has been one of the effective causes of most wars in Europe from 17th century to the end of 18th century. The slave trade was the cause of almost all the wars fought among the European countries, the Britain, France, and Spain. But the source of racism is not Nazi Germany. The Black People killed in the colonies of European countries and in North America are instances of racist hate.

Racist intellectuals and theoreticians justified the deliberate slaughter of people through their works. Hegel, Hume, Freud, and many other creator of the Western insight. The methods employed in the course of slave trade and colonialism are being used in Europe currently. It is often voiced that the working people in the West will never be free as long as all the people in the colonies are not emancipated completely.

Racism was, is, and will be a threat in front of the world peace. The individuals ought not to adopt a system of peace and stability. Thus, each responsible individual ought to support the peace movements against colonialism and their neocolonial representatives in Third World countries. Again, the racial equality and equal citizenship should be supported in the West. The greedy appetite for developing more sophisticated arms should be canalized into a struggle to end the poverty, starvation, and homelessness. The real struggle is the one which helps us act in the right direction and upright against humanity. Ngugi maintains that “Peace is impossible in a world dominated by imperialism. Peace is impossible in a world guided by the ideology and practice of racism. Hence the struggle for peace in the world must be a concerted struggle against racism and imperialism.”¹³

1.3 The Role of Church on Culture and Politics

Ngugi is a conscientious intellectual while expressing his views about the social issues, especially about the colonialists, the church, and their politics. He is a

¹³ Ngugi wa Thiong’o, *Moving the Centre*, EAEP, Nairobi 1993, p.143.

non-believer, but like anybody when he writes about social realities the church gets its share as well. He is a man of literature, a writer. Sometimes he is called a religious writer. He writes about the society and the individuals:

“I am interested in their hidden lives; their fears and hopes, their loves and hates, and how the very tension in their hearts affects their daily contact with other men: how, in other words, the emotional stream of the man within interacts with the social reality.”¹⁴

According to Ngugi everybody is free in their beliefs and this is a personal matter and related with their inner lives. He respects religious faith but at the same time wishes to share his fears and hopes. However, there are some other reasons. Since he is from Kenya, he, like others, cannot free himself from the sphere of influence of the church. It exists in every sphere of the society as a, so to speak, weapon of colonialism to get the native people to obey the colonialists through dominating their mind. Kenya has underwent certain hard times throughout her history, possibly harder times than the other parts of Africa, due to the effect of the paradox exists naturally within colonialism and its partner, the church. The term ‘paradox’ is used to indicate that although Christianity is authentically imposes love and equality between men, it was a fundamental partner of colonialism within Kenya which was established on the basis of social inequality and antagonism between the natives and the settlers and the later suppression of the black people by the whites.

With the advent of the Christianity the social structure began to be disintegrated. The tribal set-up, social norms and values by which people maintain their life were scorned and regarded as primitive. This was seen particularly in the central city where the Church of Scotland, an extremely devout puritan sect, was highly effective. The church regards itself equal to the European civilization and could not isolate the Christian doctrine from the European traditions and values. It did not matter if you believe in Christ and a devout Christian, and believe in equality between people of different races; the scale of your salvation is directly proportional with your degree of adopting the European way of life rather than Christian love and charity: if

¹⁴ Thiong’o, *ibid*, p.31

you behaved as Europeans did, if you reflected the good manners of Europeans, liked their songs, tunes, and hymns, and certainly if you denied your authentic customs, for instance the circumcision of your daughter.

So if the Kenyan accepts the doctrine of the Christian church he will have to abandon his customs completely. It implies the denial of the principles and traditions holding us together. It implies approving, so to speak, a corrupt European middle-class lifestyle. The Christian missionaries had considered the native rituals and customs as primitive, denounced the African folklore and dances, figurines of their gods as they recalled satanic concepts. That is, the African convert rejected his past and roots.

So while on one hand the Kenyan people were dispossessed of their land by the colonialists, the Christian missionaries dominated their souls through their doctrines. It is as if the African soul and body were exchanged with the hope of being wealthy and civilized.

The Africans were poor, dispossessed of their lands and worked as labourers in their own fields. They needed to be educated in a proper way, but the education, too, was employed at first to allow the converts to read the Bible in order that they could achieve certain ordinary tasks to support the missionaries. Afterwards when education became a step for a good life and provided them with better jobs and money and contributed positively to their standard of living, though apparently a European lifestyle, the Kenyan's bonds with his past, roots, and customs almost disappeared. The problems between the Kenyan people and the church, the later building of independent Churches in Africa, the religious features of the Land and the Freedom Army (Mau Mau), were consequences of the culture conflict directly caused by the missionaries. The independent churches throughout the Kenya attempted to set up a different style of pray and worship and develop an education in harmony with people's expectations. Also, our traditional approach to God and the universe were integrated. They intended to found a home-like place.

The Church today in Kenya was built by the missionaries who are dauntless co-partners of the colonialists in Africa and other colonialist-dominated countries in the world. The missionaries are advance guards of the colonialists. Together with the settlers and colonial administrators they were agents of operation department of

European colonialism. The traders and settlers came after the missionaries' activities in Kenya and by extension, in Africa. Even the administrative authority were founded at the request and initiation of the missionaries. David Livingstone, Cecil Rhodes, Dr. Arthur, and Lord Delamere are important figures of settlers, traders, and missionary activities in Africa.

The native people were aware of the fact that the church and the settlers were partners; the name of one was the trader or the businessmen, one was settler, and the other one was the missionary, but their aim was one: to colonize the country and employ it for their own benefit. Cecil Rhodes' words expresses the colonialists' goal explicitly: "I contend that we are the first race in the world, and that the more of the world we inhabit the better it is for the human race If there be a God, I think that what he would like me to do is to paint as much of the map of Africa British red as possible."¹⁵ The Gikuyu maxim "Gutiri Muthungu na Mubia" (means the Europeans and the missionary priest are identical) exemplifies the situation, that is, the intimate bond between the missionaries and the Europeans, strikingly.

Some missionaries supported this, probably in good purpose and without being conscious of this. The British and French capitalists struggled to capture the districts they longed to possess under the guise of the fight between the Catholics and Protestants. The British traders, i.e. Lugard and Stanley, supported the Protestants. As a consequence, Africans came to be, so to speak, the plaything of Europeans trade ambition under the mask of Christianity and work for God's sake. It is overwhelming to find out the missionaries' holy zeal, to civilize and bring light to the African people, is just nominal. Their real job is to influence the people morally and emotionally and eventually dominate the country and its people. So, when the people woke up, their land was taken away, the damage is done.

The missionaries changed into landlords, began to keep cattle within the lands they stole from the natives, and employed Africans as slaves to work in their farms. So they became wealthy landowners thanks to the black people's labour. In this way, the black people's mind and soul were overwhelmed while the white settlers took hold

¹⁵ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, Harvard University Press, London 1999, p.13.

of the native people's national assets. There was a popular story among the indigenous people that Mubia wanted people to close their eyes during the prayer, and then by the time they opened their eyes, everything was gone away with the land. And later on the story continues, the Mubia advised them not to be sorry for those ephemeral things and they began to sing: "this world is not my home, I am only a pilgrim" (Thiino ti yakwa ndi nwiwitukiri)

Besides the conviction that being poor was sacred and they would obtain their award in heaven, the missionaries preached that they should obey the colonial administration. The expression, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's" is in fact ascribed to Jesus Christ in the synoptic gospels but it was held up to the people going to the church and school children. This expression summarizes the connection between Christianity and secular authority. The message it conveys is that whether the Jews' paying taxes to Caesar was lawful or not. It prompts various interpretations about the conditions under which it is convenient for the Christian to obey the worldly administrations. The moral corruptness of Caesar does not trouble anybody; the African Christians were expected to submit to him. Caesar symbolizes the colonial authority. Indeed the so-called condition was not consistent with the Christian faith but served their purposes and they flourished well under these conditions.

Hence, the church grew into the most effective obstacle and rival of the African fight for emancipation. The Church was against the Land and Freedom Army (Mau Mau) but not against the colonialists. The Mau Mau guerillas, mostly the people who escaped the cruelties of the colonialists, were blamed for being barbarous and anti-Christian. The practices of the colonial powers were not noticed while people were dispossessed of their lands, forced to work for low prices, deprived to exercise their legal rights, ill-treated by the settlers contrary to the principles the Church represented. Whereas the Church seemed to utter: the white Caesar cannot get out of line; white stands for good, while black is evil and immoral. Instead of struggling against the real anti-Christ power, the colonialists, the Church, together with the white colonialists hand in hand, struggled against the native people who fought for freedom of their people at the cost of their lives.

Indeed Christ had supported and helped the Jewish people in their righteous struggle against the authorities, i.e. the Pharisees, the then elite class, and the Roman colonialists. The Roman administrators crucified him under all circumstances. Someone who thinks and acts rightfully could suggest that if Christ had lived in Kenya during the Emergency years, the British colonialists would have crucified him as a Mau Mau guerilla.

The Church at the time of the Emergency expressed its opinions frankly and dauntlessly against the people of Kenya struggling for regaining their land but kept silent against the British colonialists' oppressive practices. The Black people were faced with a colour phenomenon and intolerance and it was just sermon about the heaven and the life beyond by the church. Also, the conservative thoughts of a few missionaries has distressed the church rulers in Africa. Their point of view is that the religious life, like a hermit, should be reserved from the daily concerns of the masses to control the national economy more effectively.

Ngugi highlighted the issues of the colonial religious tradition because if the Church is to imply anything then it should support meaningfully the struggle of the people of Kenya and Africa. It should accommodate itself to a new system under which it became a righteous and authentic anchor within the ongoing fight of the people in Africa today. However, the individual who the colonialists wish to see is *Joshua* in *The River Between*.

“For the whole of that year things had gone well with Joshua. People at Kameno were becoming restless and believed that it was Joshua who was responsible for the white men who these days often came to the hills. ... In his last visit, one of the white men had announced that people in these regions would begin paying taxes to a government in Nairobi. People shrugged their shoulders, not knowing what a tax was. Nevertheless, they blamed Joshua for this interference.

Joshua did not mind this. He himself knew what a government was, having learnt about this from Livingstone. He knew it was his duty as a Christian to obey the Government, giving unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's. That was what he wanted every Christian to do. ... He prayed that the people should leave their ways and follow the ways of the white man.”¹⁶

¹⁶ Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *The River Between*, Heinemann Publishers Limited, Oxford 1965, pp.31-32.

Discussing the possible role of the church, we inevitably mention about the institutional existence of it in the past. The individuals are not subjects of question. The Church was always in cooperation with the status quo and never opposed to the exploitation of the people as in the example of the Catholic Church where people were inculcated about how to vote.

The Church has functioned as a body of legitimization for slavery side by side with the ruling elites of Europe since they needed slaves to do the jobs for the Europeans. Millions of people were transferred from their home countries into Europe, America, and various parts of the world and sold within the implicit knowledge and approval of the Church. During their journey the cruel practices of Europeans became the subjects of many literary works. Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* is a striking example of slave trade across the continents:

“Now and then a boat from the shore gave one a momentary contact with reality. It was paddled by black fellows. You could see from afar the white of their eyeballs glistening. They shouted, sang; their bodies streamed with perspiration; %they had faces like grotesque masks--these chaps; but they had bone, muscle, a wild vitality, an intense energy of movement, that was as natural and true as the surf along their coast. They wanted no excuse for being there. They were a great comfort to look at. For a time I would feel I belonged still to a world of straightforward facts; but the feeling would not last long. Something would turn up to scare it away. Once, I remember, we came upon a man-of-war anchored off the coast.”¹⁷

The individuals who were courageous enough to speak frankly against the wealthy settlers and the puppet regimes have been marginalized and thrown out of the church. Particularly in South Africa, except some courageous Christians like Father Huddleston, the Church supported Apartheid implicitly, and would denounce violence that aimed to topple that discriminatory, wicked, and white anti-Christ regime.

William Franklin Graham, alias Billy Graham, one of the important characters who was responsible for mass conversion of many people, has been a vital figure of Church in supporting and legitimizing the America's occupation of Vietnam. He did not denounce the mass killings of Vietnamese people when asked his opinions about

¹⁷ Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, Penguin Classics, London 1990, p.14.

the issue. Indeed, he was a counselor for the most American presidents, especially intimate of Lyndon Johnson, Dwight D. Eisenhower, and Richard Nixon. That is, he backed the occupation of Vietnam and tried to persuade the people that the operation, as it were, was the order of God.

In fact, the Church itself is being disturbed by some upheavals since it became outdated due to its constant cooperation with the ruling elites and wealthy barons. The churches, as corporate bodies, do not stand for the longings and faiths of people any longer. Hence, the mass of devoted and dependable believers are perplexed as their doctrine and practices are contradictory.

Is it possible for the Church to take a different stance in Africa and perhaps in the world against the members of other beliefs? As far as Ngugi is concerned, the church was the source of cultural alienation and today it should make an effort to ensure cultural integration.

“It must go back to the roots of the broken African civilization: it must examine the traditional African forms of marriage, traditional African forms of sacrifice. Why were these things meaningful and wholesome to the traditional African community? What was the secret of Mugo, of the rainmaker? What of the mountains, the moon, the trees, Mugumo for instance? What of the drums and dances and even ceremonial drinking and forms of oath-taking? Can the core of Christian faith find anchor in some of these symbols, or must it be for ever clothed in the joyless drab and dry European middle-class culture?”¹⁸

1.4 Ngugi wa Thiong’o: The Philosopher, Thinker, and Dissident

Ngugi wa Thiong'o is a professor in the field of English Literature at the University of California. In his terms, he was born into a large peasant family: father, four wives and about twenty eight children in Kenya in 1938.¹⁹ He had his primary school education at Kamandura, Manguu and Kinyogori ; later he went to the prominent Alliance High School, all these schools were in Kenya; after that he studied at Makerere University College, an overseas college of London University, Kampala,

¹⁸ Ngugi wa Thiong’o, *Homecoming*, Heinemann, London 1972, p.35.

¹⁹ Ngugi wa Thiong’o, *Decolonizing the Mind*, Zimbabwe PH, Zimbabwe 1981, p.10.

Uganda; and eventually he attended the University of Leeds in Britain. He receives ten Honorary doctorates from various universities. He is also an Honorary Member of American Academy of Letters and a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Ngugi is a sophisticated thinker, a journalist, a playwright, an editor, a novelist, a social activist, an essayist, and an academic. His homeland, Kenya, was a British settler colony in his birth and youth (1895-1962). As a young boy he witnessed the Independence War of Mau Mau Movement (1952-1963), the chief historical experience in the construction of modern Kenya and a pivotal issue among his previous works.²⁰

Ngugi became famous in intellectual circles through the performance of *The Black Hermit*, his first serious play, performed at the National Theatre in Kampala, Uganda, in 1962. The play celebrates the independence of Uganda. Ngugi was regarded as the mouthpiece of the African continent and after that play, *The Makererian*, the Student newspaper, gave a headline as “Ngugi Speaks for the Continent” in one of the assessments of the performance by Professor Trevor Whittock. Within an extremely prolific literary era, Ngugi wrote extra eight short stories, two novels, two one act plays, and a regular column for the Sunday Nation entitled *As I See It. Weep not Child*, one of the narratives, was critically acclaimed after its publication in 1964; *the River Between*, the second novel, followed it (1965). *A Grain of Wheat*, (1967) his third novel, became a critical point in the intellectual and philosophical direction of his literary career. Different perspectives and multi-narrative sentences revealing at various moments and places took the place of the direct temporary revealing of the story from a sole perspective. The individual gives way to the collective as the focus of history.²¹

Ngugi began to work as a lecturer at the department of English Literature at the University of Nairobi in 1967. He gave lectures there until 1977 during his service, at the same time, as an Associate in Creative writing at Makerere (1969-1970), and as

²⁰ <http://www.ngugiwathiongo.com/bio/bio-home.htm> Accessed 01012015

²¹ *Ibid*, Accessed 01012015.

Visiting Associate Professor of English and African Studies at Northwestern University (1970-1971).²²

While he is working in Nairobi, Ngugi studied on the matters of the English departments within Africa. He was supporting the transformation of English Literature into merely Literature which aims to display world literature focusing on the third world and African literatures. In cooperation with Taban Lo Liyong from Uganda and Awuor Anyumba from Kenya, he wrote the argumentative manifesto, *On the Abolition of the English Department*. The declaration prompted a multinational and international argument and applications that later constituted a basis for theories of postcolonialism. “If there is need for a 'study of the historic continuity of a single culture', why can't this be African? Why can't African literature be at the centre so that we can view other cultures in relationship to it?”²³ they questioned. This was not a question that one could answer comfortably. It is not just a proposal for changing the English Department's name. It aimed to radically alter the centre of language and literature from the European, principally English, perspective so as to concentrate again on East African Literatures and Languages and radiate outwards regarding this new centre. In this way, a search begins in “understanding ourselves.”²⁴

The three writer asserted that if the centre of Literature and Language studies went on to pursue British canon, then Africa would possibly lose its legacy and change into an extension of the West. The Declaration is in *Homecoming*, his first collection of literary essays, published in 1969. *Writers in Politics* (1981-1997), *Decolonising the Mind* (1986), *Moving the Center* (1994), and *Penpoints, Gunpoints and Dreams* (1998) followed the *Homecoming*.

