

THE DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGING PERSPECTIVES OF EDUCATION
IN NGUGI WA THIONGO'S FICTION.

BY

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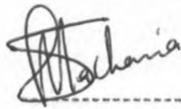
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This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for examination in any other university.



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DEDICATION

To my husband Muthure, whose
encouragement has greatly influenced
the completion of this thesis.

And to my son Macharia, whose
understanding has
been my strength.

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ABSTRACT

This study is an analysis of the development of the theme of education in several of Ngugi wa Thiongo's literary works. It looks into the various changes of the author's perspectives to the subject of education that are evident in his recurrent treatment of this theme. The River Between and Weep Not, Child have been chosen to represent his attitude to end the early phase of his writing career, while A Grain of Wheat and Petals of Blood represent the second phase. Devil on the Cross has been looked at as a representation of the author's most recent statement on the function of education in an independent African nation. Mention of his essays is made in reference to their relevance on the literary works and the theme of education.

The study situates the author's literary works in a social historical context. In this respect we trace the author's interest in the theme of education in close relation to his society's historical and social attachment to it. The texts handled here can broadly be viewed as representative of Ngugi's pursuit of his society's determination to address themselves to key issues affecting them. His perspectives are seen to be influenced directly by his society and by his social and academic background.

The prominent changes evident in the author's treatment of the theme of education, are of great significance. This study highlights that the development of this theme is a conscious and deliberate attempt by

the author to relate the issues of education to the problems of a fast developing independent African state. Consequently the need to resolve some of these issues is raised here.

The author's development of his concern for social issues has been a key factor in influencing his attitude towards education. Although this study is not a final statement on education in Ngugi's fiction, it is hoped we have made a significant contribution towards scholarship on one of Africa's greatest literary artists.

S.W.M. Macharia.

July 1990.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Literary artists have for a long time shown great concern about the place and function of education in society. This concern emanates from their belief that education plays a vital role in ensuring conformity, stability and continuity in society. Through the process of education a society defines and expresses itself. One of the best known artists of the mid 19th Century who captured the mood of education system of the public schools in England then is Charles Dickens. In his novel, Hard Times, he goes to great lengths to portray the devastating effects of the education system then on the well being of society¹. By use of satire, he links the mechanical system of education to the fast spread of industrialisation in which the common factory workers mechanically mind machines with little intellectual application.

In its broadest terms, education "begins at birth and ends only with death"². John Dewey, a renowned educationist, explains the relationship between education and life as complementary. "What nutrition and reproduction are to the psychological life, education is to social life"³. In this respect, education has no limits, for it involves every aspect of life, collective or individual. Indeed the term "education" has as many definitions as there are causes to define it. Although the definition may vary considerably, that education is a necessity of life is a point conceded by all. Consequently, we will approach it from its significant

bearing upon society. We owe this opinion to John Dewey who further defines education as "the means of social continuity of life, ... a fostering, a nurturing, a cultivating process"⁴. Our study, however, will narrow it to a more specific and manageable definition. We will understand the term in reference to its formal aspects; the kind that is commonly referred to as western education or school learning. In this mode of learning there is a deliberate, direct and systematic tuition of the young, in an institutional environment, under particular persons who are assigned those specific duties.

The foundations for formal schooling system in Africa were laid by the European Christian Missionaries in the late 19th Century, which along with the introduction of the Christian religion, became part of their "civilising" mission. Because each society, traditional or modern, has its own manner of educating its members, the Africans for whom this new schooling system was introduced at first rejected it, for it interfered with theirs which was integrated in their traditional life as a whole. Shortly, however, a few Africans got converted to the new religion and consequently got a chance to study in the missionary centres. The need to read and write was gradually felt by the larger society and soon the mission centres were filled with many children, a manifestation of their parents' aspiration to understand the mysteries of the white foreigners⁵.

It is from a historical reality that the theme of education has found its way into the fiction of African literary artists. Their concern for the effects of the impact created by European and African contact with

peculiar reference to education and christianity has been one of the dominant themes in modern African literature. Their attitudes and approaches to this contact varies considerably. Some artists for instance are nostalgic about the African way of education, while at the same time appreciating the western type they had opportunity to undergo. Camara Laye is one such example who recalls his childhood and early school in The African Child. From the perspective of a child, he portrays a harmonious traditional society in which the youth get educated through direct association with others in society, and their active participation in the social and cultural activities. Traditional rites and practices serve to instil in them certain dispositions which help them to adjust appropriately in the social life. This kind of education comes to an abrupt end when Camara leaves home to join a higher institution of learning. In A child of Two Worlds, Mugo Gatheru portrays his yearning for western education. His novel is a representation of an ardent wish for society in general to acquire western education. In his search for this education he is uprooted from the traditional life of his society and subsequently becomes a child of two worlds for having entered in part the world of the educated.

Other African artists have portrayed the effects of western education in relation to the society they depict. Amid protests from his society, Ezeulu in Chinua Achebe's novel, Arrow of God, sends his son to the missionary school to be his "ear" and "eye" and to bring him back his share of the wisdom he gets at school. In an earlier novel, No Longer

at Ease, Achebe depicts an entire village's overwhelming pride in sending their son across the seas to acquire the white man's knowledge and wisdom. The fact that the educated in the two novels do not comply with certain traditions of their society signifies the conflicting worlds in which they have lived; one through formal schooling and the other through the social and traditional society. Achebe does not blame this conflict entirely upon education; neither is he criticising education per se. He depicts instead the impact created by contact with foreign education, values and culture upon the African society in as objective a manner as possible. Indeed, both the author and the larger society are convinced that education is important in their fast changing society.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o, one of Africa's leading novelists, has shown a keen interest in the theme of education in several of his works. His creative output to date spans close to a quarter of a century, during which time he has published six novels, three plays, several short stories and essays. His fictional works focus on particular epochs in the history of Kenya. Colonialism, the struggle for political independence, the transition from colonial government to an independent state are some of the hallmarks in his fiction. One of the most recurrent themes however, is education, which has been portrayed as playing a crucial role in determining the course of some of the above events. Indeed Ngugi handles education with close attention to the significant bearing it has upon these historical and social incidents over time. Through his constant revisits to this theme he has accorded education a special

importance in which one can decipher his social concern. Ngugi is one of the African authors who have deliberately elaborated on this theme and in each work, the author's perspective upon education and the issues related to it emerge.

Although Ngugi's vast creative output has attracted many critics and scholars the world over, many of whom have shown concern with his themes, there has not been any comprehensive study specifically addressed to education, a theme that is complex, progressive and to which other related issues are closely tied giving it the ability to acquire different dimensions. Some of Ngugi's themes that have been studied in some detail are: cultural conflict as a result of the African and the European contact⁶, the alienation of the individual from his traditional and cultural roots⁷, colonialism and its impact upon the African society, the historical influence on Ngugi's creative works⁸ and the political concerns in his novels, which include the assessment of the author's ideological belief reflected in his work⁹. When the theme of education does occur in the course of some of these studies it is usually as an appendage of the main concern; usually applied to enhance the critic's observation. Nevertheless, there are a few of these scholars who acknowledge the prominence of the theme of education and have made significant attempts at highlighting its importance. G. D. Killam, for instance, observes that education may lead to a fundamental exploration of how the good of society can be achieved¹⁰. Eustace Palmer has also observed that education has always assumed a special importance in

Ngugi's works¹¹. Cook and Okenimkpe have also pointed out the importance of education with particular reference to the author's implicit question posed in The River Between, as to which form of education is desirable in Africa or elsewhere¹².

Through the above observation, it is evident that the theme of education in Ngugi's fiction has not been subjected to a comprehensive study. The little work done on this theme by Killam and Cook is in the way of raising its importance to the reader and to pave the way for further research. Their focus nevertheless has not been on education in particular, but an overall appreciation of Ngugi's work in which education takes only a small fraction. Yet the importance the author attaches to this theme is reflective of the significant role it has played in the society particularly in certain historical and social situations. Ngugi is one African artist who has consciously and consistently portrayed education in almost all his fiction as directly influencing society's attitudes and contributing directly to their state of well-being. He has not merely documented the historical events and imposed education upon them, but rather he traces the development of education since its introduction and with his artistic skill reflects its relationship to society, in particular social environments. Alongside this he takes into account the dynamic nature of society, its ability to adapt to social and historical changes and hence gives the theme a non-static nature. Through his fiction, he has portrayed various perspectives of education which develop through the various stages of his writing career. The

development and changing attitudes have largely been influenced by his social and historical circumstances. Of particular interest to our study are these perspectives, their development, and the manner in which they manifest a growing artistic and social awareness.

There are further reasons why one cannot ignore Ngugi's keen interest in the subject of education. Outside his fictional works, particularly his essays in *Writers in Politics* and *Homecoming*, the latter which he views as an integral part of the fictional world of his first three novels, he is more vocal and states the need for society to design its own education system, relevant to its needs and aspirations. In one of his recent pronouncements on education in an essay "Education for a National Culture"¹³, he emphasises the role of education in transmitting a culture that inculcates the knowledge that man can be in control of his social environment and of himself. One observes therefore, that the recurrence of the theme of education is a conscious one, which sooner or later is expressed vocally and more explicitly in his essays. It is for this reason that although we are handling Ngugi's fictional works, his essays where necessary may be consulted to enhance certain observations we make in the course of our study.

We have noted that the society in which Ngugi has grown greatly prized education. This society has considerably influenced his attitude to education. His early novels reflect to a great extent the impact of western education in the colonial period. They are set in circumstances where a small fraction of society has had western education as opposed to the

larger society some of whom are opposed to the missionary influence upon their traditional lives. His later works are set in the modern African society in which a large percentage has had some formal education up to certain levels. The effect of education is markedly different here. So is the author's attitude towards education and society and their role towards each other. In such a fast changing society, the treatment of education by Ngugi, who also has developed both artistically and in social vision arouses scholarly interest. Through an analysis of his fiction we will address ourselves to the manner in which the author handles this most complex theme. We will also investigate in the course of our study the effects of this education upon the society about which Ngugi writes, the perspectives of the author towards education at particular periods of his writing career and the factors that may have contributed to these perspectives. Attitudes that range from hope to despair and disillusionment are portrayed through various characters and through some of these characters, he projects his own convictions about the function of education.