In 1977, Ngugi experienced critical events which compelled drastic opportunities in his career and life. *Petals of Blood*, during the ten years' time his first narrative, was printed that year in July. The narrative portrays a tough and relentless image of social life in Kenya after independence. It was still well received unequivocally within Kenya and outside world.

²² Ibid, Accessed 01012015.

²³ Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Homecoming*, Heinemann, London 1972, p.146.

²⁴ Thiong'o, *ibid*, p.146.

“This bomb shell” was the depiction of *The Kenya Weekly Review* and the expression was that every variety and aspect that power could assume was the Sunday Times of London. In the same year Ngugi wrote a debatable play with Ngugi wa Mirii, namely *Ngaahika Ndeenda (I Will Marry When I Want)*, and the play was performed at the open air theatre in Kamirithu Educational and Cultural Center, Limuru, in which workers and peasants from the villages acted commonly. In the play the injustices and inequalities within the society in Kenya in general were harshly criticized. The play was regarded as clearly supporting the cause of typical Kenyan people, and dedicated itself to contact with them through their mother tongue. This caused Ngugi’s arrest and imprisonment without any charge in 1977, clearly for the political reasons. He told his memoirs in his work, *Detained: A Writer’s Prison Diary (1982)*. Ngugi stayed at Kamiti Maximum Prison during his coercive imprisonment and it was there he made up his mind to give up using English as a means of fictional writing and devoted himself to use Gikuyu effectively in his works. Following his decision he employed toilet papers and his native language to write his novel, *Caitani Mutharabaini (1981)*. The translated version of the novel, *Devil on the Cross*, was published in 1982.

Following his declaration of *Prisoner of Conscience* by the Amnesty International an international campaign held by independent authorities caused him to be released after a year imprisonment in December, 1978. However, he could not resume his job and any other job opportunity at any school or college owing to the obstructions of the Moi Dictatorship. He began to write again and went on carrying out his theatrical activities. In doing so, he kept on disturbing the Moi Dictatorship as a dissident voice. When he stays in Britain to introduce his novel *Devil on the Cross*, he discovered that the Moi dictatorship plotted to get rid of him during his homecoming. So, he was compelled to go to exile initially in Britain (1982 –1989), and later into America (1989-2002). Meanwhile, the Moi despotic regime followed him and tried to bar him from London and the other countries he journeyed. In 1986, an assassination attempt was prevented by the Zimbabwean security forces. The following narrative, written in G ikuyu, was printed in the same year. The dictator Moi took it personally considering that the narrative’s protagonist was an authentic living person and issued a warrant of arrest. But just as he found out that the character was unreal, he had pulled the books from the market accompanied by the undercover police. Thus,

until 1996 *Matigari* was illegal and could not be found in Bookshops throughout Kenya. The despotic regime also got whole works of Ngugi discarded from all educational foundations.

During his diaspora, Ngugi struggled in cooperation with the Committee in London organizing activities aiming at the freedom of political prisoners in Kenya between 1982 and 1998. The cause of democracy, freedom of speech, and basic human rights were supported by the committee. Meanwhile, he worked at Byreuth University and for the Borough of Islington, London as a visiting professor (1984-1985) and studied film at Stockholm Dramatiska Institute, Sweden (1986). After that in 1988, Ngugi came to be Visiting Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Yale University (1989-1992) while holding the position of Visiting Eminent Professor of English and African Literature New Hampshire, Smith, Amherst, Mount Holyoke, and East Massachusetts Colleges (Fall 1991). At that time, he went to New York University (1992-2002) as the Professor of Comparative Literature and Performance Studies as well as keeping the position of the Erich Maria Remarque Professor of languages. Later, he went to the University of California, Irvine for his current job. He was on exile for twenty years during the Moi dictatorship between 1982-2002. Just as he went back to Kenya with his wife, Njeeri, in 2004, four armed men tried to kill them and they fortunately escaped.

Ngugi has kept on writing creatively and the novel *Wizard of the Crow, Murogi wa Kagogo* in Gikuyu, was published in 2006. The novel has been characterized as his crowning achievement. Ngugi's works have been the subject matter of books, dissertations, activities, and guides for struggles to construct a national culture specific to the native societies far from the effects of colonial administrations. Beside his academic posts, he works as an editor for various journals to voice the people's claims in a platform. He has edited literary journals *Penpoint*, *Zuka*, and *Mutiiri* from 1963 to now at various times. He has at the same time carried on to give conferences at many universities as a prominent intellectual.

CHAPTER 2: REVIVAL OF NATIONAL CULTURE

In general terms, Culture is the common lifestyle habits of a whole community created by its members collectively while maintaining their lives through time. It consists of fine arts, science, all the foundations, all customs, beliefs, and religions or belief systems. There has been shaped a system of beliefs, values and lifestyle by people in time that becomes the distinguishing feature of a society. The material and spiritual values produced by the people through the natural and creative course of history has generated a unique “ethos”. The so-called values are reflected through various cultural and social activities, such as fine arts, musical and theatrical performances, folklore, songs, dances, architecture, religious rituals, and so on. In the course of time, those cultural and religious activities have become an integral part of world culture symbolically. The arguments concerning the culture focuses on those activities; however, we must not forget that they are emanated from a societies’ customs and going to change while that customs are transformed, modified, or flourished throughout the ages. Today, what we must do is to seek to discern how the new varieties of art and reformation of the old can contribute to give expression to the new modes of life.

Ngugi suggests that the cultural history of Africa should be considered in three broad stages. Africa before colonialism, Africa under colonial administration, and Africa today trying to discover its authentic identity.²⁵ To carry out this task is possible through displaying how the inner and outer forces altered Africa’s perspective and requirements during its different phases of development. There were various ethnic groups in the past, each had different and coherent cultures. In this day and age, those ethnic varieties endeavors to create a nation which includes a broader zone and political relation. For this reason, we should analyse the function of culture today which was obscured by the frequently incompatible appeals of the nation, the tribe, and even the Third World.²⁶

We generally mention the African culture as an unchanging notion of which we can save from the ruins of the past and reflected onto a modern stage to be viewed

²⁵ Ngugi wa Thiong’o, *Homecoming*, Heinemann, London 1972, p.4.

²⁶ *Ibid*, p.4.

by Africa's children, who almost forgot their past through the realm of foreign dominated nation and needed their forefathers' guidance. Living cultures are dynamic. Every culture is modified in the course of time with the effects of social, economical, and cultural events. Human beings attempt to dominate the physical environment and during that process they create a social one. Any influence in their physical environment or more precisely in the nature of their struggle is going to transform the structure of society and the establishment and, by extension, in their lifestyle and view of life. The new lifestyle and thinking influences the established structure and general environment accordingly. If the economy of a society and their housing conditions undergo deep changes by way of trade and migration, the people have to take the necessary steps to adapt themselves to the new conditions. Their principles and social values are probably modified throughout the time. It is clearly known that the trade with foreign countries unavoidably affects the indigenous cultures and their technologies both positively and negatively. In contrast with the views and deliberate distortions of imperialist Europeans, there has been a constant change in Africa's history. Lots of empires were founded and demolished at the continent. Hence, the conventional structure keeps changing through the time. Different cultures and people in Africa share common values socially, economically, historically, and geographically and this creates the genuine African civilization.

Ngugi asserts that "in the story of Prospero and Caliban Shakespeare had dramatized the practice and psychology of colonization years before it became a global phenomenon."²⁷ :

CALIBAN: ...When thou cam'st first,
Thou strok'st me, and made much of me; wouldst give me
Water with berries in't; and teach me how
To name the bigger light, and how the less,
That burn by day and night; and then I loved thee
And shew'd thee all the qualities o' th' isle,
And fresh springs, brine-pits, barren place and fertile.
Cursed be I that did so! - All the charms
Of Sycorax - toads, beetles, bats, light on you!

²⁷ Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Homecoming*, Heinemann, London 1972, p.7.

For I am all the subjects that you have,
 Which first was mine own king; and here you sty me
 In this hard rock, whiles you do keep from me
 The rest o' th' island.
 PROSPERO: Thou most lying slave,
 Whom stripes may move, not kindness! I have used thee
 (Filth as thou art) with humane care; and *lodged thee*
In mine own cell till thou didst seek to violate
The honour of my child ...
 I pitied thee,
 Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour
 One thing or other: when thou didst not, savage,
 Know thine own meaning, but wouldst gabble like
 A thing most brutish, *I endow'd thy purposes*
With words that made them known: but thy vile race,
 Though thou didst learn, had that in't which good natures
 Could not abide to be with; therefore wast thou
 Deservedly confined into this rock, who hadst
 Deserved more than prison.²⁸

It should be underlined that Prospero confessed to his daughter that they cannot do without Caliban, because: “. . . he does make our fire, fetch in our wood; and serves in offices that profit us.!”

Of course there is a message for us in this play. Prospero, a foreigner on the island, behaves in a friendly manner against Caliban at first. But he masters the ways in the island in a short while. He thinks, or wants him think, that Caliban has not got an authentic past and culture. He has taught his language to Caliban and when he finds out that Prospero has taken possession of his properties, has established a one-man administration, and has enslaved Caliban. His earlier slave, Ariel, was released from her captivity into a new state. He will only be released from his captivity if he serves loyally to Prospero as a spy and subject.

The European colonialists were aware of the fact that the heritage and the past of the indigenous people presented a threat for their future plans of the country and its people. They foresaw a certain type of lifestyle for the native people in which they are

²⁸ Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, IDG Books, New York 2000, pp.47-48.

inferior against the Europeans and so they should “devote his military might, religious fervor, and his intellectual energy to denying that the African had true gods, had a culture, had a significant past.”²⁹ The preachers and mouthpieces of the colonialists, missionaries, condemned the local, uncivilized rituals, dances, cult figures, reacting to the implication of their demonic feelings. Some European intellectuals encouraged this hypocrisy.

Karen Blixen, for example, an aristocrat from Denmark, resided in Kenya for a long period and observed the indigenous people and animals nearly one and a half decade. Her authentic inferences:

“The natives of the land, the Kikuyu, Wakamba, Kavirondo and Masai, have got their old mysterious and simple cultural traditions, which seem to lose themselves in the darkness of very ancient days. We ourselves have carried European light to the country quite lately, but we have had the means to spread and establish it quickly.”³⁰

Also she commented on the intellectual capability of the African people:

“The dark nations of Africa, strikingly precocious as young children, seemed to come to a standstill in their mental growth at different ages. The Kikuyu, Kavirondo and Wakamba, the people who worked for me on the farm, in early childhood were far ahead of white children of the same age, but they stopped quite suddenly at a stage corresponding to that of a European child of nine. The Somali had got further and had all the mentality of boys of our race at the age of 13 to 17.”³¹

It is really too interesting for an intellectual to question the “intellectual capacity” of people without any scientific findings. In fact no such thing can be possible as we know but this has been done seriously and believed to be so in all spheres of life as Kipling imposed the task on White people to civilized the Black people and saw it as *The White Men’s Burden* :

“Take up the White Man’s burden—
Send forth the best ye breed—
Go send your sons to exile

²⁹ Ngugi wa Thiong’o, *Homecoming*, Heinemann, London 1972, p.9.

³⁰ Isak Dinesen, *Shadows on the Grass*, John Murray, London 1960, p.13.(Qtd in Homecoming,p.9).

³¹ Ibid, p.15. (Qtd in Homecoming, p.9).

To serve your captives' need
To wait in heavy harness
On fluttered folk and wild—
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,
Half devil and half child”³²

Such points of view are common among Europeans and especially, Ngugi writes, “had rich intellectual ancestry in Hegel, with his Africa, a land of childhood, lying beyond the days of self-conscious history and enveloped in the dark mantle of the night.”³³

However, again like Prospero, the significant outcome was that the European abolished the substantial structure, and in an organized way suppressed the economic and political establishments where the African had constructed his customs and life. For instance, he introduced a leader, the focus of authority, within the egalitarian societies where there were no leaders before. On the other side, he abolished the foundation on which the principal authority had been based. So, the source of authority was not the people to whom he had responsibilities and expected loyalty and fidelity. Nevertheless, in both circumstances the establishments continue their existence only if they serve the colonialist’s purpose. That is, the institutions were tolerated on condition that they promoted the complete abuse of land in the settler colonies in the East and Central Africa, or the abuse of raw materials and bazaars within the colonies where trade was widespread. The new economical, political, educational, military, and religious system established by the colonialists to eliminate the indigenous people with the intent of controlling them at every step.

The colonialist administration aimed to create an elite class of people who adopted their lifestyle and outlook. Thus, they acted like their masters, prayed like them; they despised their own customs, disdained the primitive rites of their people. The others were dispossessed of their lands and maintained their life in houses having only rooms for a few in settler’s farms or in urban districts as lumberjack and drawers of water. The elite class break with the past and their origins. They scorned anything from their uncivilized background. The peasants and the poor deprived of their land

³² Rudyard Kipling, *The White Man’s Burden*, The United States & The Philippine Islands, 1899. Rudyard Kipling’s Verse, Definitive Edition, Garden City, New York, Doubleday, 1929. <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5478/> Accessed 26012016.

adhered to their customs and stayed nearby their land. Owing to its resilience of culture, Africa was able to resist to the damage and maltreatment to a certain extent. As Prospero discovered, it is impossible to dominate the human spirit by force completely. Mostly the workers in urban areas and peasants prayed to their ancestral gods to help them in their struggle with the enemy. The modern adaptations of traditional songs, rhythms, and dances are famous among the native people.(esp. among the Land and Freedom Army “Mau Mau” fighters)

Christians sang:

Young men arise
Jesus calls you to
Take up spears and shields and to
Throwaway your fears.
For what's the point of fear?
Go ye with bravery;
Led by Jesus
You'll be victorious.³⁴

The guerillas of Land and Freedom Army (Mau Mau) transformed the same song into a song of authentic political, perceptible physical liberty and fight for land. The struggle is in Kenya starting from today, not in heaven. The account will be settled here on earth. Thus they murmured:

Young men arise
Mbiii calls you to
Take up spears and shields
And don't delay.
Get out quickly
Come help one another
The white people are foreigners
And they are very strong
(i.e. well-armed).³⁵

³⁴ Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Writers in Politics*, Heinemann, London 1981, p.27.

³⁵ Ibid, p.28.

The elite class including the intellectuals and the middle class discovered that they were not accepted completely within the white society of colonialists. Ostracized by their fellows in the white society with racial prejudice, they were so to speak sent back into where they were belong to. They began to reclaim their old days, mostly in a state full of longing.

At the first World Conference of Negro Writers and Artists in Paris, 1956, Alioune Diop announced at the opening speech that the allegation of peoples without culture was a scandalous expression. It was the colonialists who were responsible for this deliberately made up myth and they would have all the necessary facilities to persuade the cultural and spiritual authorities to admit that people could maintain their life in a society without culture.

As he was aware of the fact that this “scandalous allegation” was in the mean time expressed in European fiction about Africa, the African writer attempted to respond through declaring in his books that Africa had an ancient civilization and culture as old as any. The negritude movement was principally a cultural occurrence but also had a political aspect. It was mostly admitted that the people who was deprived of their cultural and political freedom would discover that it was challenging to redesign a vision of its past and surely look to the future.