Our study thus seeks to investigate the treatment of the theme of education in Ngugi's fiction particularly the essence of this education and its effects upon both the individual and the society through the various social and historical periods as portrayed by the author. In the process of this investigation the author's attitude towards education will be analysed with a view to establishing the factors that may have contributed to its development and changes. The purpose of this study

emerges from the need to study critically and comprehensively the literary development of the theme of education and its mode of presentation as one continuum in Ngugi's fiction. We will trace its chronological presentation and the consequent development in the society and its consequent effects. The theme seeks to investigate further the noteworthy observation by several of Ngugi's keen readers and critics that education occupies a vital place in his fiction and through it, he poses questions related to the function of education and its relevance to society. Through the study of this theme, the growth and maturation of the author both as a literary artist and a social critic will be made manifest.

This study is undertaken with the knowledge that Ngugi's literary works have been acclaimed widely since his writing career started while he was in Makerere in the early sixties. Indeed, scholars have continued to pay critical attention to his works either in comparison with other writers or in their own right. However, no comprehensive scholarly study of the literary development of the theme of education in Ngugi's fiction has yet been done. This is a significant theme through which the author not only reflects upon the social changes that have occurred in the years, but also sub-consciously manifests his own literary growth and development, and social clarity. The absence of such a study has ultimately created a wide gap that needs scholarly redress.

Unlike other African artists who in the wake of modern African literature portrayed the theme of education as part of the contact

between African and European worlds, and had little or nothing to say about it later¹⁴, Ngugi has continued to this day to give it great prominence in his works. We will attempt to unfold this unique attachment to the theme and the unique manner in which he presents it.

In a society that places a high premium on education, and in which an artist grows and matures and derives his inspiration from the very social surrounding, it is not surprising that Ngugi portrays a significant degree of sensitivity towards education in his art. It becomes necessary therefore to evaluate how such an artist as Ngugi depicts its effects upon both the individual and society.

Ngugi portrays in his many literary works a sensitivity towards a society that is experiencing fast changes, some of which are a direct result of education, in a way that confirms his social concern and the role of education in society. A prominent theme such as education through which he makes succinct his social concerns, merits a scholarly study. Our study thus aims at redressing this gap and in so doing we hope to contribute an important aspect of literary scholarship.

We approach our study from the point of view that "Art was and has always been in the service of man"¹⁵. We underscore the importance of the social significance of literature. Consequently we will harness our study to the sociological approach to literature. Literature functions as the mirror of society as it changes both socially and historically. It reflects upon the dynamics of society as it attempts to handle these changes. Literature therefore is a social product written for society and

about society by one who derives his inspiration and raw material from that society. It also acts as a medium through which the artist projects his desire for humanity in his society. The sociological approach is most suitable to the study of Ngugi's works for it enables us to analyse in totality the author's social concerns particularly through the portrayal of education in his works.

The relationship between literature and society has been emphasised as already noted above by Chinua Achebe in his collection of essays in Morning Yet on Creation Day. Jean-Paul Sartre, a renowned French thinker and writer believes that a writer should serve his community with his pen, and further, that the subject of literature has always been man in the world¹⁶. In The Sociology of Literature, D. Laurensen and A. Swingewood view literature as pre-eminently concerned with man's social world. It delineates his roles within the family and other institutions and portrays the conflicts and tensions between groups. As art, literature transcends mere descriptions. Objective scientific analysis penetrates the surface of social life showing how individuals within the society relate to each other¹⁷. Indeed, as R. Wellek and A. Warren in their book, Theory of Literature have said, "literature is a social institution, using as its medium language, a social creation"¹⁸. Further, the two authors emphasise the importance of "the sociology of the writer, the social content of the works themselves, and the influence of literature on society"¹⁹.

In respect of the sociological approach, the social issues raised

by the author in reference to education will be important to our study. Owing to the social and historical changes that the author's society experiences, the significance of education as depicted against these changes will assist in determining his attitudes towards education at particular periods in his literary career. We hope to illustrate that the society in Ngugi's work is the focal point upon which the author forms his attitudes.

The basic hypothesis in this study is that, taken together, Ngugi's works constitute a socio-historical continuum in which education is portrayed as having had significant effects upon society over the years. These effects are highlighted in the early portrayal of the educated who by virtue of their being educated are made to shoulder the social burden of liberation. Later in the more recent works, characters who through education have also reached higher levels of social awareness, are portrayed. Closely related to this is the hypothesis that Ngugi's novels reflect a trend of development of the theme of education which demonstrates conscious and deliberate revisits to the theme, each time drawing upon particular social and historical climates upon which he bases the society's attitudes to education, and from which we can deduce his own perspective towards it. Finally, we propose that Ngugi's treatment of this theme, albeit deeply rooted in his society's historical and social circumstances, reflects a uniquely individual and artistic response characterised by his artistic development and personal social vision.

We have now noted that the theme of education preoccupies Ngugi in most of his fiction. However, since our objective is to analyse his thematic approach to the issues pertaining to education and consequently trace its development, this study surveys Ngugi's texts insofar as the theme of education is prominent and projects his perspectives. We therefore limit this analysis to his four novels: The River Between, Weep Not, Child, A Grain of Wheat and Petals of Blood. Devil on the Cross will only briefly be noted as constituting his most recent perspective. Although Ngugi has made important pronouncements about education in his essays, they will not constitute our critical study. Reference to them, nevertheless, may be made in the process of our investigations.

Our research into this aspect of Ngugi's concern was primarily in the library. Both University of Nairobi and Kenyatta University libraries were consulted frequently in reference to works written by various critics on Ngugi. Other relevant materials pertaining to the study were also sought from other libraries other than the above country.

Ngugi's creative output which to date spans well over two decades, has aroused interest in a large number of literary scholars and critics many of whom have highlighted their writings and publications in aspects of the author's writings. Some analyse the various themes, others yet concentrate on language and style. Of interest to us in this study are those scholars who have paid attention to the theme of education. Through their diverse approaches to this theme, their

objective of studying it and their manner of presentation, they have broken ground into this area of study and thus facilitate a comprehensive study towards the development of education as a theme. These critics can broadly be classified into three categories.

The first category includes those scholars who have written short articles, basing their study on single texts in isolation from the others. In this category, comments made and views held about education in Ngugi's fiction help to open grounds into further investigations of this theme as presented by the author in other texts. Although their approaches and views differ, their articles determine what aspects of education have not been studied. We will introduce consequently such critics as Killam, Cook, Dathorne, Palmer among others.

In his article "James Ngugi: Forest Fighters and Freedom", O. R. Dathorne points out the connecting chain between The River Between, Weep Not, Child, and A Grain of Wheat, as the desire for freedom. He also views A Grain of Wheat as a logical development from the earlier novels²¹¹. Although he points out that the virtues of formal education are stressed in these novels, he does not relate education to his analysis of freedom and as such leaves this relationship begging for further research.

In a short article, S. N. Ngubiah analyses two texts, The River Between and The Black Hermit in relation to peace and alienation respectively. He portrays Waiyaki in The River Between as a keen believer in the ability of education, to resolve the differences between the

white man and the African"²¹. In The Black Hermit Remi's education has estranged him from his culture and he fails to cope with the life he has chosen for himself²². Ngubiah's attitude to education in this article is negative insofar as it makes those who are educated unable to cope with their traditional culture. Whereas this may be acceptable to a large extent his analysis is not satisfactory due to its limiting texts. Coupled with this, the critic is too quick to condemn Waiyaki and Remi for their acceptance of a foreign education and does not credit them for their attempt at understanding their society "despite" their education.

Ime Ikiddeh approaches Ngugi's novels as explorations into history conducted through the medium and conventions of fiction"²³. He portrays Ngugi as an artist who records relevantly and artistically past events of his society, especially those related to colonialism. Although it is an established fact that Ngugi's novels centre on what are the most momentous events in Kenya's colonial history, our study goes further and point out that apart from its relationship to historical incidents and epochs, education as a historical reality is not static but undergoes constant changes. Ikiddeh's study which deals with Ngugi's first three novels, recognises Ngugi as a novelist and a historian who records artistically historical experiences of his society. However, we feel that Ikiddeh has omitted the aspects of education as contributing significantly to the historical trends as portrayed by Ngugi.

In his short article "Themes and Development in the novels of Nguqi", Howard²⁴. offers very little insofar as the theme of education and

its development is concerned. Here, the writer analyses the saviour theme in Ngugi's first three novels, in relation to their tribal, Christian, educational or political biases. He is particularly interested in the credibility of the characters in relation to the saviour theme. A lot could have been done particularly with reference to education. In a passing remark, he does however note that Kabonyi in The River Between, is "the self-constituted representative of the secular polarity to education"²⁵. Howard's interest in education is only insofar as it is one of the many facets of the saviour theme.

In his article "Petals of Blood as a Mirror of African Revolution"²⁶, Grant Kamenju views the entire novel as a reflection of African revolution. Consequently, education, he believes, is portrayed as symbolising imperialism that needs to be revolved against. He further demonstrates how Ngugi has been influenced by his socialist thinking in his call for an end to imperialist education²⁷. However, in an article as short as this, and considering that education is not only the central theme but also has many facets in this novel, this study deems it necessary to go further and understand this education, its various levels, effects on the various social groups before analysing Kamenju's views. This calls for a more thorough and critical analysis of the study of the literary development of education in Ngugi's fiction. Nevertheless, Kamenju's observation will contribute significantly to our understanding and analysis of education in Ngugi's fiction, particularly in Petals of Blood.