The awareness was widespread, sometimes unclear. Most African artists, intellectuals, and politicians believed resolutely that cultural freedom is the prerequisite for political freedom. And as they regard the culture just concerning folklore, dances, and drums they find it adequate if they stressed the necessity for the restoration of these elements. However, it is unsuitable to consider culture before politics. Economic and political freedom are indispensable prerequisites for cultural freedom to reveal the real potential of peoples’ creative soul and insight. It occurs when people actively engaged in removing a prohibitive social structure and founding a new one that they started to notice themselves. They feel themselves as if they were born again. One could find out the intimate relationship between the culture, as a style of life, and the social structure. What is meant with the social structure is the close relationship of the African with the land. The colonialists were conscious of this bond. Jomo Kenyatta underlines this respect in a striking way :

“It is all these different aspects of life together that make up a social culture. And it is the culture which he inherits that gives a man his human dignity as well as his material prosperity. It teaches him his mental and moral values and makes him feel it worth while to work and fight for liberty.”³⁶

Ngugi has highlighted that flattering of the African way of life went hand in hand with a deliberate destruction of the material base on which it was built.³⁷ But a culture is insignificant if it is considered independent from the structure of society on which it is developed. When the European colonialists entered Kenya as if they were merchants they dispossessed people of their land step by step mischievously. Considering the close relationship between the Gikuyu and the land they not only carry away their means of life but also the concrete sign that keeps family and tribe together. That is to say, the social, economic, and moral basis of Gikuyu life is undermined steadily. The colonialists assert that, of course for their self interest and negligently, they are in that country for the people's good, to civilize them, like Prospero to Caliban, to teach them how to deal with the things and work in a disciplined manner, and take the advantage of Europeans' progressive ideas. Yet, they did not persuade anybody but themselves; indeed they confused insult with injury.

The history of world is too old and long to belong to a single culture or nation. There is, I think, a common world culture to which almost every community contribute more or less throughout the history. Beginning from the 18th century it was the Europe who became the dominant power in the world. Taking the wealth, medicine, education, and cleanliness into account which allows people to participate in world affairs there are undoubtedly progressive thoughts among the Europeans. However, the Europeans who settled in Africa have not been eager to share their heritage with the Africans, and employed their security forces as the only way to “civilize” them. They see themselves as superior to the native people and expresses that they prefer to work for the colonialists as it is more useful rather than for himself. Every alternative were tried to deprive him of his land and he was ensured that he would benefit from the situation. Following their land, the colonialists take charge of

³⁶ Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya, The Tribal Life of the Gikuyu*, Mercury Books, London 1961, pp.317-318.

³⁷ Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Homecoming*, Heinemann, London 1972, p. 11.

the government, joke about their religion, and overlook his basic understanding of morality and justice. All these are realized under the guise of progressive ideals and civilization.

As understood from “The Land and the Freedom Army”, the Kenyans’ fight against colonialism focused on the request to regain their lands taken away from them by the British colonialists in a humiliating manner. While requesting their own lands back some died and most of them continued to fight and did not give up. They appeared to discover a new energy. They declined the establishments belong to the colonialists and by extension, missionaries. They began to found their own institutions, that is, schools, churches, and so on. They resurrected the forgotten old songs and composed and tuned them again to fulfil the requirements of their fight. They composed and produced modern songs and dances with new rhythms to encourage the people. By way of the Land and Freedom Army (Mau Mau), they got together and organized in the villages and towns and gained a new vision which went beyond the borders of their limited environment of tribal life.

At present, most of the African countries began to set to work for establishing a distinguishing national culture after gaining their independence again. Also, institutions have been established to support it. Still, efforts have been insufficient to transform the commitment of people into action. This is relatively caused by the faulty stance against culture. Some people, trustworthy people of course, mistake culture for impertinent conventionalism. We are conscious of the fact that the traditional social structure and culture is too intact into modern Africa to be removed in a short while. The culture gains meaning as long as it is composed of the immediate aspirations of the “peasantry”, and of the urban workers whose population grow rapidly nowadays. However, some other people still consider that the colonial, economic, and the other social foundations could be preserved and African culture might be transferred to it. Nevertheless, it has been observed that colonial establishments could just create a colonial outlook. What matters for us is that most of the African middle classes’ attitude through aiding to suppress the progressive requests of the mass of the peasants and urban workers and their negotiations for signing a treaty of mutual confidence with the colonialists. During the struggle for independence, some African intellectuals just wished to have the banned things. They viewed the fight with regard to their present

requirements, raised by the social status they had acquired under the colonial administration after all. Nevertheless, their attainment was discouraged through racism intrinsic to the system. Their aspiration is to dress up in the same way, receive the same wages, and reside in the same type of houses like their fellows of equal characteristics.

Following the independence, they were free from racial discriminations absolutely any longer and the barriers were removed for the ambitious neocolonists to live like the former conquerors. Body creams for lightening their skins, hair straighteners, inappropriate living room gatherings, extravagant spendings on luxury cars, villas became common through the daily life. They enjoy themselves with their glasses of whisky and soda, touching their wigs in case they drop. A group of these people will sing some old songs during the cocktail parties. In a sense, they acclaim their legendary history through singing songs to preserve their culture on their behalf. Setting up a genuine national culture, we at first determine the state of ourselves. It comes to mean that we should analyse our social and economic structures thoroughly and try to find out whether they are appropriate to answer the needs and also to energize the people. Our political and economic life should be naturalized totally and we must break our connection with the capitalism since its imperialistic phases, colonialism and neocolonialism, has damaged Africa heavily and humiliated our self completely.

Capitalism serves just the interests of colonialists and create an anti-human culture. In the past the means of economic life and production vehicles were shared communally and so African culture mostly had common features. If an ideal or a vision is not organized institutionally and is not placed on concrete economic foundations it does not make any sense and corresponds to nothing. This awareness constitutes the basis of Arusha declaration in Tanzania. This manifesto indicates that Tanzanians are conscious of the fact that although most of the countries in Africa are independent apparently in name, they are still semi-colonies in the background. Kenyans in particular and Africans in general have faced with a great deal of cruelty, abuse, and disgrace in the last century. This is caused by the disconnection and weakness of people, maybe their goodwill. They could not think that the Westerners coming to their country with a Bible in their hands were to become so cruel with their ill intentions and try to capture their lands stealthily. So it is time to get rid of them and to end that

cruelty, slavery in their homeland, and humiliation. The people develop gradually their culture by way of practical efforts, by way of creating their vehicles of living. The cultural texture and values developed becomes steady depending on the collective labour of the people. The peasants and workers strive to establish a new and modern national culture in their countries.

2.1 Resistance to Colonialism (The Land and the Freedom Army)

The home country of any individual, particularly if he or she is abroad, signifies much in his imagination. Ngugi describes Kenya as the land of hills and valleys, sunshine and rain; dry sand in the north and snow on the mountains; black and white races and a multiplicity of tribes.³⁸ The Agikuyu, members of the Gikuyu tribe, supposed that Mount Kenya, Kirinyaga, is the home of their Lord. Mount Kenya, therefore, is sacred for them. Nevertheless, the differences that constitutes the merit and appeal of the land also constitutes the foundation of conflicts. Differences and disagreements epitomize the state in Kenya. When Jomo Kenyatta described Kenya as a “land of conflicts” he was conscious of this fact years ago. There are three main racial groups in Kenya. African, Asian, and European people live in Africa. There has been a conflict among those, particularly between Africans and Europeans as a result of Europeans’ colonial acts. The Africans struggled to reach a better state in their home country. The Asian strived to acquire an equal political status with the European. Of course, the European is always in search of getting the biggest share of the cake, that is, they preserve and sustain their status both economically and politically over the others.

The Asian people struggled to get the right of equal representation within the Legislative Council until 1920. Being a British subject, he asserted that he shared the same position of immigrancy as the European. Furthermore, he asserted that his contribution to the economic and social progress of the country was much more than the others. So, he thought that it was his right to be politically equal. However, the Asian was defeated in the struggle and afterwards the African began to emerge on the

³⁸ Ngugi wa Thiong’o, *Homecoming*, Heinemann, London 1972, p. 22.

stage. They began to set up political parties to organize themselves and their leaders were selected from the people educated at the mission schools. It is essential to make it clear that Africans' sufferings did not just start in 1920, they had all the time been there in Africa before. Nevertheless, as they did not know the whites' languages they showed their objections, protest, and discontent through intermittent violent actions and armed attacks. When people began to learn the language of whites they showed their reactions a bit louder. So, the African got involved the struggle as well. From then on there were three sides in the fight. The Asian and the African realized that truth. This is a chance for the African to search for the legal and true vehicles of righting the situation. Africans were always peaceful and they settled the problems through discussion and compromise. However, their efforts and rights were renounced by the colonialists. The political parties were not allowed to function properly. The colonial administration ignored their situation and so what they gave voice to. The situation got worse year by year and in the end the Mau Mau crisis began. It was a very painful event especially for the native people in which hundreds of thousands of people were killed and thousands of people were forced to live in concentration camps for years.

After the Lancaster House agreements the hopes of independence got increased. Most of the European and Asian people came to terms with each other for the freedom of Kenya to give the Africans chance of ruling themselves. However, there were conflicts because of the sharp divisions among the different populations. The European, Asian, and African people lived apart from each other and there were no cultural contact, no meeting, no friendship, and no neighbourship with each other, so it was impossible to expect them to understand each other.

The division of the populations was the traditional "Divide and Rule" policy of the British. The people should live as strangers within the same district. They should live as separate populations without any contact with each other. Just a few brave people got beyond the borders to see what was happening on the other side. Each population had maintained their life on their own land.

The conflicts were even seen among the Africans themselves, particularly among the parties, KANU (Kenya African National Union) and KADU (Kenya African Democratic Union). Some administrators of KADU strangely sympathized

with the idea that each tribe should govern itself and so supported the division of Africa into tribal factions.

The idea of a nation, then, is not an authentic concept. The individuals are always called a European, an Asian, a Nandi, a Kikuyu, or a Luo. There is not a Kenyan national identity. Ngugi emphasized that this situation weakened their togetherness and creativity³⁹:

“To live on the level of race or tribe is to be less than whole. In order to live, a chick has to break the shell shutting it out from the light. Man too must break the shell and be free. Political freedom from foreign rule, essential as it is, is not the freedom. One freedom is essential. This is the freedom for man to develop into his full potential. He cannot do this as long as he is enslaved by certain shackles. Two of these are racism and tribalism. -To look from the tribe to a wider concept of human association is to be progressive. When this begins to happen, a Kenya nation will be born. It will be an association, not of different tribal entities, but of individuals, free to journey to those heights of which they are capable. Nationalism, by breaking some tribal shells, will be a help. But nationalism should not in turn become another shackle. Nor should it be the end. The end should be man ultimately freed from fear, suspicion and parochial attitudes: free to develop and realize his full creative potential.”⁴⁰

Kenya is in fact a vast country. The factors that causes the conflicts could be canalized to set up a powerful and steady community. Different races and tribes should be represented within a national unity. The merits and potential of different people have been employed to dominate the others politically in a community that consisted of various tribes and racial divisions. Those great characteristics must be adapted to establish and develop a national ideal.

Nevertheless, the end of tribalism and even racialism is inevitable in the long term. Tribalism and other parochial mentalities will certainly disappear particularly through the effect of rising African nationalism and commercial individualism. So, one could hope to see a better future for Kenya and its people in which there is no vertical rifts, no tribes, and other components that causes conflicts among the communities.

³⁹ Ngugi wa Thiong’o, *Homecoming*, Heinemann, London 1972, p. 23.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 23-24.

But another drawback in front of Kenya, as in the other African countries, is the separation of the elite class from the mass of the people in terms of wealth and lifestyle. Indeed this condition is not only specific to Kenya and so Africa but also widespread in the world. Division of the poor from the rich is a universal issue.

The rate of illiteracy is too high in the emerging countries and it is inevitable for the illiterate mass to expect the educated ones, the number of whom are very few, to guide and administer the society. So, the educated individuals have both economic and political power and they are in good condition economically compared to the poor. Some people fear that if they employ their political power to establish their economic status firmly. Such a situation is surely possible and again it is a universal issue not just confined to Kenya and Africa. Today almost in every country the gap between rich and poor is already too wide. The real problem is the risk of the educated class seizing the status held by the colonialists earlier. Such a situation could separate the newly formed nation. Those educated elite could easily dominate the culture besides the political and economic power. If a culture became the realm of the few educated elite then it is not a national culture. It is not a common culture any longer that carries characteristics of all components.

It is not easy to solve those rifts in the short run but it is up to the Kenyans in the first place to settle them. The Kenyan people should not give up but keep their own traditions and customs while adopting Western culture and their institutions, which some consider as the remedy for their troubles. There is a mutual service and contribution between the members of the society and the society itself within the African way of life. The individual development is completed exactly when he or she is doing any job for maintaining his life and the public as a whole. Everything in the society, i.e. food, wealth, and land, are means of maintaining its existence. Culture is the common property of all the members of the society. Every member, the rich or the poor, the intellectual or the ordinary, is free in all their actions, performances, and contributions. This is a decent principle for the upright African individual. Ngugi writes :

“I do not propose a solution to such a vast problem. I have said that the solution lies with the people of Kenya. One thing however is necessary in any attempt to eradicate these rifts. People must have that attitude of mind that is not only aware of the problems, but desires a solution. For Kenya a national culture embracing all can be developed. It is what earlier on I called a national ideal, for which in the past the different peoples have not looked. But if the people of Kenya can lift up their eyes unto the hills, and especially to Mt Kenya, and stretch their wings ready to fly to freedom and life, the shells will break. They will be free.

A dream? One has only to go to Kenya to know. All the people love her soil dearly. This is our common ground. Perhaps the soil, which in the traditional view was always seen as a source of creative life and fertility, will unite them. In this lies the hope of Kenya.”⁴¹

2.2 Going Back to the Origins

“We must abandon our dreams and say farewell to our beliefs and former friendships. Let us not lose time in useless laments or sickening mimicry. Let us leave this Europe which never stops talking of man yet massacres him at everyone of its street corners, at every corner of the world.”⁴²

Things Fall Apart, Chinua Achebe’s first novel, started an innovative literary trend within African Literature in 1958 after Ghana’s independence. The works created at that time had generally different subject-matter. While imperialism is criticized and condemned as a social historical factor in some literary texts, it is treated indifferently in some others. The authors even take on different views and attitudes on the same matter. While the content of some texts reveals dramatically the struggles of people of Africa facing the inhuman abuse by the colonialists, the content of others disguises the truth that African people were exploited and subject to discrimination. A subject matter employed to convince people that the efforts of poor, homeless, and clotheless people are for the good of themselves.

Beginning from *Things Fall Apart* in the fifties to *Petals of Blood* in the seventies almost all literary works have been created in non-native languages. This is

⁴¹ Ngugi wa Thiong’o, *Homecoming*, Heinemann, London 1972, p.25.

⁴² Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Grove Press, New York 1963, p.235.

their common characteristics. Language choice determines the public and by extension, one writes for. The language of the literary work also addresses the people only know that language. If you write in English you can address only to English people and English speaking natives in your country, and it is the case for the other languages as well. The works of a Kenyan author in English, regardless of its content, could not reach ordinary Kenyans. A play performed in English or French does not serve the purpose of Kenyan people. The audience acts as a determinant for a writer. The topic and the theme of any work are determined to a great extent according to the expectations of the audience. Certainly, the expectations of an elite class and the ordinary people do not overlap. The elite class supports a literature which arouses interest and which just amuses them. Also, emotional and musical activities from Europe became popular in Kenyan theaters. On the other hand, if you write your works in your indigenous language, that is to say, if your audience is ordinary people, then your conscience is your teacher. It directs you while reflecting the social lives of the people, their poverty, and their misery in a clear way.

The stance of the African writer who chooses completely to write in foreign languages, even if it is for the purpose of reaching a large audience in the world, especially European and American audience, reminds us the story of the crow trying to imitate walking of the partridge. Of course, it finally forgets its own style of walking. Let's see the examples given by Mr. Ngugi, one in Limuru and the other in Nakuru to make a comparison between the two kinds of authors:

“In 1966, a girl from my village, Kamiriithii, in Limuru, went to England to train as a nurse. She was about twenty. She stayed in England for two years. When she returned to our village, she spoke to the crowd of peasants who had gathered to welcome her through an interpreter. Rumour went that even to her parents she could only communicate through an interpreter. A two-year stay in England had apparently wiped out her twenty years' knowledge of her mother tongue.

A few years back I went to visit a friend at Nakuru. That was before Nakuru became so famous in contemporary Kenya's political vocabulary. A man and his wife and their seven year old daughter joined us on the verandah. I knew the man and his wife because they and I were once students at Makerere and were active in anti-colonial activities. The following scene unfolds: Mother goads daughter to speak. Daughter speaks in English. Mother then urges daughter to read a book. She obliges with an English book: I think Winnie the Pooh or something. I make

the mistake of speaking to daughter in Cikiyii. Daughter answers with a stream of incomprehensible words. Mother laughs with pride. Then she puts on a very sad face: 'Children of these days! They don't know our native tongues. Only English, English air the time, so different from our times, don't you think?'"⁴³

It was clear from their face that seeing their daughter to be able to speak English with an upper class accent pleased them much; however, she was not able to speak her native tongue, *Cikiyii*, in any way as well. So, the parents took pride in her daughter's negligence of their own nationality rather than feeling embarrassment and contempt.