In the second category are critics who have studied certain

fictional works of Ngugi but only as one of the tributaries of the broad area of African writing. Their studies treat Ngugi's works as constituents of the whole spectrum of African literature. Due to the very nature of their studies, these critics have hardly made significant studies in any one author, more so, any comprehensive study in any particular theme that concerns an author. Not much therefore with respect to education in Ngugi's fiction is available, albeit the critics' views remain highly significant.

Adrian Roscoe, in reference to Ngugi's first novels, views education as "a catalyst to development, the moulder of new leaders who will guide the clans through the complexities of the modern world"²⁸. To Roscoe, education is a means to development and civilization. He does not portray how the society views it, the educatees or the author before putting to the fore, his views on it. The theme of education he points out is closely related to land and Christianity - an observation that needs further investigation. He also observes, like S. N. Ngubiah, that education creates class division. These sentiments remain observations that could be further investigated to test their validity.

A fairly recent critic of the African novel, Simon Gikandi²⁹, has studied character and consciousness in Petals of Blood. Under the umbrella of "The Political Novel", Gikandi observes that "the novelist seeks to be both the mirror and the lamp of his society"²⁹. Although little attention has been paid to the theme of education, he makes an important observation in reference to Siriana Secondary School. He

refers to it as an elitist school whose products form the elite population of independent Kenya¹⁰.

One of the available works that goes a step further from these two critics above, has been written by Fustace Palmer. Although his study of Ngugi cannot be described as comprehensive, he has nevertheless highlighted certain observations in regard to education in Ngugi's works. In his book An Introduction to the African Novel, he has studied Ngugi's first three novels tracing his artistic achievements which, he observes, reach the peak of "excellence" in A Grain of Wheat. In Weep Not, Child, Palmer states that Ngugi demonstrates that the solution to the country's problems did not lie in education¹¹. He believes that education is portrayed as an escape from the responsibilities of the times. With regard to The River Between, Palmer blames Waiyaki's obsession of education as largely contributing to his tragedy¹². Although our observation may differ from Palmer's he does go further than the other critics in his sensitivity to education in Ngugi's fiction. The Growth of the African Novel, which shortly followed his first book has included various novels by Africans which were published after the first book. Palmer studies Petals of Blood with symbolism, characterisation and social disintegration as his major concerns. In a paragraph on education, he is of the opinion that despite the importance the society attaches to it, many end up in disillusionment. He adds that education is represented as "an oppressive, irrelevant and racist system"¹³. As earlier mentioned, a thorough study of this theme is necessary for it constitutes

a dominant portion of the novel. Through this study we shall determine why this education is oppressive and irrelevant and what the author would substitute it with.

In the third category are critics who have taken an interest in virtually all Ngugi's fictional works. They also highlight the author's social and literary background, which contribute to the understanding and appreciation of his social concerns in his art. The critics study each text on its own merit, in isolation from the others. Although in the cases where themes recur, the critics have isolated them, they have not been subjected to an indepth study. They nevertheless help in giving insight to the artist's output and through their study, one can decipher the various areas that call for further investigation

David Cook and Michael Okenimpe in their book Ngugi wa Thiong'o : An Exploration of his Writings, analyse the author's novels first in their chronological order, from The River Between up to his first Kikuyu novel later translated into English as Devil on the Cross. They then analyse the short stories and the plays. Style is analysed exclusively, in its role of facilitating communication with the readers. Owing to their broad study of Ngugi, little attention is given to the theme of education. However, in their criticism of The River Between, they raise an important observation: that the novel "poses questions which remain urgently relevant today, as to what form of education is desirable in Africa or elsewhere"¹⁶. This issue indeed forms the core of this novel and therefore becomes of crucial importance to our study. Having raised

such an important issue, one would expect that when the theme of education recurs in any other works, reference to this issue would be made. Not so; in fact that is the furthest they go in analysing this theme. The subject has therefore been abandoned without any further analytical study.

In An Introduction to the Writings of Ngugi, G. D. Killam has analysed Ngugi's fiction from The River Between up to Petals of Blood. Included here also are Ngugi's collection of short stories Secret Lives and his play The Trial of Dedan Kimathi. His objective is to introduce Ngugi to his readers in order to appreciate his fiction. His chronological approach also makes it possible to make explicit the artist's creative growth. In a text of this nature, that is, a short analysis of each text, one hardly expects a comprehensive study towards any particular thematic concern of the author. However, he does observe the prominence of education in the various works of art. Killam notes that education in The River Between is explored by the author as one of the possibilities of reconciling opposite ideas and factions¹¹. Further, he notes that the theme of education is first introduced in this novel and continues to concern him more in his later works. We share to a certain extent his view that the author does not at this stage have any specific answer to the question of the place of the traditional education in the light of the fast spread of western education¹². Indeed as he points out, education is focused less clearly in Weep Not, Child.

In Killam's analysis of Petals of Blood he correctly notes that

education is discussed at great lengths in the novel. However, he only briefly outlines the relationships of the prominent characters through their common secondary school background at Siriana. He also notes Karega's quest for a purpose in his life through education. Although we acknowledge that Killam goes further than Cook and Okenimpke in his analysis of the theme of education, he does not systematically evaluate it as a recurrent theme that is subject to several changes. His two-page study of education, for instance with regard to Petals of Blood can hardly constitute an adequate investigation to such a complex theme particularly as it is portrayed in this novel. Our study goes much further than Killam's. We approach education as a theme portrayed in various stages in the author's literary career, through which we intend to analyse its development and the subsequent perspectives the author consciously or unconsciously portrays.

In the fourth and last category are those scholars who have in various respects studied education in Ngugi's fiction. They however refer to it mainly as a reference to the wider areas of their major interests. Their importance arises in the pronouncements they have made on the topic of education. These scholars have studied Ngugi, not in isolation, but along with other East African artists, whose literary concerns arouse scholarly interest.

In her Ph.D thesis "Cultural Conflict in East African Writing", Eddah Gasnukia broadly talks about the effects of missionary education in Africa as seen and expressed by several African artists. In broad terms

also, she has favourably portrayed traditional education as opposed to the missionary education which she points out, disrupts the social harmony of the traditional society. Education in The River Between and The Black Hermit, for instance, is seen as a means of creating cultural conflict within the individual, Waiyaki and Remi respectively. She observes with particular reference to Weep Not, Child, that education created class differences that were hitherto unknown in the African society.

Christopher Wanjala, in his Ph.D thesis, "Alienation in Modern East African Literature", acknowledges the importance of education in Ngugi's fiction. Under "Education as a panacea: Its Danger of Alienation", he analyses The River Between and Weep Not, Child. He observes that although education is held dear by both the educated and the society, it alienates the former from the social obligations and expectations of his society. Like Gachukia, he expresses the view that both education and Christianity alienated an individual causing a cultural shock in its recipients". In reference to The River Between, he emphasises the role played by African traditional education in initiating one into his society. The harmony is later disrupted on acquisition of western type of education. He scorns Njoroge's tenacious faith in education in Weep Not, Child, as both unconvincing and illusionary.

All these scholars and critics have portrayed their interest in various aspects of Ngugi's fiction found in various texts. So far, none of them has connected clearly and systematically, the development or

transition of the theme of education in Ngugi's fiction. Those that have shown a significant interest in the theme of education, have analysed it in relation to a larger theme, making education a constituent of their major concern. Others have isolated the theme and studied it in reference to a particular text. In various ways however, these scholars have assisted in highlighting areas that need thorough analysis, in this respect, the development of the theme of education. Some of their observations will be of significance to our study and reference to them may be made either to enhance our views or to help reveal other aspects of education that may not presently be obvious. Some too will be congenial to our study and may lead to further revelations in this theme.

ENDNOTES

1. C. Dickens, Hard Times, (Harmondsworth: Penguin 1854) see the first four chapters.
2. J. Kenyatta, Facing Mount Kenya: The Tribal Life of the Gikuyu, (London: Secker & Warburg 1938), p.99.
3. J. Dewey, Democracy and Education, (New York Free Press, Macmillan Publishers Co. Inc. 1966), p.6.
4. Ibid.
5. For further reading, see D. Sifuna and G. Muriuki in Short Essays on Education in Kenya, (Nairobi, Kenya Literature Bureau, 1980 and "The Rise of Kikuyu-British Conflict up to 1980" - unpublished paper respectively.
6. E. Gachukia has dwelt extensively on the issues of cultural conflict in East African fiction in her Ph.D. Thesis U.O.N. 1980.
7. The theme of alienation in Ngugi's early works has been analysed by C. Wanjala in his Ph.D Thesis "Alienation in Modern East African Literature" U.O.N. 1977/78.
8. I. Ikiddeh, "Ngugi wa Thiong'o: The Novelist as Historian" A Celebration of Black and African Writings, eds. King B. & Ogunbesan, K.(Ahmadu Bello. University Press, Zaria O.U.P. 1975), p.204
9. E. Ngara, Art and Ideology in the African Novel, London: Heinemann, 1985), p.75-84

10. G. D. Killam, An Introduction to the Writings of Ngugi, (London: Heinemann, 1980), p.21.
11. E. Palmer, The Growth of the African Novel, (London: Heinemann, 1979), p.303.
12. D. Cook & M. Okenimpke, Ngugi wa Thiong'o: An Exploration of His Writings, (London: Heinemann, 1983), p.27.
13. This paper, first presented at the Zimbabwean seminar on education in Harare in 1981, was later published in Barrel of a Pen, (London: New Beacon Books Ltd., 1983), p.87-100.
14. Many African artists raised the issue of education in relation to European-African contact but abandoned it soon after. Okot P'Bitek and Camara Laye are two examples.
15. C. Achebe, Morning Yet on Creation Day, (London: Heinemann 1975), p. 10.
16. J. P. Satre, What is Literature?, (Trans. by B Frenchman, New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p.58 & 150.
17. D. Lawrenson & A. Swingewood, The Sociology of Literature, (New York: Schocken Books Inc. 1974) p.12-13.
18. R. Wellek & A. Warren, Theory of Literature: A Seminal Study of the Nature and Function of Literature in all its Contexts, Harmondsworth; Penguin, 1973), p.94.
19. Ibid., p.96.
20. O. R. Dathorne, "James Ngugi: Forest Fighters and Freedom", African Literature in the Twentieth Century, (London: Heinemann,