The position of African writer has been varying between the instances of the nurse girl and the mother and child while distressed with criticism for giving up his native language for the sake of a foreign language. The views of African writers about which language they should employ varies. In one of his articles for the *Transition* magazine in 1963, Obi Wali, a Nigerian critic, contented that African Literature was simply a petty supplement within the tradition of European Literature. The adoption of foreign languages, the languages of the colonialists, especially English and French, unquestioningly is misguided and could not develop African culture and literature. In other words, this mentality causes African literature to simply reach a deadlock. African writers must write in their indigenous languages to be creative, to reach the ordinary local audience and to contribute their development and civilization without expecting anything in return in a mood of writer responsibility. Otherwise, the ordinary native people, the majority of the population, could not participate this type of European style literature.

Obi Wali's article created a great dissatisfaction among African writers. Chinua would respond later that he had been given the language and he intended to use it. Wole Soyinka, the supporter of continental usage of Swahili, requested to understand the deeds of Wali in translating his works into European languages he learned to speak. Ezekiel Mphahlele, considered as an important critic of African Literature for long, attributed mystical political powers to English. To him, English and French have been widespread languages in creating a common front against the colonialists. Even after the withdrawal of colonialists the so-called languages undertake a combining factor.

⁴³ Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Writers in Politics*, Heinemann, London 1981, p.55.

As for the South Africa, Mphahlele could not see the gist of the matter. He criticized the regime for supporting the native languages as the means of instruction. He contends that the first six years of primary education has created an effective and intellectual educated class whose leadership is a real threat to colonialists. But what he could not see is the planned intention of the African colonialists' wish to control what they are going to read. There is a wide library of uncensored content of books available in English and French and thus that policy aims to realize their goal. Ngugi advises him about the so-called leadership that he mentioned "had to wait for SOWETO schoolchildren to show them the correct path of resistance to fascism."⁴⁴

Professor Ali Mazrui reflects Mphahlele's views in his works. He expresses that the main factor in creating nationalism in Africa is the English language, culture, and literature.⁴⁵ Taban Lo Liyong, a Ugandan author, tells in his book *The Last Word* that his father was against his talking of English at the university and when he died he became very happy for he could speak and study in English freely. As for Ngugi, he said that he was not conscious of the colonial education and in a talk in BBC on English in 1965-66, he summed up the pros and cons of writing in English over the African languages. One of the reasons he gave was that English had a vast source of vocabulary.⁴⁶ Ngugi writes:

"My colonial university education at Makerere had blinded me to the true nature of colonialism and imperialism. It had turned me into a parrot and an animated puppet mouthing out phrases prepared for me in European text-books. But Kariiki's education in the settled area, in the streets of political struggle with the masses, in the universities of Manyani and other concentration camps, had opened him out to see the link which bound the peasants and workers of Kenya to all others struggling against oppression and exploitation."⁴⁷

The stance of African writer is almost the same as critics like Gerald Moore who spoke highly about the writers for preferring to write in foreign languages like English and French. The name of his book was *The Chosen Tongue*, thus he tried to give the

⁴⁴ Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Writers in Politics*, Heinemann, London 1981, p.55.

⁴⁵ Ali Mazrui, *Cultural Engineering and Nation Building in East Africa*, Northwestern Press, Evanston 1972.

⁴⁶ Thiong'o, *Ibid*, p.57.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p.83.

message that the English language was the God chosen tongue and it is an honour for those who chose the English language as the vehicle to produce their literary works.

The critical aspect is that Obi Wali failed to embody the truth in his article about imperialism. He could not underline the point adequately that the basic dilemma of the African writer was connected with the imperialist blockade and the cruel restriction over the indigenous African languages and culture. Through the colonial western education, the African writer acquired their culture and outlook and so he was already the part of bourgeois class and culture. In this sense a resistance to the ways of colonialists would be within the same convention of culture and language, and that's all; it could not go beyond that.

The writers, including Ngugi, have changed as the time goes by. This is crucial in identifying themselves with the people and thus to integrate themselves in their struggle against the foreign domination, slavery, and injustice. This way the intellectual potential of the African writer would be at people's service on the way of independence and freedom. Instead, those neocolonial fake Europeans cause their own African native characters seem naive and simple-minded due to their shallow, distorted foreign languages with which they were required to define themselves through the preference of language and audience. Mostly the ordinary people were donated with an indecisive personality and point of view. Thus eventually, they were directed to articulate that creed timidly in foreign languages. So, the indigenous languages of Africa were nullified in the works of African writers and displaced with English, French, and Portuguese languages. Indeed, the body of works created up to now is not African or Kenyan literature except the oral literature. It can be called Afro-European literature including works of writers in European languages. Kenyan writers must face the reality of language choice and audience before they can discuss the national literature and national theatre which constitutes the basis of Kenyan national culture:

“Kenyan national literature should mostly be produced in the languages of the various nationalities that make up modern Kenya. Kenyan national literature can only get its stamina and blood by utilizing the rich national traditions of culture and history carried by the languages of all the Kenyan nationalities. In other words, Kenyan national literature can only grow and thrive if it reaches for its roots in the

rich languages, cultures and history of the Kenyan peasant masses who are the majority class in each of the Kenya's several nationalities.”⁴⁸

2.2.1 Language and Literature

Languages serve as the vehicles of communication among people. Each of the languages meets the social needs of its people. Everything in the material life of a society also affects the language. Language becomes the carrier of collective memory of a society throughout the time. Thus, it reflects the historical awareness of their struggles with various forces and symbolizes the progression and innovation within that historical awareness. It was this facet of language that prompts people to struggle against the assimilation of their languages or prohibition of its being spoken. As it is the carrier of the collective memory of a society which constitutes its identity such oppressive practices are seen as equal with eradicating the memory of its past. This comes to mean the elimination of a nation from history. After all, the generations carry out in their lives what they see from their preceding generations. The traditions are maintained, productive materials are used, and new practices are added to the old ones if there is a need accordingly. Language is produced by the successive generations and it also functions as a carrier of culture with changes occurred through the course of time. Ngugi contends:

“Literature as a process of thinking in images utilizes language and draws upon the collective experience - history - embodied in that language. In writing one should hear all the whispering, and the shouting and crying and the loving and the hating of the many voices in the past and those voices will never speak to a writer in a foreign language.

For we Kenyan writers can no longer avoid the question: Whose language and history will our literature draw upon? Foreign languages and the history and cultures carried by those languages? Or national languages - Dholuo, Kiswahili, Gikiiyii, Luluhya, Kikamba, Kimasai, Kigiriama, etc., - and the histories and cultures carried by those languages?”⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Ngugi wa Thiong’o, *Writers in Politics*, Heinemann, London 1981, p.58.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p.59.

If the Kenyan writer intends to address the African people he should write in the indigenous languages they speak or the lingua franca of Africa, Kiswahili. If he intends to write for the foreigners then he ought to use their own tongues that is English, French or German, in order to communicate with them. The prerequisite for the Kenyan writer to get involved in authentic national literature is to write in national languages. The insight and motivation provided by national sources past and present constitutes the national mainstream. If he thinks that writing in a foreign language gives him inspiration then he should utilize foreign languages. Before deciding to prefer a language in writing, the long-term historical national struggle of Kenyan national culture against colonialism should be taken into account. In fact, the British colonial administration was against the Kenyan's learning English between 1900 and 1940 as we mentioned before in the case of South Africa because of the possibility of obtainable anti-imperialist communist literature in English by Kenyans. Beginning from 1950s the colonialists judge it necessary to initiate in creating a native elite class donated with British middle class values to protect their future interests in Kenya. Also, the main drawback in their mind about the teaching of English was the possible availability of anti-imperialist literature; however, they chose to teach English at the cost of Kiswahili.

The choice of teaching English is not pointless. The planned policies of British colonialists determined their future actions. Namely, the necessary component to establish the British values was thought to create an African elite class. Only in this way they thought their values could be established in Africa. Of course, teaching English suggested that the interests of Europe were guaranteed during that process. This could be done with the hands of Africans having the same mentality with the colonialists.

As part of carrying out their colonial ambitions they started to impose cultural activities to promulgate British values together with teaching English to devise bourgeois integration in Kenya: The Outward Bound Movement to instruct Kenyans in British Scout mountaineering style; cinemas Capitol, Theatre Royal, Empire, and playhouse cinemas showing British films; the Nairobi Musical Society and the East

African Conservatoire of Music were set to work to popularize British and western music in Kenya; the British Broadcasting Unit of the then cable and wireless studios at Kabete arranged shows for Africans under the direction of British.

However, the most effective medium was the theatre. The Donovan Maule Theatre began its performances in Nairobi in 1948. The Kenya National Theatre was founded in 1952 with the contributions of the then governor, Sir Philip Mitchell, as a director in its governing board. Similar theatrical activities were carried out in various places in Kenya. These efforts were done to encourage the English language theatre in Kenya. The British began to impose its culture on Kenya deliberately with the simultaneous outbreak of national fighting of The Land and the Freedom Army (Mau Mau) which continues incessantly up to now. If anybody looks at the entertainment pages of a newspaper he can see easily all foreign theatre celebrating the activities of foreigners. Those activities are the parts of systematic enculturation of the imperialist culture assimilating Kenyan indigenous cultures. The racist British critics try to display the Kenyan patriots as terrorists and the plays describe their choices as meaningless and sex-motivated. According to those critics, any play against the colonialism is bad but the plays that has no concern with cruelties of colonialism are preferable and good. These are the parts of a deliberate and systematic struggle of cultural design for reshaping the minds of the people of native countries by the colonialists. While English language was being supported and their culture conveyed through it was being fostered, the indigenous languages of Kenya were being consciously disheartened and their authentic culture suppressed. The presence of African languages were just for show both at the time of colonial presence and during independence. Even some languages were not utilized in writing. From 1900 to 1963 some others were employed simply to meet the missionaries' demands of being able to read the Bible and colonial directions. In the years following the independence the elite class that took over the administration from the British quitted using the native languages for the sake of English.

Still Kiswahili continued to be taught on a vast scale either as an instruction vehicle or as a subject from 1909 until 1940. However, after 1949 Kiswahili was stopped to be taught in all rural schools. The assimilation policies of British colonialists on indigenous Kenyan languages went on hand in hand with suppressive practices and

policies on native cultures. In parallel with these policies, the songs, poems, dances, and instrumental music was prohibited. Among the songs that was well known in 1930's were the Miithzrzgii dance and song and the Mau Mau guerilla's nationalistic literature in the 1950s. Newspapers in indigenous languages and reporting pro-Kenyan national news and interpretations, i.e Miimenyereri, were prohibited. Books reflecting the Kenyan national culture and views, like Kenya Biiriiri wa Ngiii by Jomo Kenyatta, were prohibited. That is to say, the colonialists did everything to ban the literary works, either oral or written, of native patriots. Unfortunately, the neocolonial governments who follows their colonial masters continued in the same way and did not give a chance for indigenous literature to develop in its natural course. The then Kenyan Government declined to license the modern and progressive theatrical efforts of native people of Limuru within the body of "The Kamiriithu Community Education and Cultural Centre" founded by Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Ngugi wa Mirii. On the contrary, it detained one of the authors.

After the performance of a play meaning *What a World* written by the girls at Riara Secondary School in Gikuyu describing the life conditions of a plantation worker who has to make his living with 300 shillings a month the school was busted by the local intelligent units and the individual responsible was intimately interrogated. However, the books telling the virtues of colonialists and imperialism, poems, and plays published freely without any restriction in Kenya and Africa.

Today, as the Kenyan neocolonial government was engaging in suppressing Kenyan languages, and theatre and other works in Kenyan languages, the colonialist countries carried out their cultural activities through their embassies. Language courses were being arranged by free language teachers; Theatrical performances and cinema programmes were being organized without any restraint. Ngugi argues that foreigners cannot improve the native literature, languages, or theatre for the African people; that is, it is not possible to promote the cultures and literatures by means of adopted languages. Thus, the Kenyan writers ought to keep the cultural and historical struggle between the foreign and the native in mind while making a choice. The only way to form a patriotic national literature and culture is possible simply through returning to the roots of African identity within the cultures and languages and heroic

histories of the Kenyan people which indicates the self-respect of Kenyans.⁵⁰ Fanon analyzed the situation strikingly:

“If we want to transform Africa into a new Europe, America into a new Europe, then let us entrust the destinies of our countries to the Europeans. They will do a better job than the best of us. But if we want humanity to take one step forward, if we want to take it to another level than the one where Europe has placed it, then we must innovate, we must be pioneers. If we want to respond to the expectations of our peoples, we must look elsewhere besides Europe. Moreover, if we want to respond to the expectations of the Europeans we must not send them back a reflection, however ideal, of their society and their thought that periodically sickens even them. For Europe, for ourselves and for humanity, comrades, we must make a new start, develop a new way of thinking, and endeavor to create a new man.”⁵¹

⁵⁰ Ngugi wa Thiong’o, *Writers in Politics*, Heinemann, London 1981, p.64-65

⁵¹ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of The Earth*, Grove Press, New York 1961, p.239

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE AND SOCIETY IN AFRICA

It seems to me that the most remarkable issue in the neocolonial African countries is the problem of the usage of national languages freely and national literature created in indigenous languages. Unless the complete independence is achieved the African continent will not reveal its authentic potential. However, there is no need to worry about this subject because Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Wole Soyinka, Nelson Mandela are crucial instances of success achieved through constant struggle and labor without fear.

The position of native literature in the African education system has been discussed continually after 1950s. It is not possible to debate such an issue in Europe or in America. The Europe and America positioned themselves in the center and regarded the whole world, specifically their colonies, as their sphere of influence and English is the lingua franca. Thus, such discussions about the language have been made by the true writers of indigenous cultures.

Every child grows in his own society and under the control of his own social values. So, his imagination is shaped through the native literature before getting to know the other literatures. The source of cultural background exists in the native soil. This is the case for all cultures. Instructing the ABC of education follows generally the same path in most societies. But this is not so in the Africa, the West Indies, and the colonized countries. For years, the departments of literature, dubbed as English departments then, in Nairobi, Dar-es-Selam and Makerere Universities used to teach just British writers from Chaucer to Graham Greene. This shows clearly the condition of our education system under the administration of colonialists. But the thing that matters is why it is going on currently. Frankly speaking, the core of our national syllabi, the perspective, and the introduction of our literature is being determined by the imperialists. Cultural policies of colonialists become the basic factors of maintaining the (neo) colonial order. Literature is a vital agent within the life of the societies, in their cultural education, in their daily and general activities in the course of life. Of course, considering its effect on culture it is manipulated to maintain their colonial ambitions in any country by the colonial powers. Also, on the contrary, the people who struggles against the colonialists employed the literature as a means of national decolonization process. That is to say, literature can be used both for cultural

imperialism and as a means of national liberalization. The reason for this is its natural output results from the honest feelings and ingenuity of people.

The imposition of culture then on the colonized people was a part of a complete economic exploitation and order of political repression and massacre and literature was a fundamental constituent of that order of repression and massacre. It was employed in the same direction as religion and language. However, it was a more sophisticated medium since literature functions by means of affecting feelings, vision, and awareness of a people in a definite mode. It intends to enable the colonized to comprehend the world through the eyes of intellectuals and the artists of the western administrators. The European literatures attacked the students from colonial African countries by means of several ways and categories. At first, the best examples of good European literature were introduced: Aristoteles, Sophokles, Shakespeare, Yeats, Ibsen, Balzac, Faulkner, Thomas Mann, Goethe, Montaigne, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Cervantes, and so on. The only issue in question by the time they discussed anything the European background of history became a part of the matter. By the time “man” was discussed in any situation it was the “European” who was implied. When Americans struggled for independence it was not the “inalienable rights” of black man but the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant. Thus the white image encircles the African student day by day. As it is nowadays the same white image continues to shape the perception of him through the television, advertisements, films, and so on. These authors were employed for exporting culture at any rate and were employed to intimidate us who were not identified for unsophisticated creation and no sciences or arts. In any case the goodwill and sensitivity of a writer can be utilized to attract the attention of an individual, here the African in question. Shakespeare’s employment relentlessly by the British Council is a good example of this. The white teachers in Africa construed this literature in such a way that supports the perception of European elite classes together with their racism, shortsightedness, and holy wasteland as universal man.

The other part of literature functioned as the one that attempted to describe the colonies for the sake of European colonialists. It was the true racist literature which did not need to conceal its ill-intentions. These writers are well-known all over the world. Rudyard Kipling *The 'Mowgli' Stories*, Rider Haggard *King Solomon's Mines*,

Robert Ruark *Uhuru and Something of Value*, John Buchan *Prester John*, and Nicholas Monsarrat *The Tribe that Lost its Head* are a few striking examples of these writers.