- 1976), p.129.
21. S. N. Ngubiah "Ngugi's Early Writings: The River Between and The Black Hermit" Standpoints on African Literature: A Critical Anthology, ed. C. Wanjala, (Nairobi: EALB, 1973), p.63.
 22. Ibid., p.65.
 23. Ime Ikiddeh, op.cit., p.204.
 24. W. J. Howard, "Themes and Development in the Novels of Ngugi" The Critical Evaluation of African Literature, ed. E. Wright, (London: Heinemann, 1973).
 25. Ibid., p.105.
 26. G. Kamenju, "Petals of Blood as a mirror of African Revolution" Marxism and African Literature, ed. G. Gugelherger (New Jersey: African World Press Inc., 1986), p.133.
 27. Ibid., p. 132
 28. A. Roscoe, Uhuru's Fire: African Literature East to South, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p.173.
 29. S. Gikandi, Reading the African Novel, (Nairobi: Heinemann, 1987), p.134.
 30. Ibid., p.137.
 31. E. Palmer, An Introduction to the African Novel, (London: Heinemann, 1972), p.4.
 32. Ibid., p.20.
 33. E. Palmer, op.cit., p.303.
 34. D. Cook & Okenimpke, op.cit., p.27.

35. G. D. Killam, *op.cit.*, p.21.
36. *Ibid.*, p.26-7.
37. C. Wanjala, Alienation in Modern East African Literature. (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Nairobi 1977/78), p.153.

CHAPTER TWO

EDUCATION AS LIBERATOR - NGUGI'S EARLY VISION

In the first chapter we observed the importance Ngugi attaches to the issues of education in his literary works by pointing out the dialectics on his work by other scholars. We also justified the research on the basis that this concern for education occupies a key place in almost all his literary works. We noted too that the society in which Ngugi was raised regarded education as a very important and unique achievement hence a great premium was placed on education since its introduction by the early European missionaries. The dominance of this theme is significantly influenced by his historical and social environment. In this chapter, we will analyse two of Ngugi's early novels, The River Between and Weep Not, Child. These works were written in the early 1960s when the author was studying at Makerere University College, having gone through an education system quite similar to what he portrays in the works. These works will be analysed with a view to illustrating what views he held about education then, and the factors that may have influenced their formation.

Ngugi's treatment of the subject of education has largely been influenced by two major factors: the social and the personal. Both are deeply rooted in the historical realities of his society. In these works he captures certain historical epochs in the Kenyan past in which his social

concern can be located. The River Between, in which the early missionary begins to settle in interior Kenya, and in which the issue of female circumcision becomes controversial, is set in the period of 1929-31¹. It is against the historical background of white settlement, African resistance and the ensuing conflict of traditional practices that the author raises the issue of education and its effects upon this society. Weep Not, Child is centred on events soon after the Second World War up to the period of Mau Mau uprising, and the consequent emergency period declared by the colonial government. Some of these events are familiar to the writer who experienced them as a young school boy². We will analyse how these historical settings affect the author's attitude to education.

The second important factor which influences his early perception of education is the his own social and academic background. This factor is important because the fiction treated here comprises his attempts to come to terms with the complexities of education while he is undergoing such an education system himself. He places his protagonists in a society in which education is greatly prized and through them he is able to project his observations about the education issues. The author utilizes personal reminiscences. For instance, he recalls an incident in which the first boy in the village created a sensation by qualifying to go to a secondary school in 1952. In this article, the elders are reported to have declared: "The future belongs to the educated man"³. He goes on to say that it was the acquisition of education that made the boy "a hero"

and rocketed him from the "insignificant" society to that of the educated. This incident portrays the elevated social position the learned person instantly acquires.

Three years after this incident, Ngugi secured a place in one of the country's prestigious schools then. It is therefore from a personal experience that he is able to perceive his young educated protagonists, the kind of understanding that emanates from personal, emotional and social experiences. The desires, hopes, fears and conflicts encountered are closely related, sometimes making the authorial voice merge with those of his protagonists⁴. Through these characters and their relationships with the rest of society, the author gives the theme of education a social dimension.

An artist responds sensitively to his immediate environment and its effects upon society. For Ngugi, education, the settlement of white farmers and the consequent effort by his society to reclaim their land, were some of the key issues affecting his society. Any attempt therefore to understand the significance of education in the author's fiction cannot be complete without some background knowledge of the society's strong attachment to land.

In his anthropological text on the Kikuyu, Facing Mount Kenya, Kenyatta explains his society's emotional, spiritual and cultural attachment to land:

The Gikuyu consider the earth as the "mother" of the tribe... It is the soil that feeds the child through lifetime and again

after death it is the soil that nurses the spirits of the dead for eternity. Thus the earth is the most sacred thing above all that dwell in or on it⁵.

Similarly, Ngugi portrays the centrality of land ownership in his fiction, particularly in the two novels, giving rise to the need for liberation of the society's land. In The River Between, for instance, the old man Chege takes his son Waiyaki to the distant sacred grove where he reveals to him the Creator's dwelling. He tells him the creation story which comprised the literal handing over of the land from the Creator to Gikuyu and Mumbi "and their children... world without end"⁶. Like Chege, Ngotho in Weep Not, Child narrates to his wives and children the creation story in which the Creator gave Gikuyu and Mumbi the land⁷.

With such a profound attachment to land, the need to understand the white man's "magic power" that enables him to possess their land and colonise them is of utmost importance. Acquisition of education is viewed by many as a means to liberate society from landlessness, and it is equated to political liberation. It is in this respect therefore that education is viewed as a prerequisite to liberation, a position the author shares with the society, particularly in The River Between. In this novel, western education is perceived by many as part of the fulfilment of a prophecy by a Kikuyu seer, Mugo wa Kiburu, who had foretold the coming of the white man. He had further prophesied that this enemy could not be fought like an ordinary one, with spears and arrows, unless, he warned, one learned and knew their ways and movements"⁸. It is evident that Chege's faith in the prophecy is profound and his

wisdom emerges in his attempt to understand it and to seek its fulfilment in his time. He sends Waiyaki to the mission school, with the conviction that after he has learned the white man's ways, the prophecy of a saviour who would save the society from the white man's domination, would be fulfilled through Waiyaki. This concept of the learned bearing the responsibility of leadership has its roots in the messianic motif belaboured by the author in his fiction. The motif is a reflection of the society's expectation of the educated person. It is this messianic expectation of society that provides background material for the role of the educated. In this respect, therefore, Chege explains to his son why he must go to school:

Arise, heed the prophecy, Go to the mission place. Learn all the wisdom and all the secrets of the white man... A man must rise and save the people in their hour of need. He shall show them the way; he shall lead them".

Chege's conception of education lies in its ability to make one understand the white man. Once this is done, they will learn to fight off his domination. For Chege the white man's magic power lies in education and if this is understood, the African would adequately prepare himself in repossessing his land from the coloniser.

As the events of the novel unfold it is evident that western education has not yet taken a firm hold on the African society. Indeed Waiyaki is one of the pioneers of missionary education. In foregrounding the importance of western education Ngugi does not in effect overlook the significance of his society's traditional education. The author

explicates the function of the indigenous education undertaken by the youth and which prepared them for integration into their society. Thus, he asserts that missionary education did not find a people devoid of any education relevant to their social setup. Certain social and religious rituals like the second birth and circumcision are highlighted. Their significance in the growth and maturation of youth as factors that create a strong social cohesion among all people is emphasised. Ngugi underscores the fact that the society's traditional education is deeply rooted in their social and cultural system.

Education is therefore not confined to formal lessons only. For instance, Chege is portrayed as an educationist in his own right. He teaches his son as traditionally expected, about his natural and social environment. On their way to the sacred grove, Chege teaches him about herbs and the various medicines to be found in the natural vegetation pointing out each tree, leaf and root in turn, as they walk, and explains the uses and dangers of each to man. He also explains to Waiyaki the animals encountered and their purposes in man's life. In this way, the relationship between man and his flora and fauna becomes an important lesson in traditional education.

Of great significance to our analysis of education in this novel is the fact that despite the sound education Chege gives his son, he realises it is not enough. He realises that for the youth time and change have posed complex questions that need a different form of education. The author, in support of Chege's decision to take Waiyaki to a mission

school, portrays a society in rapid change, and suggests implicitly that the social concerns must of necessity change in order to deal with the complexities of this change. Chege's decision in sending his son to school is portrayed as wise, symbolic of a man of foresight living well ahead of his time. Chege adequately prepares his son to face the inevitable change in their time, and in so doing prepares him to save his society through the acquisition of his education.

Thus, Waiyaki goes to school in Siriana Mission Centre with the idea of being saviour and leader already suggested to him by his father. He is to be a leader by virtue of his being educated. Owing to his youth, however, the significance of his father's words, their meaning and application, do not immediately make an impact. They are some of the issues he will grapple with in the process of his growth and maturation until he can come to terms with them. The contradictions in the expectations of Waiyaki from his father and implicitly by the larger society, and from the missionary teachers begin to be felt by Waiyaki soon after he joins the mission school. The Africans, represented by Chege, aspire to realise the ancient prophecy of salvation through education, while the missionaries aim at the fast spread of the gospel.