In Nicholas Monsarrat, for example, the driving force that urges colonization was declared blatantly as in Kipling's *White Man's Burden*. Africa would be nothing without Europe. If it had not been for the Britain Pharamaul would have been an underdeveloped island. It is a modern place today. In the past there had been two hostile tribes on this island which was an isolated country. Its people were very poor and were constantly in conflict with each other over sand and goats. Lots of people lost their lives before the coming of British throughout a long process of time. Then British came to soothe and control the situation and stayed there to train and construct.

The European appears as the *Superman, Tarzan, Batman* and so on who overwhelmed a hundred big-nosed, thick-lipped, and curly-haired black people. The Blacks are portrayed, particularly in Rider Haggard's works, in two ways: the wicked ones who are described so terribly that a Satan image formed in the imagination of the reader. They are also envious of whites because of his senseless hatred. The good ones are described as individuals who shiver from fear when they see the white man frowns in anger or displays meekness and appreciation for the favors done for them by the European master.

Another racist writer is Karen Blixen, an aristocrat from Denmark. She goes to Kenya at the beginning part of Twentieth century and buys a plantation in the now popular area of Nairobi still bearing her name. Disapproving her love for the indigenous people and the animals alike, she writes:

“As for me, from my first week in Africa, I had felt a great affection for the natives. It was a strong feeling that embraced all ages and both sexes. The discovery of the dark races was to me a magnificent enlargement of all my world. If a person with an inborn sympathy for animals had come into contact with animals late in life: or if a person with an instinctive taste for woods and forest had entered a forest for the first time at the age of twenty; or if someone with an ear for music had happened to hear music for the first time when he was already grown up; their cases might have been similar to mine.”⁵²

⁵² Isak Dinesen, *Out of Africa*, The Modern Library, New York 1992, p.15.

While depicting the African people, she frequently refers to animal imagery. The African was indeed part of woods and animals. When she returns to Denmark, her familiar African characters appear in her dreams as animals:

“It was then that my old companions began to put in an appearance in my dreams at night, and by such behaviour managed to deeply upset and trouble me. For till then no living people had ever found their way into those dreams. They came in disguise, it is true, and as in a mirror darkly, so that I would at times meet Kamante in the shape of a dwarf-elephant or a bat, Farah as a watchful leopard snarling lowly round the house, and Sirunga as a small jackal, yapping - such as the natives tell you that jackals will do in times of disaster with one forepaw behind his ear. But the disguise did not deceive me, I recognised each of them every time and in the mornings I knew that we had been together, for a short meeting on a forest path or for a journey. So I could no longer feel sure that they did still actually exist, or indeed that they had ever actually existed, outside of my dreams.”⁵³

There is a hierarchical order in her world in which God is at the top, white elites come second and then other white people, finally domestic and wild animals who has a straight relationship with the God. There is no place for the Black people but wood and stones.

The type of writers worth mentioning are the ones who begin to handle the Africa either to attract the liberal conscious of Europe or just to explain Africa for its people. However, the African idea is still pessimistic. Joseph Conrad, for example, expresses that the characters in *Heart of Darkness* belongs to that barbarity which is beneath the skin of each civilized individual. He was discussing with his friends that they went to Africa to civilize and to enlighten a pagan people; damage that thin guise of civilization and they would find the primitivity of Africa in themselves, too.⁵⁴ According to Joyce Cary, the good gifted African in *Minster John* is a fool whose wish and last achievement must be ended by the hands of an Englishman whom we are disposed to believe esteems him highly. This is like shooting a horse to ease it from its

⁵³ Isak Dinesen, *Shadows on the Grass*, John Murray, London 1960, p.45 “Quoted, WP, p.18”.

⁵⁴ Ngugi wa Thiong’o, *Writers in Politics*, Heinemann, London 1981, p.19 (Quoted).

pains. This is the case for Mister Johnson and Master Joyce Cary.⁵⁵ As for William Blake, the black child weeps thus:

“My mother bore me in the southern wild,
And I am black, but O, my soul is white
White as an angel is the English child,
But I am black as if bereaved of light.

....

Thus did my mother say, and kissèd me,
And thus I say to little English boy.
When I from black, and he from white cloud free,
And round the tent of God like lambs we joy,

I'll shade him from the heat till he can bear
To lean in joy upon our Father's knee”⁵⁶

...

He yearns for the time he will perish and get rid of the burden of his skin colour, thus he and the white child will “lean in joy upon their Father's knee.”

“...

And then I'll stand and stroke his silver hair,
And be like him, and he will then love me.⁵⁷

...”

Ngugi calls this situation as “the white liberal's dream of a day when black and white can love one another without going through the agony of violent reckoning.”⁵⁸ Liberalism, for Ngugi, has always been the the sugary ideology of imperialism. Liberalism is against the national struggle and represents unethical peace, so it provokes an immoral stance and causes a decline in individuals. Alan Paton's ‘Cry the Beloved Country’ is a clear instance of this perception. If the African wants to be qualified as good then he should be submissive and have a desire for being loved by the enemy. This is a component of describing one's self negatively and imposing self-hatred. Paton was conscious of the violence inflicted on the African by the colonialists

⁵⁵ Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Writers in Politics*, Heinemann, London 1981, p.19(Quoted).

⁵⁶ William Blake, *Collected Poems*, Routledge Classics, London and New York 2002, pp.49-50.

⁵⁷ Ibid, p.50.

⁵⁸ Thiong'o, Ibid, p.20.

and the fact that the instruments of violence -guns, prisons, barracks, and so on- were brought into the country by the white minority. Again Paton is aware of the fact that one day the oppressed people of Africa will rise against the colonialists. It was this potentiality that frightens Paton. Thus Paton writes a novel that describes an African who is impoverished by the Church and who not only avoids the slightest form of violence but also portrayed even as unable to get angry, a positive character under all conditions.

While reading Paton's novel and the literary texts of other liberal authors one can notice why the church is always giving sermons about meekness, mercy and peacefulness to the oppressed people but not the colonialists who dispossessed them of their lands. Of course the answer is simple. The intention is to undermine the struggle of the indigenous people. At this point literature is their vehicle to condition the oppressed people psychologically, to make them believe that the basic source of their trouble is their spiritual mood. Edward Wilmot Blyden appropriately described this sort of literature:

“All our traditions and experiences are connected with a foreign race. We have no poetry or philosophy but that of our taskmasters. The songs that live in our ears and are often on our lips are the songs which we heard sung by those who shouted while we groaned and lamented. They sang of their history, which was the history of our degradation. They recited their triumphs, which contained the records of our humiliation. To our great misfortune, we learned their prejudices and their passions, and thought we had their aspirations and their power.”⁵⁹

He summed up the total outcome of cultural imperialism on the soul of the African child as:

“In all English-speaking countries the mind of the intelligent Negro child revolts against the descriptions given in elementary books - geographies, travels, histories - of the Negro; but though he experiences an instinctive revulsion from the caricatures and misrepresentations, he is obliged to continue, as he grows in years, to study such pernicious teachings. After leaving school he finds the same things in newspapers, in reviews, in novels, in quasi scientific works, and after a while - sape

⁵⁹ Edward W. Plyden, *Christianity, Islam, and the Negro Race*, Black Classic Press, Baltimore 1994, p.105.

cadendo - they begin to seem to him the proper things to say and to tell about his race, and he accepts what, at first, his fresh and unbiased feelings naturally and indignantly repelled. Such is the effect of repetition.

Having embraced, or at least assented, to these errors and falsehoods about himself, he concludes that his only hope of rising in the scale of respectable manhood is to strive after whatever is most unlike himself and most alien to his peculiar tastes.”⁶⁰

As a result, this kind of literature intends to create an African who constantly feels himself inadequate and appreciate the achievements of Europe admiringly. An individual like Kumalo in Paton’s work ‘Cry the Beloved Country’ does not believe in himself and his people’s capacity in gaining independence. First and foremost, this literature and general attitude towards cultural and literary education instilled the cultural values of European elite classes into the African people and forced the neocolonial newly appearing middle class to adopt those values as global standard. The obvious existence of native people’s intellectual dependence is the outcome of this understanding. The African people should not trust in and commission guides of undependable nature and should not keep foreign teachers, administrators, religion, history and language under the guise of so-called experience. Experience comes after enactment, involvement, and confrontation. But above all, this sort of education exemplified by the attitude towards literature was an element of a conscious plan to encourage a weak native middle elite class who obeys the instructions of their masters after official independence.

Neocolonialism, in a sense, is the name of the system in which impotent submissive capitalist economic structures constructed by colonialists and managed by a native ruling class went on to control the exploitation of Africa’s resources and labour in the name of colonialists. Politically, this neocolonial native class will be in cooperation with their colonial masters to guarantee their position to rule through making defence alliances and arms agreements. The distinguishing feature of this class is its embarrassment with the people. The people are not to be relied on and thus any conflict or division is now consciously supported and maintained.

⁶⁰ Edward W. Plyden, *Christianity, Islam, and the Negro Race*, Black Classic Press, Baltimore 1994, p.88.

The embarrassment with the people is obvious among the governing elite classes and shows itself within the most African novels. The characters appear as unprincipled and foolish who are easily deceived and misled and applaud now this leader and then that leader for a little money or any other benefit. The crowds are regarded as having no memory of their own. Ngugi contends that in African literature they have very few promising writers among the working people; promising writers to express the soul of struggle and resistance against exploitation and undisguised theft of the neocolonial elites and their global allies. In terms of culture and human values this class represents the mainstay of cultural imperialism. Thus, beside going on to introduce foreign teachers from Europe and foreign literature into the African schools and universities and turning it into a premise of our studies, they are supported to create the sort of literature that sustains the same decadent western values and world perspective.⁶¹ It is vital for the Africans to comprehend that cultural imperialism in this period of neocolonialism is more dangerous than ever before as it assumes new subtle forms. New churches are being built in every village by Africans themselves under the guise of Harambee self-help plans under neocolonial administrations.

Evaluation

Ngugi's aim in portraying the colonial process is to be able to learn a lesson from anti-colonial process, from the whole historical struggle for national liberation. This struggle implies the rejection of the colonial process mentioned before. The most valuable thing in the colonized people's life, as it is a concrete source of things that they acquire to maintain their life, is the land. It is thought that land must supply bread and pride in Africa. Fanon asserts that this pride has nothing to do with human pride. The colonized individual is not familiar with such a principle. All he experienced in his surroundings is arrest without any specific reason, humility, misdeed, repression, and poverty. Nobody attempt to end the hardships he experienced and to share his bread. According to the colonist, morality necessitates silencing the pride of the imperialist, stopping his violence to eliminate him from the scene.⁶² Amilcar Cabral also maintains that the national emancipation of a community is to recover the historical character of that community and to go back to its historical roots by

⁶¹ Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Writers in Politics*, Heinemann, London 1981, pp.24-25.

⁶² Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Grove Press, New York 2004, p.72.

destroying the foreign domination to which it was exposed to. National emancipation can be realized only through creating an atmosphere for national productive forces free from every kind of foreign domination.⁶³

Completing the anti-colonial and anti-imperialist fight, the Africans also must fight against the cultural imperialism as the goal is to bring back the genuine African character, to bring back the African indigenous values to improve the standard of life. In fact, most of the national freedom struggles begin through declining the culture of the colonialists. The religious and educational activities are renounced. People create and produce their own poems, songs, literature that expresses the native culture against the colonialists. The songs of the colonialists were adapted into a different sense and stress by the militants of the Mau Mau, the Kenyan national freedom movement. They declined the foreign culture of the colonizer and developed a popular oral literature that symbolizes anti-colonialist values. This way it is intended to alter the perspective of people, to regain the privilege and spirit of explaining oneself.

Ngugi praises such a literature in which the people of Africa are actors and decision makers. The characters like Okonkwo and Ezeulu as the agents of people's soul of disobedience creates their own history. He believes that the teachers of literature can help in people's collective struggle to regain their visionary energy in history. To do this we must be conscious about the genuine effect and function of literature within society.

Ngugi suggests that African literature and the African people's indigenous literature in the West Indies and America must be principal and key in all African schools, teacher training institutions, and community centres. The oral literature of African people is central to this, including modern pieces.

The literature imported from foreign countries must be appropriate to African social, economic, and cultural life. That literature should tackle the native historical settings and struggles. It must be a literature that resists repressive social-economic structures, that resists all the pressure groups which prevents the creative progress of man. In such a condition, the literatures of Asian, Latin American, and socialist

⁶³ Amilcar Cabral, *Return to the Source, Selected Speeches of Amilcar Cabral*, Monthly Review Press, New York and London 1973, p.39-57.

countries is of vital importance. However, anti-imperialism, anti-elite literature and the literature created for and supported the struggle of people by writers living in imperialist countries contribute much to African people's struggles for a freer and livable environment.

The crucial requests of the more formal components and demands of any art are not declined on one hand, but the literature whether oral, African or from other countries must be subjected to a most effective criticism from the outlook of the struggling people. The positive, revolutionary, and humanistic aspects of works of art must be uncovered, supported and reinforced; and the the negative aspects must be eliminated within the same and other works.⁶⁴

Of course, it is not an easy task for the African since it requires to review their world point of view, values, inclinations, biases, and thoughts. First and foremost, it expects us to revise our own stance against the fight which already continues in the continent. The fight of the people against the cultural, economic, and political exploitation of the European imperialism. Mozambique, South Africa, Rhodesia, and Angola are the worst examples of colonial practices. It anticipates people following a progressive point of view in the society regarding the practices of church in collaboration with the imperialists. Black people must regain their authentic creative power to control the productive forces and the equal distribution of the products of their own labour to improve the quality of their lives. Ngugi's view is that this is not possible outside a socialist context and a complete freedom of the African potential at every stage. Literature and their viewpoint to literature can enable or prevent "the creation of a collective socialist Black Power in Africa based on the just continuing struggle of peasants and workers for a total control of their productive forces."⁶⁵ His suggestion, as writers and critics of literature, is to constitute a cultural initiative against imperialism among African people to realize a complete economic and political freedom from all external forces.

⁶⁴ Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Writers in Politics*, Heinemann, London 1981, pp.30-31.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, p.31.

3.1 Literature at Schools

“Education consists not only in the sum of what a man knows, or the skill with which he can put this to his own advantage. In my view, a man’s education must also be measured in terms of the soundness of his judgment of people and things, and in his power to understand and appreciate the needs of his fellow-men, and to be of service to them. The educated man should be so sensitive to the conditions that he makes it his chief endeavor to improve those conditions for the good of all.”⁶⁶

The dispute on literature shows that Africans are after all interested in the content of the subjects taught at the schools. This is as it should be as education is a mirror to the society. Considering the colonial domination over the Africa, education has been a major area for the ideological struggle between the colonialists and the national freedom fighters. Thus, the Kenyan national education system is the barrier in front of the British imperialism that should be overcome to impose their own. Four basic issues has been discussed besides the problem of literature. First of all the appropriateness and sufficiency of the current education system. The outlook, basic foundation, and guidelines behind the system are vital issues under question. The national social vision is also vital to serve the Kenyan native culture and literature. Of course, those issues determine the type and area of literature to be taught in schools. Secondly, the decision making personnel should be native as they decide the cultural and literary programmes. What should be taught and how should it be taught in African schools? Thirdly, should the Africans go on to recruit and retain colonialist staff to teach literature, language, history and culture in African schools? Fourthly, what is our perspective that guides us in our literary studies as teachers of literature? What is our approach to literature as a ‘mirror unto the society’? What is our philosophy in decoding literature? The individuals participating the discussions accepted the perception that a Kenyan child must follow the path to self-realization just through African national heritages and cultures. Ngugi put that the price they pay for those Eurocentric studies of themselves is the total distortion and misplacement of values of national liberation, making them continue to be slaves to imperialism.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Kwame Nkrumah, *Speech at the opening of the Institute of African Studies*, 25 October 1963, *Axioms of Kwame Nkrumah*, 1969.

⁶⁷ Ngugi wa Thiong’o, *Writers in Politics*, Heinemann, London 1981, p.34.

Literature is a mirror for the life of a society. Ngugi's consciousness is that literature as a part of culture is indeed a reflection of the concrete reality we experienced in our lives. While endeavoring to comprehend the extent of the distortion caused by the imperialism, he has come to understand that a significant national culture cannot be created under any sort of foreign rule. The African people must control their natural and human resources completely to develop a patriotic national culture. This is the only way for this. If culture of people is guided by foreigners then people see and judge their material and economic reality by means of those foreigners. They will be rating their past and current accomplishments, their history, their potential state in the future from the outlook of colonialists who cannot put up with and foresee any prosperity or development for the Africans. An independent people or economy is not possible under a foreign domination. Kenya was poor, and is still poor not because of lacking in adequate resources but because of the exploitation of the resources and people resulting in developing the western world. Literature is the product of a society's creative awareness in their efforts to shape the nature through collective work and in the course of transforming and changing themselves. It displays in words society's awareness of anxieties and disagreements causing by their endeavors to shape a significant atmosphere established via their collective labour on environment to struggle the ways of life: clothing, safety, food, and shelter. Hence, literature embodies people's visions of themselves throughout the history and their position within the world.