To the missionaries education and evangelism are inseparable. The primary aims and objectives of education are to train the youth to preach the gospel to their fellow Africans. It is in this respect that Waiyaki's quick progress at school impresses the missionaries "who saw in him a possible Christian leader of the church"¹¹. The mission school

further discourages the students from actively getting involved in politics or in any affairs of the colonial government. The headteacher at Siriana influences his students to share his belief "that education was of value and his boys should not concern themselves with what the government was doing or politics"¹¹. Waiyaki's experience at the mission school is bound to divert his attention from the society's objectives. Indeed later we are told that Livingstone's teachings "had found a place in Waiyaki's heart"¹², making him disinterested in the Kiama, the society's political party. Already therefore, we notice the conflicting objectives of education as perceived on the one hand by the African society and on the other, as introduced by the missionary.

The author portrays the strong influence that the missionary education immediately has on Waiyaki both as an individual and in relation to his society. During the circumcision period, when dancing of ritual songs is part of preparation for initiation ceremony, Waiyaki, one of the candidates, is expected to take part in the dances. His absence from the village life has kept him out of touch with his agemates and their village life. Having learned at school that education and Christianity were most essential in life, the feeling that participating in this ceremony was wrong inhibits any spontaneous response to the dances and celebrations like the rest of the initiation candidates.

Livingstone, the symbol of Christianity and education becomes a looming shadow, a nagging conscience in Waiyaki. Amidst the dancers, for instance, Waiyaki "wonders what Livingstone would say now if he

found him or if he saw the chaos created by locked emotions let loose"¹³. It is the teachings at Siriana that unconsciously make Waiyaki aloof, preventing him from fully participating; "although his body moved and his mouth responded to the words, his soul did not fully participate"¹⁴. On an individual level, the missionary school experience becomes alienating¹⁵ and it creates cultural conflict¹⁶ within the African society. This aspect of education is described by the author as inevitable in Waiyaki's time, but does not constitute the overall perspective of education. Although Waiyaki's conscience is torn, he realises the importance of such practices in his society, and when he lets go he is able to enjoy the dances. Waiyaki leaves the mission centre having been tainted by the missionaries' religion and culture. Our study of education, owing to the sociological dimension mentioned earlier does not end on Waiyaki's personal alienation and the cultural conflict created within the society at large. The larger part of education movement is focused after Waiyaki leaves the mission school. The impact of this movement to the larger society therefore becomes crucial to the role of liberation.

With the closure of the mission centre against those students whose parents refuse to denounce traditional practices, especially female circumcision, Waiyaki, along with several others, leaves Siriana. Soon after this dismissal, Waiyaki initiates the idea of the people's own school, a gesture directly derived from the formation of the Kikuyu Karing'a Education Association¹⁷. Two points emerge through this turn of events which further contribute to the theme of education. One, the education

becomes decentralised and spreads to the larger community and not only to the selected few as the missionaries practised it. A larger population could thus acquire the benefits of education. Two, through the education movement that Waiyaki founded, the author portrays his leadership ability and exposes him early to society. It is not long, before the society views him as a potential leader who could realise their hope of political independence.

The society's ability to draw a line between education and the Christian religion and western culture, emanates from their desire to have the white man's education and not his cultural values. The missionaries' resentment for almost all the Kikuyu traditional practices, many of which were sacred and central to their well-being, contributed to their desire to break away from the white man's mission. Indeed, the white man realises that the Africans were basically interested in education and not the Christian religion. Livingstone observes with great disappointment that his call to win souls for Christ had failed: "these people seemed only interested in education while they paid lip service to salvation"¹⁸.

Mariosioni, the school initiated by Waiyaki, is the first people's own school. It is a manifestation of self-help in education. The society has a keen interest in education and willingly supports the growth of Mariosioni and the many others that subsequently follow. The society hereby realises that they have the potential to rally together and build schools, without necessarily sending their children to the mission centre.

This realisation that they could break away from the white man and still offer to their children his education, makes the number of schools rise alarmingly fast. Soon schools become a symbol of the society's expression of their desire to resist the European cultural imposition. Soon after Mariosioni, several other schools are hastily built to meet the demand of the fast growing population of students:

Schools grew up like mushrooms... and there they stood, symbols of people's thirst for the white man's secret magic and power. Few wanted to live the white man's way, but all wanted this thing, this magic¹⁹.

This fast spread of education is evidence of the society's belief that the white man has magical power

which makes him so powerful that he can alienate the Africans from their own land. This magic, the society further believes, can be learned by their children through attending school. Waiyaki becomes testimony to this, for after acquiring education at the mission school he is now learned enough to be a teacher to their children. The realisation that the society can offer their children education through their own concerted efforts further creates in them a certain degree of freedom and the subsequent desire to have absolute control of their destiny begins to attract them. The urgency of education and the need for more schools spreads fast, creating an enthusiasm previously unknown. Parents particularly, are most enthusiastic, for their hopes lie in their children:

... mothers and fathers waited, expecting their children to come home full of learning and wisdom. Parents would feel proud, very proud when a son came home in the evening with a tear-washed face... Beat them hard, we want them to learn²⁰.

Such anxiety for their children to get education under all costs expresses the underlying belief that through education, the society hopes to alter the present situation of white domination. Waiyaki ignites this fever through his education movement and within no time he is identified as the leader of the education movement. Through the self-help schools, which now flourish throughout the ridges, the society's aspirations to acquire education assumes significant proportions. Education becomes one of the primary needs in this society, a means according to them, to understand the white man and eventually reclaim their lands and retain their traditional culture.

With Waiyaki's elevation as a leader, key issues arise which are significant to our understanding of the extent to which education contributes to liberation. One, how well Waiyaki is prepared for his role as leader and educator and two, how well he understands the significance of education in relation to the kind of liberation the society envisages. Finally what constitutes the education he offers his students, considering his mission school education background, which, as we have already mentioned, taught values pertaining to the missionary teaching, among which is non-involvement in politics. An attempt to address ourselves to these issues would reveal the role education plays in such a society and thus reveal the author's concern for his educated

protagonist faced with the complexities of his society.

Waiyaki is elevated to the position of leader because he hails from a family of leaders and seers, but of more significance is the fact that he is educated and initiates the birth and spread of independent schools. For him however, the significance of the title "Teacher" is no more than a respectful one, in appreciation of his duty as a teacher. A close scrutiny at this form of address however, reveals that the society uses it only on Waiyaki and expects him to lead them further to political liberation. The fast and enthusiastic spread of education in the ridges is soon regarded as a movement which the society further believes will lay foundation for a strong political movement. Waiyaki's aim in heading Marioshoni and spreading education to all, contrary to the society's expectation, is to wipe out illiteracy and bring education to the children: the knowledge to write and read and speak English. This is his primary objective. However, the society envisages the kind of liberation that will restore their lands and fight off the white man's domination. This, they believe, can only be done through education and Waiyaki, they further believe, is moving towards the desired direction of political leadership. Finally, we realise that the mission school has not prepared Waiyaki to tackle challenges faced by his society, the most direct and prominent one being political. Indeed Waiyaki has internalised Livingstone's theory that education should be far removed from politics. Thus whereas the society expects that Waiyaki as a teacher is preparing the youth to challenge the white man, Waiyaki is so carried away by the joy of

teaching and eradicating illiteracy, that politics and the society's danger does not bother him as yet.

That the author does not address himself to the issues above exposes a lack of critical attitude towards the essence and significance of education in his society. Instead he is more descriptive of events and in so doing fails to raise the contradictions posed by education as seen and understood by society and as understood by Waiyaki. The author sufficiently portrays the politically based expectation of education in society. The fact that Waiyaki's view of education is portrayed with neither irony nor criticism portrays a lack of critical distance between the author and his character. It is this lack of critical distance that makes many educational issues escape without critical analysis. It is this absence also that leads the author to idealise education just as his character does and at the same time point out the opposing expectations of society. This leads to the apparent ambivalence towards education in the novel. The author portrays Waiyaki's ignorance of his society's expectations of him through education more with sympathy than with criticism. This kind of sympathy emanates from an implicit understanding of the expectations of society upon those educated. This emotional attitude to a character wins over the reader to share the difficulties faced by Waiyaki. The author subsequently fails to transcend his own experience and thus employs an inscribed perspective of education in its importance in eradicating ignorance and illiteracy, and paving way for development.

The portrayal of Waiyaki as a teacher and leader of the education movement is sharply contrasted in his favour with that of Joshua and Kabonyi. These two are extremists, one in christian religious teachings, the other in the traditional Practices. The fact that both are rigid and do not accommodate any ideas outside what they believe in, further contrasts sharply with Waiyaki's flexibility, and his ability to compromise, making him the best leader of the three. Joshua's myopic sense of "leading a sinful people towards Israel" is ridiculed by the author. For Joshua, there is no compromise. "All tribe's customs were bad"¹. He preaches about the need to be righteous, which according to him is synonymous with unquestioningly accepting the missionaries' teachings. For him, one either follows the missionaries or the "heathens": "He spoke of those who wanted to walk their feet on two roads at the same time. How could you mix the two ways?"²². Kabonyi on the other hand, is a traditional conservatist. He strongly believes that the tribe should rid itself of the influence of the white man, especially his religion. Having once been converted into the Christian religion, he goes back to tradition with vigour and conviction that Christianity only contaminates tradition. His concept of leadership is portrayed as conservative, rigid and retrospective. For him a leader should rid the tribe of all contamination, the white man and the converts like Joshua, leaving the tribe pure.

Through the negative leadership qualities portrayed in the two extremists, the author accords Waiyaki a more favourable image as a leader. His youth, his flexibility to change and most of all his education

make him stand well above the two characters. He is the author's means to accommodate the better in Joshua and Kabonyi. For instance, he sees nothing wrong with an uncircumcised girl, neither does he see anything wrong with visiting Joshua's church or taking an oath. Because of his education he stands above his social milieu.

In a society already experiencing drastic changes the author rules out Kabonyi's and Joshua's conservative views of liberation as rigid and lacking the ability to face the complexities brought about by the fast social changes. Through Waiyaki the author's concept of liberation emerges. The acquisition of education makes Waiyaki open and receptive to the white man's knowledge, and appreciative of what his own tradition has taught him. This way the rigidity and single mindedness of a hasty short-term liberation as is the case with Kabonyi and Joshua, gives way to a more dynamic one, one in which a properly laid foundation with clear objectives is considered. Through his education, Waiyaki realises the need to be objective to both the white man and the traditional society, in order to understand what the latter needs to be liberated from.

Waiyaki realises that there is need to unite the society, through making them understand the need for education irrespective of one's background. This is in agreement with the author's view that education would create the neutral grounds on which both the Christian converts and the traditionalists would meet, and together address themselves to a common issue. Only then can they embark on the more difficult task

of political liberation. Indeed Ngugi portrays education as an important means to bring the two ridges towards unity and reconciliation. It is through this that his idealism in education emerges. His belief that education can unite and thus assist in liberation is brought forth.

Through Waiyaki the author poses the suggestion that education is important in uniting this society, and consequently ready themselves for liberation. Waiyaki explicates the relationship between education and liberation:

... Waiyaki thought that he would never forsake them [the people]. He would serve them to the end. With the little knowledge that he had, he would uplift the tribe. Yes, give it the white man's learning and his tools so that in the end the tribe would be strong enough, wise enough, to chase away the settlers and the missionaries.²¹

The above quotation marks the beginning of Waiyaki's efforts to relate the mission of education to the needs of society. He realises that education for its own sake will not do in a society in dire need of their land and hence political liberation. In spite of this, his vision of an educated society is both romantic and idealistic:

And Waiyaki saw a great tribe with many educated sons and daughters, all living together, tilling the land of their ancestors in perpetual serenity, pursuing their rituals and beautiful customs...

Waiyaki evades the application of education in his desired goal of uniting the society. The author too does not explicate how practical education would be in this dimension. It is no wonder that Waiyaki continues to idealise education and to a great extent views it as an end

in itself. Once he undertakes the task of teaching, he does it so single-mindedly that nothing else seems to matter. Driven by the desire to serve and his romantic vision of a peaceful, educated society, Waiyaki works tirelessly, his zeal for education completely dominating him. His enthusiasm drives him to fervently build more schools and staff them with what few teachers become available. Through such efforts he hopes to fulfil his dream of a united peaceful society. He throws his energies single-mindedly into the expansion of education. He views himself first and foremost as an educator, with a mission of making education available to all. Other needs related to education, for instance unity and political liberation, it appears, will fall into place once the society is educated.

Meanwhile the white man has continued to alienate the people occupying the land around the mission. Others have been forced to work on the same land, now legally owned by the white man. There is an urgent need among the society members to put an end to any further land alienation. The society that has continued to perceive Waiyaki as their leader, destined to liberate them politically now expects Waiyaki to do something magnificent with the use of his education and bring them liberation. Waiyaki on the other hand is unaware of this urgent expectation. Indeed he has been so busy with the expansion of schools, that he has not realised the urgent need in society to reclaim their land.

At a time when Waiyaki believes in non-involvement in politics, it

is Kinuthia, his colleague, who in a heated argument with Kamau declares:

I shall take my father, for example... He is the head of the family. Suppose another man comes in and we offer him hospitality. Suppose after a time he disposes my father and makes himself the head of the family with a right to control our property. Do you think he has any moral right to it? Do you Waiyaki? And do you think I am bound by any consideration to obey him? And if conditions become intolerable, it lies with me to rebel, not only against him but also against all that is harsh, unjust and unfair.

Kinuthia's political consciousness, however simplistic is an expression of how far one should go to achieve what is rightfully his. Although Waiyaki is challenged to answer some of the questions, he declines to comment and instead contemplates of education and its expansion. He fails to realise that the society's enthusiasm for education embraced more than the mere desire for learning. It was an expression of their enthusiasm for political freedom. In a society charged with the desire to free itself from colonial domination, the non committal attitude of Waiyaki to the function of education, is evidence of the ambivalence of the author himself in his attitude to the function of education. This, notwithstanding, the author continues to portray Waiyaki as the leader despite his political shortsightedness, and continues to accord him qualities befitting a leader.

At a parent's meeting at Marioshoni, for instance, Waiyaki outlines his plan to extend the school through recruitment of more teachers, replacing the leaking roof with new roofing and purchasing new desks

and stationery. His speech is immediately greeted with loud applause by the parents and the members of society who have also attended this function. The pupils' songs in praise of education are received with hope. They foresee change and believe that things would change for the better. It may take years, but far into the unknown future they ardently hope that things would become different. A saviour had indeed come. Waiyaki impresses the parents both through the pupils' songs, and also by his address to them. "With a persuasive voice and courage, he addresses them, avoiding insulting language, telling them that as a youth, he only wants to serve the ridges under the wisdom and guidance of the elders. He emphasises the role of education in development, so that their society does not lag behind₂₆". He thus, creates such a favourable impression upon the crowd, that Kabonyi's attack is seen as being rooted deep in his jealousy towards him.

Kabonyi's attempt to consolidate power through the Kiama is treated with no less cynicism than Joshua's use of the church to assemble his own followers. His selfish and ambitious motive of stripping Waiyaki of his honour and esteem in society, is treated with contempt, for Waiyaki has clearly impressed the crowd on his potential to advance education. Through Kabonyi, the Kiama is portrayed as a group of people whose sole interest is to aggravate the already existing rivalry between the two ridges. It is portrayed for instance as composed of war-like people, who molest the christians by burning their huts. The Kiama, for instance sends some of its followers to burn down huts belonging to

Joshua's followers. Waiyaki who gets this information prior to the action goes to Joshua's house to warn his followers who have assembled to celebrate the birth of their saviour. The author's sympathy in this incident clearly lies with the christian converts, who continue worshipping in spite of the warning by Waiyaki.

After Waiyaki has impressed the crowd at school, and synonymously they all agree on the need for education, Kabonyi's sole objection is treated with contempt. His opinion that the white man's education is not even necessary and instead they should recruit warriors to drive him out physically confirms his adamant refusal to accept that new challenges should be dealt with by using new tactics. At this point the author's sentiments towards education are portrayed through Waiyaki. The author is cynical to Kabonyi's practical solution: rebellion, which history documents as having played a significant role in the political freedom in Kenya. Instead, Kabonyi's call to battle is treated by the author, as that of a conservative power hungry old man who lacks the foresight Waiyaki apparently has. However, by disregarding Kabonyi's opinion, the author does not, nor does Waiyaki, qualify exactly how education would liberate the society.

For education to be functional in society, it must be conceived of and understood in very explicit terms by Waiyaki, in his capacity as the leader of the educational movement and as the acknowledged political leader. Thus, Waiyaki has to accept that he cannot divorce himself from the society's political needs. He realises his naivety and almost hates

himself for not realising earlier the society's urgent need for freedom. So obsessed has he been with education that he is shocked to realise the omission:

And all at once, Waiyaki realised what the ridges wanted. All at once he felt more forcefully than he had ever felt before, the shame of a people's land being taken away, the shame of being forced to work on those same lands, the humiliation of paying taxes for a government that you knew nothing about.²⁷

Waiyaki has come to grips with the conditions of his society and the fact that for education to be meaningful, indeed if it is to be worthwhile, it must be socially functional. The society's needs oblige him to realise that education is a seed, which if carefully tended, could greatly increase people's awareness of their predicament which in turn could result in their ability to decide what is right and good for them and how best it can be achieved.

On return from the sacred grove, where he had withdrawn for self-reassessment, and where he had sought the purpose of his mission as educationist in relation to his father's prophecy, he emerges assured that his role as educator and the fundamental role of the Kiama to restore the tribe did not conflict. It is during this second visit to the sacred grove that Waiyaki undergoes a cognitive development. He recalls the importance his father had attached to the first visit, almost akin to reverence. He looks at the land through the eyes of the people, which is what his father had desired in the first place. Only then is he able to realise the implication of land alienation and the suffering under

the colonial domination. Waiyaki comes out triumphant that he is now able to outdo what the missionary education had done to him; he can no longer ignore the political situation of his society:

Yes, the Kiama was right. People wanted action now. The stirrings were an awakening to the shame and humiliation of their condition... How could he organise people into political organisation when they were so torn with strife and disunity? Now he knew what he would preach if he got another chance. Education for unity, unity for political freedom.²⁴

In his last address to the people gathered in large numbers at the Honia river, Waiyaki systematically explicates the need for education, with particular emphasis on its ability to unite. He reminds them of their historic victories in war, singling out unity as the major factor contributing to these victories. He urges similar unity:

So that divided we may drive him [the white man] out... We must fight together in one political movement or else we perish and the white man will always be on our back. Can a house divided against itself stand?²⁵

The rivalry that has existed between the two ridges, in Waiyaki's view can only be bridged through education. Education is the neutral ground on which both the Christians and the traditionalists would come together and learn the secret wisdom of the white man. Thus equipped and united, they would vent their energy to forming a strong political movement. This view is in rejection of Kabonyi's call to arms, not realising the white man's power is more potent, and in rejection also of Joshua's passive acceptance of the Christian religion as the sole redeemer of sin. Education becomes a major prerequisite for unity which

would consequently strengthen the political struggle.