Today, speaking honestly, the student of literature suggests an English student. The images presented to a Kenyan child is completely determined by institutions guided by Europeans. The history of English language and history is taught beginning from Beowulf to Roland Barthes and other modern writers. The children are mesmerized through poems and other literary texts. A type of admiration is tried to be created in the minds of Kenyan children. So, the instruction of simply European literature implies that the African students have to face with the European way of life, history, and image daily. A literature that imposes the superiority of European values and the inferiority of African values, customs, and religion. The world is made to be seen, assessed, and judged through the eyes of Europeans. Even worse, the children are faced with a biased reflection of themselves and of their past in the works of

European literary figures. They learn Prospero's views about Caliban but not Caliban's views about Prospero. Robinson Crusoe's role in noticing and civilizing Friday but not his opinion about himself and his gallant efforts about Crusoe's abuse and tyranny.

The case can be understood more obviously if literature is compared with the condition of the cinema and television in Today's Kenya. Whenever we go to the cinema the positive image of Europe, the world from the outlook of Europeans can be observed and of course the reasons to justify why their image is superior to others in the world. Thus what we see on the screen is just Europe, and this is enough to conquer a castle from within. There is no answer or reaction against the native people or surroundings on the screen. Worse still, the audience mostly praises the acts of racist imperialist characters: Tarzan, American Cowboy, or 007 James bond destroying hundreds of other people; Red Indians, Africans, Mexicans, or the Chinese.

This is the imposition of culture, namely cultural imperialism, for Ngugi cultural bomb. It is more effective vehicle of tyranny than a de facto confrontation since it perverts the perception of their past and the facts of their world surrounding them. These perverted literary presentations, encouraged through the 'white' images of God and angels and angels commanding and singing in 'heaven' as black 'devils' struggled in hell for their 'black' sins, were intended to guide us into a tentative mood, into self-hatred, self-doubt before the imperialists. Okot p'Bitek in his book of poems 'Song of Ocol', indicated this neocolonial generation effectively as thinking and questioning this condition in pain:

“ Mother, mother
Why
Why was I born
Black ?” (SO,126)

White teachers caused Ocol to believe that he himself, his continent, his people, his family, in other words, everything belong to him is in fact evil. They have deprived him of his self-respect. Worse still, he feels humiliated with his skin colour. This case is not specific to Africa. It is a fact for all the colonized black and third world people. Aime Cesaire depicted the situation strikingly:

“I am talking about societies drained of their essence, cultures trampled underfoot, institutions undermined, lands confiscated, religions smashed, magnificent artistic creations destroyed, extraordinary possibilities wiped out.

They throw facts at my head, statistics, mileages of roads, canals, and railroad tracks. I am talking about thousands of men sacrificed to the Congo Ocean ? I am talking about those who, as I write this, are digging the harbor of Abidjan by hand. I am talking about millions of men torn from their gods, their land, their habits, their life—from life, from the dance, from wisdom.”⁶⁸

Malcolm X was the real witness who proves Ocol’s pains and his denial of united African sense of self and writes :

“How ridiculous I was! Stupid enough to stand there simply lost in admiration of my hair now looking "white".... This was my first really big step toward self-degradation: when I endured all of that pain, literally burning my flesh to have it look like a white man's hair. I had joined that multitude of Negro men and women in America who are brainwashed into believing that the black people are "inferior"—and white people "superior"—that they will even violate and 71 mutilate their God-created bodies to try to look "pretty" by white standards.”⁶⁹

Well, it is not always possible for Africans to disable their bodies, but how long will their creative potential and minds be disabled through surrender to cultural imperialism?

It is high time for the African people to notice the imperialist background of Europe throughout the history mirrored within their literary canon is not the global understanding of history. Also, Europe’s history consists mostly of injustice, brutality, discrimination, and slavery of other communities, particularly Black people. Indeed, it is the African people whose experiences of history as reflected in their songs and literature, is one of continuous heroic struggle against Western European slavery and their imperialist pillage and plunder of our wealth. Still, it is Africans who should be expected to memorize and recite the story of our imperialist oppressors and thus identify with their literary glorification of imperialist plunder and murder?⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, Monthly Review Press, New York 1972, p.43.

⁶⁹ Ngugi wa Thiong’o, *Writers in Politics*, Heinemann, London 1981, pp.37-38 (Quoted).

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, p.38.

Ngugi contends that the principles dominating the report of the language debate showed that most of the participants were agree about the primacy of the literature of African peoples rather than European literature. Secondly, literature of people who have struggled against racism, colonialism, against imperialist economic, political and cultural domination - and this means mostly progressive Asian and Latin American literatures - should follow. Literature from the rest of the world - chosen on the basis of relevance to our struggle against inhibitive social structures - should be the third component of literature in our schools.

This is the only possible way to enhance a critical outlook in African students. Individuals who can analytically judge and assess their surroundings thoroughly in Kenya and in turn Africa, and utilizing the vehicles acquired from there, observe the other spheres and react in the same way. Within literature there have been two conflicting aesthetics. One is the aesthetic of repression and brutality and of surrender to colonialism; and the other is that of people's fight for complete freedom. African literature should be the literature of those who struggle and support freedom. It is the literature of those who are against the abuse and repression, and the abasement of peoples' creative soul. The aesthetic results from that literature is in compliance with the aesthetic arising from the Kenyan people's past. It is an aesthetic that attained its most notable point in the struggle of Mau Mau against British colonialists. Mau Mau songs and poems were the literary output of that aesthetic. However, the arrangement and the combination of study is critical. At First Kenya, second East Africa, after that Africa, Latin America and Asia, and then the others, should follow.

Secondly, the decision making personnel should be native African people. The report released after the debate about these personnel is positive and obvious. Independent countries should not tolerate any foreigners to interfere with the decisions concerning the crucial cultural affairs. Any judgment about the future of Kenyan people can only be determined significantly by indigenous Kenyans, not by imperialist British foreigners. This even should not be a matter of discussion. Assigning the Africa's cultural and educational policies to British colonialists is the highest point of sheer national irresponsibility and open betrayal of African people. Therefore it was implied and called to nationalize immediately the decision making

staff of literature and languages. Ngugi reiterates that only Kenyan nationals should decide on the running of their education system.⁷¹

Thirdly, setting the expatriates to work is to do with what is done about the two issues mentioned, shorty independent minds and nationalization. It is thought that the present personnel generally were taken into service according to the current policies from which simply foreign literature arised in schools. A number of these teachers are not adequately trained to teach and evaluate even their own literature, so they waste time referring to unnecessary things. Thus, they conceal their lack of knowledge claiming that they have an extensive knowledge of their language and they are familiar with the spontaneous and social environment for the literature. However, several of those teachers are enlightened and sensitive in their approach into literature. Their insight comes from a thorough education and commitment to the principle of peoples' freedom. They do not refrain from revolutionary literature. Kenyan national literature or any other socially appropriate literatures do not pose a threat for them. On the contrary, those progressive teachers appreciate a literature whose background the students can question and in turn explain and discuss it. On the other hand, there are a number of dogmatic people who take pleasure in considering and describing a London or a Europe they have no information or learnt from imperialist works. These figures dislike the idea of authentic national Kenyan Literature which is primitive for them, and also they dislike the students' familiarity with the social background as the teacher. Luckily, a fresh class of Kenyan students and teachers who support a national aesthetic of freedom are confronting those who are alienated from their own values because of the cultural imperialism.

Ngugi recapitulates that the question about the employment of foreigners to teach literature in our schools cannot be decided on the basis of philosophical stance of the foreigners. I believe that only the nationals of a country have the right and the responsibility of running their education system, and this over-reliance on foreigners is dangerous for our country's future.⁷²

⁷¹ Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Writers in Politic*, Heinemann, London 1981, p.39.

⁷² Ibid, p.40.

The final principal statement agreed after the literature debate is that literature is of no use if it is not dedicated to the merits of a people flourishing into the highest attainable stage of their creative potential and possessing the fruits coming out of it. The principal obstacle in front of the people's merits of freedom is the very imperialism with its colonial and neo-colonial phases. The literature displaying an aesthetic which praising the evil acts of imperialist elites and its neocolonial allies is of no use for the African people. It just increases the alienation of African people from their native culture. The national literature ought to express the dignity of Kenyan history. It ought to indicate Kenya's heroic deeds in their past to dominate the environment and to resist the foreign rule, the fights against the Arab slave traders, the Portuguese and the British. The literature and history taught at the schools ought to reveal the racist lies and the humiliating doctrines of the European imperialism lasting for a century. In this sense Césaire's verses are significant:

“ For it is not true that the work of man is finished
That man has nothing more to do in the world
but be a parasite in the world
That all we now need is to keep in step with the world.
But the work of man is only just beginning and it remains
to man to conquer all the violence entrenched in the
recesses of his passion

And no race possesses the monopoly of beauty ,
of intelligence, of force, and there is
a place for all at the rendezvous
of victory ...”⁷³

The literary instruction in Kenya should enable the people to possess their own land, which is sacred in social life, again, to set up an independent and self sufficient Kenya free from foreign and domestic repression and abuse. The literary debates among the patriot writers can be seen as just tiny steps on the way to freedom. But Kenyans should be hopeful about freedom as long journeys start with tiny steps.

⁷³ Aime Césaire, *Return to My Native Land*, Penguin Books, Middlesex, England 1969, p.85.

3.2 Ngugi's Characters, Community, and People

The most significant point that the novel genre brought in is the creation of characters who have motivation and independent will and thus the readers' imagination broaden exceeding the limits of the fiction. Apart from *Weep Not, Child* and *A Grain of Wheat*, Ngugi's novels' common feature is that they do not completely display this tradition. Ngugi's characters are inclined to possess an importance more typological than psychological. They do not tend to act according to the plot and their actions are not limited by the necessities of the story. *The River Between*, *Petals of Blood*, *Devil on the Cross* and *Matigari* have been fictionalized as a sequence of events and the theme, plot, and characters are invariably part of a dominant event.

The foremost characteristics of Ngugi's fiction throughout his lifetime is the chief role that the upper classes play in it. The upper classes have been presented as the creators of the new independent country and its modernist doctrine. It doesn't matter if this doctrine is entrenched within the nationalist discourses of his previous novels or within the revolutionary socialist perspective of his subsequent novels. It is realistic to discuss that the intellectual upper classes perform a conciliating function between the colonial establishments and search for liberation, between the neocolonial institutions and the struggles of the people intending to set up a fair social order. It is this function as founders of the new social doctrine that moulds the insight of nationalists, i.e. Waiyaki, and constitutes the foundation of anticolonial fight in *Weep Not, Child*, and Kihika's appeal for national sacrifice in *A Grain of Wheat*. As for *the River Between*, the focus is on his alienation from the society but his bravery is honoured. His position as a peacemaker between the hostile groups, the Christian converts and the native people, in his society happens to be both his source of power and alienation and in fact Ngugi's statement of the fluctuation that typifies nationalism.

The role of Waiyaki in the narrative as a peacemaker appears to be fit with the uncertain part of the upper classes in African liberation struggle. The revival of a community is possible only if the struggles of the individuals end with the foundation of a nation. As Stuart Hall contends, nations are symbolic communities whose full materialisation depends on the ability to weave together a narrative that will win the

sympathy of the intended subjects⁷⁴. This is exactly what Ngugi wishes to do with Waiyaki. He wishes to found a nationalist appeal by means of building independent schools and educate the Gikuyu people. Thus, they could act and be encouraged to act against colonialists as united communities when it is necessary.

“There are two ridges in the River Between that lay side by side. One was Kameno, the other was Makuyu. Between them was a valley. It was called the valley of life. ... A River flowed through the valley of life. ... The river was called Honia, which meant cure, or bring-back-to-life. Honia river never dried: it seemed to possess a strong will to live, scorning droughts and weather changes. And it went on in the very same way, never hurrying, never hesitating. People saw this and were happy.”⁷⁵

Ngugi implies that the river indeed has a potential for not only providing ‘cure’ for the conflicts of people but also can be an element of disintegration. “It can both unite and separate.” Ngugi’s protagonist, Waiyaki, acts as the mediator between the two antagonistic ridges. He struggles to unite people in accordance with Ngugi’s modernist nationalist project. Edward Said contends that *The River Between*, by Ngugi wa Thiongo, redoes *Heart of Darkness* by inducing life into Conrad’s river on the very first page.”⁷⁶ “Honia was the soul of Kameno and Makuyu. It joined them. And men, cattle, wild beasts and trees, were all united by this life-stream.”⁷⁷

Although Waiyaki has some weaknesses he represents the tradition that Ngugi tries to create so as to rehabilitate the community to its genuine state. His separatist education is a vehicle to permit anticolonial discourse in Ngugi’s fiction:

“You could not spear them until you learnt and knew their ways and movement. Then you could trap, you could fight back. ... ‘Arise. Heed the prophecy. Go to the mission place. Learn all the wisdom and all the secrets of the white man. But do not follow his vices. Be true to your people and the ancient rites.”⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Stuart Hall, David Held and Tony McGrew (eds), *Modernity and its Features*, Polity Press, Cambridge 1992.

⁷⁵ Ngugi wa Thiong’o, *The River Between*, Heinemann, London 1965, p.1.

⁷⁶ Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, Vintage Books, New York 1994.

⁷⁷ Thiong’o, *Ibid*, p.1.

⁷⁸ Ngugi wa Thiong’o, *The River Between*, Heinemann, London 1965, p.20.

The rehabilitation process is possible only by setting up an atmosphere in which people feel themselves as a community again and united. For this reason, Waiyaki's father, Chege, advises him to learn how the white men acts but not follow their vices. Waiyaki's moral dilemma that he faces as the savior and builder of the nation is indeed Ngugi's as a member of upper classes in the early 1960s. Waiyaki chooses to keep away from the Kiama, the group of people fighting for land, and instead to educate people to acquire political liberation. This case has to do with the ambivalence of the Kenyan upper classes against the Mau Mau which symbolizes Kiama in the narrative.

After independence, the Kenyan upper classes whose prime leader was Jomo Kenyatta, began to consider the Mau Mau as illegal and tried to deactivate it. After all, Kenyatta's the Kenya African National Union (KANU) was requesting people to ignore the past, renounce the violence and unite behind Kenyatta. KANU became the primary force taking the place of the Mau Mau behind Kenya's independence. Kenyatta's imprisonment and sacrifice were underlined continually. He already declared his views just a year before independence: "We are determined to have independence in peace, and we shall not allow hooligans to rule Kenya. We must have no hatred towards one another. Mau Mau was a disease which had been eradicated, and must never be remembered again".⁷⁹ Although his portrayal of Waiyaki and his stance in connection with the Mau Mau fighters in the narrative reflect the nationalist outlook of the then upper classes, Ngugi probably did not have similar sentiments with Kenyatta. Regarding this point Ian Glenn argues that:

"Waiyaki's relationship to the Kiama is marked by ambivalences that recall Kenyatta's to the Mau Mau: he is the source of its strength, distances himself from it haphazardly, and is innocent of its violent intentions. Though he realises the justice of their claims and concerns, his version of the correct method of political emancipation is that of education for unity."⁸⁰

Kenyatta states that "the most essential need which he has constantly sought to proclaim and fulfil in Kenya has been that of national unity; nationhood and

⁷⁹ Jomo Kenyatta, *Suffering without Bitterness*, EAPH, Nairobi 1968, p.189.

⁸⁰ Ian Glenn, *Ngugi wa Thiong'o and the Dilemma of the Intellectual Elite in Africa, A Sociological Perspective*, *English in Africa*, 8: 2, 1981, p 53–66.

familyhood must and can be contrived out of our many tribes and cultures'⁸¹. Ngugi was wrestling with the problems of ethnicity and nationalism, too. "To look from the tribe to a wider concept of human association is to be progressive. When this begins to happen, a Kenya nation will be born."⁸² Ngugi, like his contemporaries, regards the decolonization process and building a progressive nation as the principal duty of the intellectuals at the time.