Through education, Waiyaki has, on the individual level, been liberated from the petty social barriers that hinder one from loving and worshipping without social or tribal inhibitions. Through his growth and maturation, education is finally perceived in its social perspective; its need to relate itself to the social conditions of the time. Education has been deliberately shaped towards the fulfilment of the prophecy earlier told in the novel. The society's unwavering faith in education and their teacher, hence cause the guilty feelings that they have contributed to his downfall when they reject his involvement with Nyambura, Joshua's uncircumcised daughter. Therein lies his tragedy. In his attempt to prove that there is nothing hideous about an uncircumcised girl, Waiyaki befriends Nyambura but the ital influences the crowd to ostracise him. Waiyaki's tragedy emanates not from his failure as an educator, but in his attempt to embody the unity he so much desires. One feels inclined to share the observation of Cook and Okenimpke, that his tragedy stems from his delicate position; "He is asked to solve the problems of society long before he can solve the problems of his own identity".³⁰

In his second novel¹¹, Weep Not, Child, Ngugi deals with events (following the Second World War) which culminates in the Mau Mau uprising. We witness these adverse effects of colonial rule; land alienation and forced labour on the white settlers' farms and the freedom struggle, through the observations and experiences of Njoroge. All these events take place from the time Njoroge enrolls at primary school up to

the time he drops out, shortly before his final year at Siriana Secondary School. A great deal has changed since the events recorded in The River Between: the white man who was physically absent from most of the African land around the ridges and only alienated those around his mission centre, has in Weep Not, Child penetrated deep into the heart of Gikuyu land. He has already settled on most land. A few well-to-do Africans have also become landowners, while the majority of the indigenous people are squatters on either those farms owned by the whites or those owned by fellow blacks.

The consequent dissatisfaction and its expression is captured in the relationships between the three families: that of Mr. Howlands, a white settler, that of Jacobo, a wealthy African land owner and that of Ngotho, a squatter on Jacobo's land but one who works on Mr. Howland's farm. In this novel, the effects of land alienation are depicted as acute, and the resentment against the white man's domination, explosive. The author analyses these effects through the lives of the members of Ngotho's family who are most affected. He also explores the idea that acquisition of education would ease some of the social, political and economic problems experienced by society in varying degrees.

In The River Between, the focus was on the expansion of education so that it may reach the larger society. We also noted the author's conviction that education is important to a society undergoing change and through it, progress and unity would be achieved which would further be used to lay the foundation of political liberation. In Weep

Not Child, the author's focus is on a particular family unit, whose liberation first would symbolise the total liberation of the whole society. The family consequently is portrayed as a macrocosm of the larger society. The author's portrayal of the Ngotho family's pathetic condition of life, and the urgent need to liberate them from poverty and degradation under colonial rule, is opposed to that of the wealthy European settler and Jacobo, the rich African landlord. These three families are representative of the constitute the three basic classes dominant during this period. It is in respect to Ngotho's condition of life that education is introduced right at the beginning of the novel.

The seemingly minor gesture by Nyokabi to her son Njoroge, to enrol in school at the beginning of the novel, and the boy's consequent uncontrollable joy, immediately makes us wonder what education means not only to mother and son, but to the society at large. By sending her son to school, Nyokabi hopes to join the ranks of those women like Juliana, Jacobo's wife, or Mrs. Howlands, whose children go to school:

Nyokabi was proud of having a son in school... It made her soul happy and light hearted whenever she saw him reading... she felt elated when she ordered her son to go and do some reading or some sums... she tried to imagine what the Howlands woman must have felt to have a daughter and a son in school. She wanted to be the same, or be like Juliana... she must surely have felt proud to have a daughter who was a teacher and a son who would probably be flying to foreign parts soon.³²

It is the ardent wish to be recognised in society among the women who have made it, that motivates Nyokabi to take her son to school. She

believes that her greater reward of motherhood would be to enjoy the status Juliana enjoys, brought about by the pride of an educated son. She also views Njoroge's education as directly liberating the rest of the family from poverty and landlessness. She reasons:

If Njoroge could now get all the white man's learning, would Ngotho even work for Howlands...? Again, would they as a family continue living as Ahoi in another man's land, a man who clearly resented their stay?³³

A simple peasant woman, Nyokabi recognises the changes brought about by the colonial government which further the need to adjust one's view of life. create changes in value. Education, she observes has assumed a significant value. The above sentiments, expressed by Nyokabi, are evident that an educated son alone cannot be a complete source of pride. It is the achievements of her educated son that will bring the greater satisfaction. For instance if her son could elevate them from squatters to a higher social class, like that of Jacobo's they would directly enjoy the benefits of education.

Njoroge too, instinctively understands his parents' expectations of him, once educated. In spite of his youth, he understands education as a factor that contributes to elevation of one's economic and social status. He observes:

I think Jacobo is as rich as Mr. Howlands because he got education. And that is why each takes his children to school, because of course, they have learned the value of it.³⁴

To Njoroge, wealth has been brought about by education, and because

the rich educated parents want the same for their children, they also take them to school. That constitutes the value of education as understood by Njoroge. Education in this novel acquires an economic dimension, absent in *The River Between*.³⁵ Ngugi exemplifies this view through the portrayal of Ngotho's family, their acute need for land and a better life.

Ngotho's desire for his son to get educated coalesces around his most immediate need, land. Although like his wife Nyokabi he is proud to have a son in school, a fact which "made him feel almost equal to Jacobo"³⁶, the greatest achievement that education could realise for him would be ownership of his ancestral land. This is how he understands the relationship between education and land: "Education was good only because it would lead to the recovery of the lost lands".³⁷ This view is representative of the older generation whose sentiments about their land, are painfully real. Ngotho for instance, works on his ancestral piece of land, now legally owned by Mr. Howlands, in the hope that one day he would re-possess it.

It is clear up to this point, that the larger society, here represented by the Ngotho family, link education to economic liberation, symbolised by the reclamation of their land. The author, however, does not address himself to the exact relationship between education and liberation, a fact that makes education ambivalent. It is not clear, for instance, whether Njoroge will buy land for his parents with money earned after he gets a job in the government, or he will get rid of Mr. Howlands and settle on

what is traditionally his father's land. Neither is it clear how Jacobo has become a land owner. In a nutshell, the acquisition of land by the educated is a point the author does not address himself to in this novel. History records however indicate that those Africans who supported the settlement and the government of the Europeans were rewarded with large pieces of land. A large number of these were educated.³⁸ The absence of this dimension of the educated joining hands with the white man, makes us certain that education in this work is perceived and supported by the author as a means of acquiring material benefits; a means of liberating one from a life of want and poverty. A critical attitude towards the educated is absent.

The theme of education takes another turn in development and perspective; not long after Njoroge enters school, the dissatisfaction caused by land alienation, finds expression and explodes into a war. Its effects upon the school-going pupils, and their attempt to understand the situation is explored by the author. In the war, which Njoroge can barely comprehend, the part played by education becomes significant. The turmoil and tension in society force Njoroge's view of education to change. The situation conditions him to make a conscious effort to understand his role in society. In this attempt, he gets an illusionary feeling that with education, he would save not only his family, but the whole society. Guided by this vision, he clings even more tenaciously to his studies:

Through all this Njoroge was still sustained by his love for and

belief in education and his own role when the time came. And the difficulties of home seemed to have sharpened this appetite. Only education could make something out of this wreckage. He became more faithful to his studies. He would one day use all his learning to fight the white man, for he would continue the work that his father had started. When these moments caught him, he actually saw himself as a possible saviour of the whole God's country. Just let him get learning.³⁹

Njoroge escapes the harsh reality of the war and its effects both on his family and on the larger society by visualising himself as able to solve the family and society's entire problems once he finishes school. He dreams of the day, when equipped with education, he will compensate his family for their suffering. It is in this respect that he imagines himself powerful enough to conquer the white man. Such an escapist and illusory attitude towards the reality of war and the suffering society weakens Njoroge's character. He does not attempt to understand either the white man's invasion or the ensuing struggle. Instead he escapes in such platitudes as "the sun will rise tomorrow", "Surely this darkness and terror will not go on forever", "education is the key to the future". Such a helpless attitude to the war situation characterises Njoroge, who means well, but is overwhelmed by the sudden and tragic changes in society so that instead of action, he continues to hope that things would change of their own accord.

Despite the war disturbances, the society as a whole continues to express faith in education. When Njoroge is admitted to Siriana Secondary School, for instance, the news brings immense joy not only to Ngotho and his family, but also to the larger society:

The news of Njoroge's success passed from hill to hill. In spite of the troubled time, people still retained a genuine interest in education. Whatever their differences, interest in knowledge and book learning was the one meeting point between people such as Boro, Jacobo and Ngotho. Somehow the Gikuyu people always saw their deliverance as embodied in education. When the time for Njoroge to leave came near, many people contributed money so that he could go. He was no longer the son of Ngotho but the son of the land.¹⁰

The author observes that education, in spite of the war, continues to occupy an important and prestigious place in the society. The society's keen interest in education is expressive of the society's hopes to win freedom. The author too portrays this hope, in his work. In the above quotation he is more descriptive than analytical of the role education would play in liberation. He passively observes and describes the society's attitude without any suggestion that education alone, would not liberate them. Whether the author is aware of the role the freedom fighters play in ensuring freedom or the fallacy of society in placing most value to education, is not apparent. He does not analyse the significance of society paying such high premium on education, and thus exactly how education will liberate, remains ambivalent.

The society's pressure upon Njoroge, symbolised in their financial contribution to his education, plays a great part in influencing Njoroge in his duty toward them. He feels indebted to them and imagines he should reciprocate their commitment to education by fulfilling their hope for political liberation. His vision of himself as a saviour, naive as it may

appear emanates from the common belief in this society that the educated will save the society from colonial domination. The untold demands made upon him by his society, by the virtue of his having attended school, influence him to view education as a panacea. For him, education is seen to lead to all kinds of expectations:

He knew that for him education would be the fulfilment of a wider and more significant vision - a vision that embraced the demand made on him, not only by his father, but also by his mother, his brothers and even the village. He saw himself destined for something big, and this made his heart glow.⁴¹

Njoroge lacks a proper understanding of education. For him education "held the key to the future; It was the end of all living". Such an idealistic attitude to education further symbolises Njoroge's inability to comprehend education in terms of the school activities, subjects learned and opinion of the teachers who teach him. He neither has preference for particular subjects, nor does he at any time refer to his teachers. His view of education is sentimental and is clouded by fantasy. The messianic expectations too, now rife during the Mau Mau uprising and the soon expected liberation further influence Njoroge to fantasise himself as the saviour.