The ambivalence towards the Mau Mau continues in *Weep Not, Child*. Again, *Njoroge*, the mouthpiece of the upper-classes through having their ambitions and the convictions of unity, embodies the politics of the day this time. But Ngugi is obviously conscious of the fact that conciliation is not possible because of the oppression exercised by the colonialists which causes the youth to take up arms. It is this oppressive administration that causes Ngugi's young but ingenuous hero's gradual downfall. In the circumstances, he appears to be implying that national ideals are not realistic. The community could not restore itself simply based on a modernist outlook like Njoroge's, as in *Waiyaki*, who prefers education to land restitution. Ngotho and his son Boro notice that this process can only be performed through violence. Ngugi was step by step criticizing the sort of nationalism that was conceived in terms of common fate and nationality. He was beginning to grasp that if the upper classes did not empathize with the fight of the people, if they did not give up the search of rank like Njoroge, they took the risk of being insignificant. Also, he was beginning to grasp that the destiny of the nation cannot be consigned to the upper classes.

It seems that Ngugi endeavors to reinterpret the heroism and the task of the intellectual elites in 'A Grain of Wheat.' Although he is portrayed positively in the narrative, Kihika does not have a prime role in terms of action. Kihika, like Boro in *Weep Not Child*, is regarded as mad; that is, the ambivalent treatment is the case here, too. The focus is on the community of Thabai and the actions in the narrative provides us with a key sense of this community. Its suffering and anxieties of observable effects of colonialism and probable neocolonialism on people; its remembrance of the rebuilding of a new nation and, in fact, the influence of capitalism on Thabai people, implicitly, on the Kenyan awareness. In the narrative, Ngugi places the political

⁸¹ Kenyatta, *Ibid*, p.ix.

⁸² Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Homecoming*, Heinemann, London 1972, p.24.

authority into the controversial relations of the nationalist doctrine of the time and the incipient capitalism. The upper classes are a substantial part of a social process in which the incongruities and accomplishments are shared with others.

One of the reasons for this change in Ngugi's attitude is that he has come to realize that a free Kenya would not ignore the disloyalty, betrayal, and disappointment found in the colonial and neocolonial formation of the country. Ngugi advises in the novel that 'the situation and problems are real – sometimes too painfully real for the peasants who fought the British yet who now see all that they fought for being put on one side'. It is getting clear that the complementary roles of the writers and the nationalist politicians cannot be prolonged after the independence. This fear about independence is denoted through Gikonyo during the race held for 'Uhuru' day: "As he ran, Gikonyo tried to hold on to other things ... Would Uhuru bring land into African hands? And would that make a difference to the small man in the village?"⁸³.

Thus, though he celebrates Uhuru, he could not conceal his dissatisfaction about the betrayal. His fear of decolonization becomes apparent with the dark and gloomy cloud appeared on the day of Uhuru: 'The morning itself was so dull we feared the day would not break into life'⁸⁴.

Bringing Kenya's Uhuru into question, Ngugi has changed his outlook of nationalism that he displayed in *The River Between*. Gaining independence was expected to bring justice and equality among the people but it foreshadowed a new type of intolerance which can distress the community again. The perception of ethnic identity in the earlier novels is changed almost completely. This does not imply that Ngugi discards colonial past and its exhausting impacts out of his most important narrative. On the contrary, he is conscious of the colonial doctrine as he reminds that the mouthpieces of the British colonialists, the native neocolonial administrators, will continue to mould Kenyans' consciousness and colonialism sustains under the rule of native neocolonial administration with white settlers and their masters.

Ngugi's fiction is significant in the sense that it attempts to recreate a community whose members regain their self-respect and to remind us to be alert against self-interest. To exceed the inconsistencies rooted within the postcolonial basis of the

⁸³ Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *A Grain of Wheat*, Heinemann, London 1967, p.180.

⁸⁴ Ibid, p.178.

emrgent nation-state Ngugi postulates a process of self-criticism and establishing a common awareness on the basis of virtue and principle. All the characters in the narrative are deprived of these qualities.

3.2.1 Ngugi's Heroes: *Petals of Blood*

Ngugi's later fiction is distinguished in their extremely expected and clear portrayal of characters. They are heros and heroines whose behaviours can be predicted easily and who pursue a certain strategy in the narrative. They belong to a community who are deprived of their lands, who live in poverty, and who struggles to reach a better state for the good of people. They are labelled as rebels and their lives are associated with rebellion and resistance to oppression. Matigari in *Matigari*, Muturi in *Devil on the Cross* and Karega in *Petals of Blood*.

Petals of Blood is a narrative depicting a school atmosphere and educational issues are tackled primarily. The setting of the novel is rural Ilmorog where poverty is prevalent. Throughout the novel it is questioned that what function the education should perform at schools, including the universities and experimental village schools, to bring a just order for people. However, the novel implies at the end that the real struggle for social justice beyond the scope of educational foundations. It can be actualized through the cooperation of workers and peasants. Thus, it can be seen that the real target of the novel is the upper classes of Kenya. The novel asks again and again if they are able to carry out an effective struggle and revolution.

Petals of Blood tells the story of a national despondency in a postcolonial environment. However, it displays chiefly the crisis that the postcolonial intellectual confronts. The novel is about the life stories of four individuals: Karega, Abdulla, Munira, and Wanja. Abdulla became a veteran after his Mau Mau experience trying to make his living as a modest merchant in a corrupt neocolonial country which despises and shows hostility to an increasing extent for his account of brave fight against colonialism. Munira and Karega are both inexperienced teachers in the school and ex-schoolmates from the elite Siriana High School where they were expelled for defying the principal, Cambridge Fraudsham. The last one, Munira, was the son of a wealthy colonial chief. He declined to have an upper class education and prominent jobs.

Despite his fathers disapproval he chooses to teach at Ilmorog Primary School as it was so deprived that there was no teachers to conduct regular classes. Contrary to his family's materialistic stance, Munira stays objective, apolitical, and carry out his task as a teacher unthinking and conscientiously.⁸⁵

Karega means 'revolutionary'. As a young boy he participated in the strike at Siriana High School aimed at Mr. Fraudsham and also he organized the strike targeting the black principal of Siriana, Chui. Munira portrays him as idealist and hopeful: "a man with a 'glowing faith in the possibilities of heroism and devotion'".⁸⁶ Karega's faith and pursuit for truth and justice is stressed rigorously in the text. His pursuit 'made him a wanderer all over Kenya, from Mombasa to Kisumu and back again to Ilmorog'.⁸⁷ The interplay between search and revolt is obvious in his character and is best enacted as Karega began to work as a teacher at Munira's school. He attempts to renew the syllabus of school almost by himself and does not inform Munira about this. As his first responsibility, Karega intends to raise awareness of the children through instructing them the Ilmorog's history and explaining them its close connection with the Kenyan society, and Africa in general. When he realizes their distressing silence he discovers that his lessons are boring and abstract. He finds out that his approach to instruction is problematic which raises questions rather than answers. Karega is keen about developing a syllabus that includes an effective tendency for the African continent disregarding the advantages and disadvantages of such a syllabus. When he got history books sent by the lawyer written by Black intellectuals he comes to realize that it is not an adequate condition to be Black for writing objectively on the history of Blacks. Karega notices that the knowledge generated is not unbiased and is of use to only specific interests and factions. The lawyer warns him: "In a situation of the robber and the robbed, in a situation in which the old man of the sea is sitting on Sinbad, there can be no neutral history and politics. If you would learn look about you: choose your side".⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Apollo Obonyo Amoko, *Postcolonialism in the Wake of the Nairobi Revolution: Ngugi wa Thiong'o and the Idea of African Literature*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York 2010, p.67-68.

⁸⁶ James Ogude, *Ngugi's Novels and African History: Narrating the Nation*, Pluto Press, London 1999, p.46.

⁸⁷ Ogude, *ibid*, p.46.

⁸⁸ Ogude, *ibid*, p.200.

Karega's perspective begins to alter as Munira sacks him suddenly from his teaching job at Ilmorog. At that time he makes up his mind to support the workers' struggle. Karega's transformation is drastic after his participation into the struggles. After five years of separation, he comes back to Ilmorog and founds a trade union in Theng'eta Breweries, the place where he works as an accounting clerk, to raise the consciousness of workers about their rights. Ogude argues that:

“Karega's coming to consciousness, his apparent transformation from a black nationalist to a trade union leader embracing the socialist vision, remains unconvincing. This is largely because as a character most associated with the mass movement, indeed as a character who, in the words of Gikandi, ‘mediates between the inner reality of the novel and the author's ontology’, his impact on the narrative as the centre of consciousness remains contrived and abstract.”⁸⁹

Karega is Ngugi's mouthpiece in his criticism targeting the department of political science like the department of history as it fails to provide a report of the emergency state of neocolonialism in Kenya in late 1970. Karega denounces political science professors for their oblivious avoidance at the time of mass suffering: “Here professors delighted in balancing weighty rounded phrases on a thin decaying line of thought, or else dwelt on statistics and mathematics of power equation”.⁹⁰ Political science professors are accused of dwelling on arcane debates based on carefully footnoted articles and books.⁹¹ Karega asks desperately looking at the postcolonial university: “What of the resistance of African peoples? What of all the heroes traversing the whole world of black peoples? Was that only in his imagination?”⁹²

Wanja drops out high school as Karega and Munira does and this caused her not to continue her education and to work as a barmaid and prostitute. That is, she was in a state exploited by men reluctantly. After a while she goes to Ilmorog to save herself from that abuse. As in the examples of early novels, Karega and Wanja's love ends after Munira sacks Karega in a moment of anger. Karega leaves Ilmorog and in turn Wanja.

⁸⁹ James Ogude, *Ngugi's Novels and African History: Narrating the Nation*, Pluto Press, London 1999, p.140.

⁹⁰ Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Petals of Blood*, Heinemann, London 1977, p.199.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, p.199.

⁹² *Ibid*, p.198.

Ngugi makes use of the story of Wanja for displaying the state of women in an extremely gender-centered postcolonial state. Her prostitution symbolizes the extent of corruption of postcolonial administration as the exploitation and corruption of the postcolonial community have parallels with each other. Karega gets angry for Munira's selfish denunciation of Wanja's prostitution:

“We are all prostitutes, for in a world of grab and take, in a world built on a structure of inequality and injustice, in a world where some can eat while others can only toil, some can send their children to schools and others cannot, in a world where a prince, a monarch, a businessman can sit on billions while people starve or hit their heads against church walls for divine deliverance from hunger, yes, in a world where a man who has never set foot on this land can sit in a New York or London office and determine what I shall eat, read, think, do only because he sits on a heap of billions stolen from the world's poor, in such a world, we are all prostituted.”⁹³

Evaluation

Petals of Blood is a narrative in which Ngugi attempts to capture a universal view that transcends the boundaries of nationality and ethnicity and to face with the problem of abuse from a universal outlook. But Karega's efforts did not succeed. His unrealistic perception of African character is caused to become ironic through the reality of drought. In a touching episode, a starving student passes out within the climax of his Africa-centered educational programme. Karega's lessons appears theoretical and irrelevant in a state of overwhelming drought that is causing trouble in Ilmorog. Thus, the real state of the classroom were brought to his notice. “What had education, history and geography and nature-study and maths, got to say to this drought?”⁹⁴ Nevertheless, the extremist educational programme that he is presenting, he finally discovers that the instruction he is providing, much like a sort of typical instruction provided by Siriana, comes to a “gigantic deception”⁹⁵. It is in this state that he guides the villagers of Ilmorog to carry out an act of protest against the status quo. Karega began “to doubt the value of formal education as a tool of a people's total liberation”⁹⁶.

⁹³ Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Petals of Blood*, Heinemann, London 1977, p.240.

⁹⁴ Thiong'o, *Ibid*, p.110.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, p.110.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, p.252.

Working as an activist in a trade union, Karega implies that social transformation will not be come true through the educational programme of the classroom instruction even if it be a radical one.

In the final part, Karega appears not to believe in black race's historical existence from the old times up to now. He condemns Wanja for trying to keep Nyakinyua's hut like in the old days, in a sense, like a statue resisting the effects of time. As Wanja gets astonished and reminds Karega his obsession with the significance of the past time, he replies:

“True . . . but only as a living lesson for the present. I mean we must not preserve our past as a museum: rather, we must study it critically, without illusions, and see what lessons we can draw from it in today's battlefield of the future and the present. But to worship it—no. Maybe I used to do it: but I don't want to continue worshipping in the temples of a past without tarmac roads, without electric cookers, a world dominated by slavery to nature.”⁹⁷

Apparently, this expression simply mirrors Karega's wish for modernization and his disapproval of traditionalism. Africa-centered perception pervading the narrative appears to have been moderated at the end of the narrative.

⁹⁷ Ibid, p.323.

CHAPTER 4: NGUGI WA THIONG'O'S SUGGESTIONS FOR THE EMANCIPATION OF A NATION

Frantz Fanon states that “the claim to a national culture in the past does not only rehabilitate that nation and serve as a justification for the hope of a future national culture. In the sphere of psycho-affective equilibrium it is responsible for an important change in the native.”⁹⁸

Ngugi's thesis about a nation's emancipation and its standing on its own feet is, in his terms, simple: He suggests that a completely socialized economy, collectively owned and governed by the people, is essential for a national culture: a thorough and complete freedom of the people, by way of the disposal of all manipulative bodies, is vital for a national culture: A stratified society, even in pre-colonial Africa, produces a stratified culture or a sub-cultures, sometimes to the total exclusion from the central hub of national life of the *ahois*, the *ndungatas*, the *osus*, the *mbaras*, the *slaves* and *serfs* in such pre-colonial societies, and of the peasantry and working people in modern neo-colonial states. An oppressive racist society, like that of South Africa, can only produce an oppressive racist culture that cannot nourish and edify man.⁹⁹ He goes on to assert that while ultimately the development of a meaningful self-image is dependent on the complete re-structuring of our societies, we must also create practical, specific policies to facilitate the emergence of new attitudes and art-forms. One example will do: the educational policy (as it relates to literature and art).¹⁰⁰

The colonial order created a sort of education that instructed inferiority, self-hatred, and correlative doubt. It attempted to produce a feeling of subservience to make the indigenous people feel themselves naturally inferior constantly. It generated a people displaced from the others. Mostly there was an ethnic intolerance in the allotment of teaching facilities, of teachers, and of schools. Even the toilets were built apart for every class; Europeans, Asians, and then Africans. Society resembled a pyramid whose layers divided racially. Certainly, the European minority at the top, the Asian in the middle, and the African forming the base. The educational order indicated

⁹⁸ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Grove Press, New York 1963, p.148-149.

⁹⁹ Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Homecoming*, Heinemann, London 1972, p.13.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, 14

this imparity. It fostered a perception of slavery together with a feeling of admiration for the so-called successes of Europe. Europe was the focus of the civilization and the world. It was Europe who discovered Africa and thus Africa was an extension of Europe. Accordingly, throughout the history people committed to memory the progress of the Anglo-Saxons as if they were the real ancestors of the humanity. Even in geography, the rocks of Europe had to be studied first before coming to Africa.¹⁰¹

He argues that the destructive effect of colonial education, which sees Europe as the centre of the universe and man's history, is well illustrated in Sembene Ousmane's novel, *God's Bits of Wood*.¹⁰² Education, for N'Deye, sets her apart from the struggle of her people for liberation and a betterment of living conditions. She dreams of love and she is utterly ashamed of her people and of herself¹⁰³ :

“The people among whom she lived were polygamous, and it had not taken her long to realize that this kind of union had nothing to do with love - at least not with love as she imagined it. And this, in turn, had made her recognize what she now called the 'lack of civilization' of her own people. In the books she had read, love was something that went with parties and costume balls, weekends in the country and trips in automobiles, yachting trips and vacations abroad, elegant anniversary presents and the fall showings at the great couturiers. Real life was there; not here, in this wretched corner, where she was confronted with beggars and cripples at every turning. When N'Deye came out of a theatre where she had seen visions of mountain chalets deep in snow, of beaches where the great of the world lay in the sun, of cities where the nights flashed with many-colored lights, and walked from this world back into her own, she would be seized with a kind of nausea, a mixture of rage and shame.¹⁰⁴

One day she had made a mistake on the date of a film she wanted to see and gone into a theatre where a documentary film on a tribe of Pygmies was being shown. She had felt as if she were being hurled backward, and down to the level of these dwarfs, and had an insane desire to run out of the theatre, crying aloud, 'No, no! These are not the real Africans!' And on another day, when a film of the ruins of the Parthenon appeared on the screen, two men seated behind her had

¹⁰¹ Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Homecoming*, Heinemann, London 1972, p.14.

¹⁰² Sembene Ousmane, *God's Bits of Wood*, Doubleday, New York 1960 and Heinemann, London 1970, p. 106.

¹⁰³ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Grove Press, New York 1963, p.14.

¹⁰⁴ Fanon, *Ibid*, pp.14-15.

begun talking loudly. N'Deye had turned on them like an avenging fury and cried in French, 'Be quiet, you ignorant fools! If you don't understand, get out!' N'Deye herself knew far more about Europe than she did about Africa; she had won the prize in geography several times in the years when she was going to school. But she had never read a book by an African author - she was quite sure that they could teach her nothing."¹⁰⁵

Ngugi states that today the more obvious ethnic features of our education have been disappeared. But the true educational system which intended to create slavish minds which simultaneously treated with contempt the rural peasantry and the urban workers has not been fundamentally changed. Europe is at the focal point of our schools and our universities. And the priority has been bringing up men to govern.¹⁰⁶

At a conference the other day a very important controversy arose at the University of Nairobi, when a group of lecturers questioned the validity of an English Department, the only department concerned with literary studies, which continued teaching only British literature in the heart of independent Africa. This chauvinistic, basically colonial approach to the study of humanities was justified on the grounds that people needed to study the historic continuity of a single culture! British of course! The opinion that the British culture and the dawn of the modern West were the source of our enlightenment and cultural legacy was stressed dominantly. The lecturers responded¹⁰⁷ :

“Here is our main question: if there is need for a study of the historic continuity of a single culture, why can't this be African? Why can't African Literature be at the centre so that we can view other cultures in relationship to it? The aim in short should be to orientate ourselves towards placing Kenya, East Africa, then Africa in the centre. All other things are to be seen and considered in their relevance to our situation.”¹⁰⁸

Towards this end, they demanded the removal of the English Department and the foundation, instead, of a Department allotted chiefly to African Literature and

¹⁰⁵ Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Homecoming*, Heinemann, London 1972, p.14.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, p.15.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, p.15.

¹⁰⁸ Ngugi Henry Owuor-Anyumba, Taban Lo Liyong: “On the Abolition of the English Department” in Discussion Paper No. I. Faculty of Arts, Nairobi 1968.

Languages. The Department of Literature would instruct modern African Literature in English and French, Afro-American and Caribbean Literature and a selected course in European literary canon. But the study of oral tradition in African literature would be the focus of such a department.¹⁰⁹

“The study of the Oral Tradition would ... supplement (not replace) courses in Modern African Literature. By discovering and proclaiming loyalty to indigenous values, the new literature would on the one hand be set in the stream of history to which it belongs and so be better appreciated; and on the other be better able to embrace and assimilate other thoughts without losing its roots.”¹¹⁰

He claims that such a study would be important both in rehabilitating their minds, but also in helping African writers to innovate and break away from the European literary mainstream.¹¹¹

“[Already] one may note that African literature in the European languages lays claim to being differentiated from the metropolitan literatures not only in its content but also to some extent in its form. Its originality comes from the recourse made by our writers not only to African themes and subjects, and to elements of folklore, but also to stylistic innovations derived from the formal features of traditional African Literature.”¹¹²

In the meantime, the instruction and analysis of African languages is of equal importance for their cultural revival. They have already experienced living under a colonial rule, so they know well what it means: forcibly making them speak their tongue and downgrading their mother tongue, making them feel inferior and savage by imposing an educational system apart from theirs to produce submissive slaves. In this way, the colonialists turn the learning of their language a status symbol. The persons who learn it start to look down on the peasant majority and their *savage* languages. Through imbibing the thought-systems and principles of his adopted

¹⁰⁹ Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Homecoming*, Heinemann, London 1972, p.16.

¹¹⁰ Ngugi Henry Owuor-Anyumba, Taban Lo Liyong: “On the Abolition of the English Department” in Discussion Paper No. 1. Faculty of Arts, Nairobi, 1968.

¹¹¹ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Grove Press, New York 1963, p.16.

¹¹² Abiola Irele, “The Teaching of Traditional African Literature” in Proceedings of the Conference on the study of Ghanaian Languages (ed. J. A. Birnie and D. G. Ansare).

language, he becomes estranged from the values of his mother language, in other words, from the language of his own people. Language is eventually a means of carrying values acquired by a society in the course of time. In a country where the majority of people speak a certain language it is an eclipse of reason not to instruct that language at schools and colleges. We feel the necessity to create a national language, but also keeping the local tongues alive. In a socialist economic and political atmosphere, the establishment of ethnic languages would not be harmful to national integrity and awareness. It is just in a competitive capitalist formation that the competing interests manipulate ethnic and regional language varieties to the harm of the collective cause of the peasantry and the workers. That a study of our vernacular tongues is crucial for a significant self-image is increasingly being realized. At a recent conference on the study of Ghanaian languages at the University of Ghana, D. G. Ansare told the delegates¹¹³ :

“We have invited you here to share with you some of our needs. One of these is the need to realize that the systematic and careful study of our indigenous languages is a prerequisite to the better knowledge of ourselves, our way of life, our ideals of the beautiful, the true, the good and the holy. It is also an indirect aid in our performance in other languages, including English.”¹¹⁴

Concerning the language he asserts that the growing analysis of indigenous African languages is naturally going to motivate more Africans who wish to write in their mother tongues and in this way initiate new ways for our creativity.¹¹⁵

About Fine Arts he suggests that schools of drama and music should be set up in African universities and other centres of learning, not as mere focuses for the academic study of African music and drama, but as nerve-centres for experiments in new forms and structures. Orchestras and drama companies resident at the schools and universities must go out to the villages and urban areas. The University should also be

¹¹³ Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Homecoming*, Heinemann, London 1972, pp.16-17.

¹¹⁴ D. G. Ansare, “The need for a specific and comprehensive policy in the teaching of Ghanaian Languages”, Birnie and Ansare.” op. cit. *Towards a National Culture* 21

¹¹⁵ Thiong'o, *ibid*, p.17

accessible to regional music and drama groups, to ensure a healthy mutual exchange of ideas and skills.¹¹⁶

He explains that most African universities and schools have departments of Fine Art where students go to learn sculpture, drawing and design. But apart from the approach to art in most such departments, which are run and organized as part of a Western mainstream, our very attitudes to art and to our artists have driven the artist to withdraw into himself, or into resignation. In terms of living, we have driven him to be dependent on the tourist. Often our artists paint or sculpt with one eye on these patrons. This ought to change. There must be a way of drawing our artists into the collective mainstream of the community. First, the academic criteria for entering a school of fine art should be removed or radically modified to make it possible for village artists to use the facilities. Even the selection of teachers should not be made on mere academic qualifications. After all, the African sculptors who have had such great influence on modern art were not trained in Western academic institutions. They moulded from a need arising out of the total religious involvement with the community. If a radical approach to art centres were adopted, we would be able to tap the artistic resources and skills in the country as a whole. And we must set up national galleries to collect any available traditional sculpture and crafts and to prevent the best of our contemporary output from going to other countries. Ideally, our social and economic life should be so organized that each village and each section of our cities is an art centre, a music centre, a drama centre. This would have the further advantage of rescuing our artists from their present dependence on the patronage of the tourist or outsider.¹¹⁷

Ngugi's and the aforementioned African Intellectuals' above suggestions indicate how important the educational institutions are in the construction of a people's self-image. A radical re-structuring of our facilities should not be confined to the arts alone, but should extend to science, medicine, geography, in fact every aspect of learning, so that Africa becomes the centre¹¹⁸ :

¹¹⁶ Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Homecoming*, Heinemann, London 1972, p.17.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, pp.17-18.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, p.18.

“In many discussions on the role of the university and indigenous culture, one is often confronted with a rather lazy question. How can one teach medicine, education, physics, agriculture, engineering, law and the rest of other university disciplines not associated with the humanities and bring out through their study and practice the African cultural values? I feel here that the answer must surely lie in two directions. The first and most important is in research. The second is in having the will and the courage to think. How many of our medical academics have, for instance, taken the trouble to study carefully and evaluate the importance of the wealth of curative psychiatry that the African medicine man uses in his practice of medicine. Does this not lie at the core of preventive and curative medicine in Africa? How many African educationists, for instance, have paused to read *Mzee Kenyatta's* education of a Kikuyu child in his book *Facing Mount Kenya* and have had the courage to think and evaluate the wealth of material based from our roots and cultural tradition that can help to build up a true philosophy of African education in all its exciting aspects of educating the full man? How many physicists have used the wealth of the African view of the cosmos to enrich the new western evaluated views and facts that are helped by advanced technology. Surely, it is not from wonder that man seeks truth. The magic wonder is an expression of a people's soul.”¹¹⁹

The universities and our schools should go to the countryside; there must be total involvement with the creative struggle of the peasants and workers. The present dangerous, unhealthy gap between intellectual and practical labour, between the rural and urban centres, would be overcome. The centres of learning, the villages, the towns, would all be part of the blood stream revitalizing the whole body.¹²⁰

Ngugi states that he believes that all these activities, as they are very important, would be meaningless unless seen in the context of the kind of society they want. Their activities should not be aimed at enhancing reactionary traditionalism, irrelevant tribal solidarity, or elitism. After all, traditional tribal entities are irrelevant and old-fashioned now that the economic bases on which they rested have been removed. In an interview with the Cuban revolutionary magazine *Tricontinental*, the leader of the Liberation Movement in Guinea and Cape Verde, Mr Amilcar Cabral, tackled this question as far as it affected his guerrilla forces against Portuguese colonialism¹²¹ :

¹¹⁹ David Rubadiri, “*The University role in the development of East African culture*”, *East Africa's Heritage*, EAPH, Nairobi 1966, p. II.

¹²⁰ Ngugi wa Thiong’o, *Homecoming*, Heinemann, London 1972, p.18.

¹²¹ *Ibid*, p.19.

“We believe that when the colonialists arrived in Africa the tribal structure was already in a state of disintegration due to the evolution of the economy and historical events on the African scene. Today it cannot be said that Africa is tribal. Africa still has remnants of tribalism, in particular as far as the mentality of the people is concerned, but not in the economic structure itself. Moreover, if colonialism, through its action, did anything positive at all, it was precisely to destroy a large part of the existing remnants of tribalism in certain parts of the country.”¹²²

He explains that they want to set up a innovative culture which is not narrowly confined by the limitations of tribal traditions or national boundaries but looks outward to Pan-Africa and the Third World, and the needs of man. The national, the Pan-African, and the Third World awareness must be transformed into a socialist programme, or be doomed to sterility and death.¹²³

After making up their mind, they then employ all the resources at their service, radio, television, film, schools, universities, youth movements, farmers' co-operatives - to create such a society. The film, especially, has great possibilities in Africa, where many people are still illiterate. But the film industry in Africa is practically non-existent. In this way they shall find new strength and a new dynamic. Talking to teachers at Dar es Salaam earlier this year, Julius Nyerere urged them to teach to produce strength in the context of the revolutionary aims of the Arusha Declaration¹²⁴ :

“Otherwise you will teach to produce clerks as the colonialists did. You will not be teaching fighters but a bunch of slaves or semi-slaves. Get your pupils out of the colonial mentality. You have to produce tough people; stubborn youths - who can do something - not hopeless youths.”¹²⁵

Ngugi argues that any true national culture which can produce healthy 'stubborn youths', a culture that nurtures a society based on co-operation and not ruthless exploitation, ruthless grab-and-take, a culture that is born of a people's collective

¹²² Amilcar Cabral, “Determined to Resist”, *Tricontinental*, No.8, 1968.

¹²³ Ngugi wa Thiong’o, *Homecoming*, Heinemann, London 1972, p.19

¹²⁴ Thiong’o, *ibid*, p.19

¹²⁵ Julius Nyerere, *An unofficial translation by the Makerere Political Science Department, of a speech given to teachers at Dar es Salaam*, January, 1969.

labour, such a culture will be best placed to contribute something truly positive and original to the modern world.¹²⁶



¹²⁶ Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Homecoming*, Heinemann, London 1972, p.19.

CONCLUSION

It seems to me that the most significant issue Ngugi has tackled is the use of indigenous African languages. Even if the focus of this study is his suggestions for the emancipation of a nation, Ngugi's stance against the imperialism, colonialism, culture, and literature. During my study, I have closely examined his nonfiction works, in particular; *Homecoming*, *Decolonizing the Mind*, *Moving the Centre*, *Detained: A Writer's prison Diary*, *Something Torn and New*, *Globalectics*, all of which are invaluable accounts of a responsible intellectual and writer about his surroundings. In his early fiction, *Weep Not, Child*, *The River Between* and *Petals of Blood*, Ngugi has a nationalist view, and believes in conventional order of things. During his Leeds University experience he got acquainted with Frantz Fanon, Marks, and Engels. After that he acquired radical political ideas and became a socialist and Fanonist. Ngugi is a true intellectual defending and supporting his people in their endeavor to regain their land from British colonialists.

Ngugi has a large family living in a village near Nairobi. His father had four wives and about twenty eight children. They spoke Gikuyu when they worked in the fields, at and outside their homes. He told that in his childhood he recalled:

“The evenings of storytelling around the fireside. It was mostly the grown-ups telling the children but everybody was interested and involved. We children would re-tell the stories the following day to other children who worked in the fields picking the pyrethrum flowers, tea-leaves or coffee beans of our European and African landlords. The stories, with mostly animals as the main characters, were all told in Gikuyu. ... There were good and bad story-tellers. A good one could tell the same story over and over again, and it would always be, fresh to us, the listeners. He or she could tell a story told by someone else and make it more alive and dramatic. The differences really were in the use of words and images and the inflexion of voices to effect different tones.”¹²⁷

¹²⁷ Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Decolonizing the Mind*, Zimbabwe PH, Harare, Zimbabwe, 1981, p.10.

Ngugi contends that :

“Language was not a mere string of words. It had a suggestive power well beyond the immediate and lexical meaning. Our appreciation of the suggestive magical power of language was reinforced by the games we played with words through riddles, proverbs, transpositions of syllables, or through nonsensical but musically arranged words.”¹²⁸

Thus they learned the music of their language at first stage. The language through images and symbols brought them an outlook of the world, yet there was a beauty in it. Their houses and the fields became their first schools but above all, their language in every occasion were the same one. But when he went to a colonial school that harmony was broken. The educational language was no longer the language of his culture.¹²⁹

Ngugi’s life has been moulded first in Alliance High school, which is a prestigious colonial institution and in Makerere University, which is also a colonial institution. In 1952 after the Mau Mau uprising a state of emergency was declared and all the educational institutions managed by native Kenyans were undertaken by the British colonial administration. Ngugi acknowledges that:

“My colonial university education at Makerere had blinded me to the true nature of colonialism and imperialism. It had turned me into a parrot and an animated puppet mouthing out phrases prepared for me in European text-books. But Kariiki's education in the settled area, in the streets of political struggle with the masses, in the universities of Manyani and other concentration camps, had opened him out to see the link which bound the peasants and workers of Kenya to all others struggling against oppression and exploitation.”¹³⁰

Ngugi’s struggle is against the colonialists and after independence with the neocolonialist, the elite class of Kenyan people who continue to oppress the Kenyan people and represents the interests of Europeans. He believes that writing in

¹²⁸ Ngugi wa Thiong’o, *Decolonizing the Mind*, Zimbabwe PH, Harare, Zimbabwe, 1981, p.11.

¹²⁹ Ibid, p.11.

¹³⁰ Ngugi wa Thiong’o, *Writers in Politics*, Heinemann, London 1981, p.83.

indigenous languages is a part of anti-imperialist struggle of African people. Kenyan native languages were associated with negative qualities of backwardness, underdevelopment, humiliation and punishment. The people who went through that school system were meant to graduate with a hatred of the people and the culture and the values of the language of our daily humiliation and punishment. He stresses that he does not want to see Kenyan children growing up in that imperialist-imposed tradition of contempt for the tools of communication developed by their communities and their history. He wants them to transcend colonial alienation.¹³¹

To sum up, Ngugi's intention is to help the Kenyan child to restore his natural environment in which he can regain his self-confidence and feeling of security through establishing the harmony between all the aspects and segments of language. Thus, the child will be in a situation to be able to alter his surroundings for his common interest. The mother tongues of Kenyan people must carry a literature mirroring not just the cadence of a child's verbal statement, but at the same time his combat with his social nature and the nature itself. Establishing a sound unity between himself, his language and his environment and taking this unity as the first step, he can act without any complexes about his own self, language and environment; that is, he can acquire a different language, possess the good qualities in foreign literatures and cultures.¹³²

Finally, the idea of setting up a department of literature where plays, fiction, and other genres of literary texts from various parts of the world are focused on is a revolutionary action. Such a department should be set up in Turkey and works from the world should be selected carefully by a committee to be taught within these departments in the future. As for the language, native languages are indispensable as languages of writing. Language is the carrier of culture and is specific to a certain one, so it should carry out its real function in its native land.

¹³¹ Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Decolonizing the Mind*, Zimbabwe PH, Harare, Zimbabwe, 1981, p.28.

¹³² *Ibid*, p.28.

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