The relationship between education and political liberation is not expounded in detail in Weep Not, Child, as the case was in The River Between. In the latter, Waiyaki's sole purpose of going to school is directly related to political liberation, symbolised by the foretold

prophecy. In *Weep Not, Child*, however, young Njoroge is left to deduce the purpose of going to school, first through Jacobo's social and economic status, and later by internalising the society's expectations of the educated. His brothers too, even when they are fighting in the forest, ascertain that he continues with education by paying his school fees. The confusion and bewilderment consequently felt by Njoroge influence his illusory role of a saviour.

The author's treatment of Njoroge is neither cynical nor critical of his lack of motivation or courage to participate in the events surrounding him. Neither is he critical of Njoroge's escapist attitude to the war situation, which makes him seek solace in school and later in the suicide attempt. It is for this reason that we note that the author has not yet developed a critical stance towards the attitudes brought about by education. His educated protagonists are by their very education exposed to criticism from the reader but they are handled by the author with sympathy and compassion, in a manner suggesting that he understands their predicaments in this society. Njoroge, for instance, is accorded sympathy befitting one who has suffered intensively both socially and mentally. With reference to the novel's title, the author's sympathies to Njoroge emerge. Indeed, it is ironical that Njoroge extends pity to Howland's son, the boy who seems to understand better the war situation. Yet the author seems oblivious of the irony he has created.

↳ The emotional attitudes the author has for Njoroge, characterised by his tender age, the complexities of his surrounding which he barely

comprehends and his tenacious hold on education removes irony or criticism in the author's attitude to the manner in which Njoroge perceives education. In so doing the reader is drawn to sympathise with Njoroge's inability to change his environment. By the time the final tragedy hits Njoroge, the readers have been drawn to share his loss with him. Njoroge's tragedy is not only on the individual scale. It has far reaching consequences for his family whose faith was founded upon Njoroge's education.

The close relationship between Njoroge's success at school, and the joy it brings at home is not coincidental. Indeed the only rays of hope that penetrate into the family of Ngotho are with every mention of Njoroge's progress at school. Consequently, the disintegration of Ngotho's family depicted side by side with Njoroge's abrupt end of education is symbolic of how far the lack of fulfilment through education can affect a family. Lack of education aggravates the misery in Ngotho's family, and leads to utter desolation. The war situation, they could tolerate, for they had high hopes that once their son gets educated, all their misfortunes would be a thing of the past. It is no wonder then that Njoroge's abrupt end of education directly involves his family whose final disintegration is testimony of their faith in education.

More explicit however is the treatment of education as an agent of peace and harmony. The gloomy picture of the sorrow and misery of war is contrasted with Njoroge's success at school. Siriana, the secondary school Njoroge attends, is described as "an abode of peace

in a turbulent country".⁴⁶ It is the school that provides Njoroge with the feeling of security which enables him to concentrate on his studies. The school is portrayed as the meeting point of people from different racial, ethnic and social backgrounds. At the school, the youth dispel their childhood and social fears. Njoroge for instance, discovers contrary to his earlier beliefs, that the white man can smile, laugh and even make friends with him. Njoroge is further surprised that he can befriend boys of different ethnic background without any fear of their dangerous practices of witchcraft. He even takes the initiative, something hitherto unimagined, to speak to Stephen Howlands, and even pity him that he has to leave the country against his wishes. This rosy picture of Siriana, and the comfort of the youth at school, is sharply contrasted with the rest of the society torn by war. It is interesting to note that the author is not critical of this sharp contrast in which the students surrounded by comfort at school are oblivious of the hostility of war outside. Indeed, the peace and harmony described as prevailing at Siriana symbolises the author's opinion that through education a harmonious society can be realised.

The author further portrays education as capable of bridging the gap between the Jacobos, the Howlands and the Ngothos through the relationship between Njoroge and Stephen Howlands, and Njoroge and Mwhaki respectively. The author suggests that whereas their parents are poles apart the children are able to overcome and transcend their parents' prejudices and suspicion of each other. Njoroge rids himself of

the instilled fear and suspicion of Howlands and Jacobo, when he socialises with Mwihaki and Stephen. This has only been possible through education. Indeed the author treats the three children as equals and peers suffering similar hardships of war. In a society gripped by effects of the Mau Mau uprising, economic and political conflict, it is the educated youth that symbolise for the author hope for an ideal society. Education has liberated them from racial, ethnic and economic prejudices that hinder peace and harmony..

The school therefore becomes the author's vision of the ideal society, free of fear and suspicion, a place where they treat each other with mutual trust and understanding. The image of Siriana becomes a projection of the possibility of peace. In school, both staff and students live in harmony. Njoroge for instance notices this of the white teachers:

They never talked of colour; they never talked down to Africans; and they could work closely, joke, and laugh with their black colleagues who came from different tribes. Njoroge at this time wished the country was like this. This seemed like a little paradise, a paradise where children from all walks of life and different religious faiths could work together without any consciousness.⁴³

In the above quotation, the ideal is achieved in terms of racial harmony. However, such a utopian existence does not tally with colonialism that dominates the entire country. Such sentimental, almost romantic attitudes towards the school environment are sufficient evidence that the author does not address himself to the underlying issues of colonialism. Indeed we may with justification say that the author has not unravelled

the seemingly rosy picture of the school and discovered the underlying tones of colonialism. It is only after he leaves Makerere that he begins to develop a critical awareness of issues that he earlier witnessed but had not clearly understood.

In an interview at Leeds University several years after he wrote Weep Not, Child, the author addresses himself to the issue of colonialism, particularly as practised at his old school, Alliance, upon which he models Siriana. The difference in approach and the critical awareness is obvious; he reflects upon the school atmosphere, this time in an analytical dimension. In response to the issue of colonialist influence in missionary schools, he says:

They [the missionaries] didn't brainwash you so directly... After the Gikuyu primary school I went to a missionary secondary school. Here I found white people, missionaries and they were very kind, very peaceful, and they wanted to help you, but in a very patronising manner. The headmaster was said to be pro-African, but he believed, and often told us so, that there was not a single African in the whole of Kenya, who on the basis of merit could qualify to Cambridge. As an African you could be taken in Cambridge, but not on the basis of merit, more as a gesture.⁴⁴

This later consciousness that was clearly absent in his approach to Siriana school and to education as a whole as he wrote the early novels, constitute our findings that the author hoped for and believed unity and liberation, as possible to achieve through education. The omission of a critical authorial voice, and his sentimental attitude towards the educated protagonists, justify our findings that the author is overwhelmed by the

value attached to education by his society. Consequently he fails to detach himself from his own position as an educated person in such a society, and from that of a creative writer. Abdul R. Jan Mohamed describes the situation:

If Njoroge's fantasies are products of the socio-religious factors in the specific colonial situation products, that is, of the effects of land alienation, of the premium put on education by the Gikuyu, of christian and Gikuyu messianic influences and of the peripeteia of values, then the ambiguity in the narrative attitude to Njoroge can be seen as a manifestation of the same forces. For in the final analysis it is Ngugi's inability to define adequately his stand towards these factors which are part of his own colonial background that must bear the responsibility for the textual ambivalence. The novel then, can be seen simultaneously as a product and a portrayal of the peripeteia of values in a colonial situation.

We feel inclined to share the opinion quoted above, for it is clear that the work lacks any critical distance between the author and the situations faced by his educated protagonists. The author's own background has been composed of an assortment of such forces as land alienation, Christianity, traditional messianic expectations and emphasis on education, all of which he subjects to his educated characters. At a time that the author has not transcended their effects, his character's attempts to understand these issues emerge as the author's inability to critically analyse them, and instead involves his personal sentiments to those of the educated protagonists.

In conclusion, we have noted that the author not only portrays the society's sentiments towards education, but also his own individual

sentiments arise. This observation has been reached through the close relationship between the author and his educated characters. The emotional attitude to these characters signifies a lack of critical distance between them and the author. This further contributes to the author's ambivalent attitude to education observed in certain instances. For instance, amidst hostility between Makuyu and Kameno, Waiyaki as the leader of the education movement, fails to put into practise the ability of education to unite. Instead he reaches his tragic end before the author explicates his theory. Further still, in Weep Not, Child, the role played by education in the midst of the Mau Mau uprising is ambiguous. Njoroge's attempt to understand his own role as an educated person, the part played by the forest fighters towards political liberation and the overall faith in education by society, only aggravates this ambiguity. The author fails, during these crucial moments in his work, to transcend his protagonists' weaknesses and the sentimental attitude to education by his society. Hence his approach to education is sentimental and more descriptive than analytical.

This ambivalence notwithstanding, the author himself, a product of this society, projects his underlying belief that education would help lay the necessary foundation for political liberation. This belief is deeply rooted in his society's faith that education would provide them with the ability to liberate themselves from the white man's domination. The author perceives unity and reconciliation as ideal products of education, the necessary ingredients towards the achievement of political liberation.

This perspective is projected through his educated characters, who, through education, have been liberated from the various cultural and social forces that hinder reconciliation. They therefore symbolise the author's ideal society: a society whose unity would enable them to demand political liberation.

ENDNOTES

1. J. Kenyatta, Facing Mount Kenya: The Tribal Life of the Gikuyu, (London: Secker & Warburg 1938), p.130-131. See also G. Muriuki, "The Rise of the Kikuyu-British Conflict Up to 1930". (Presented at the Third International Congress of Africanists, Addis Ababa 1973), p.18.
2. M. Githae-Mugo, Visions of Africa, (Nairobi: KLB 1978) p.21-27.
3. Sunday Nation, (Nairobi, 27 May 1962), p.4.
4. Several critics have observed the autobiographical nature of Ngugi's early works. Asked about it by fellow students at Leeds University Ngugi replies that every writer's books are autobiographical, i.e. "you write about your experiences, your immediate experiences" (Cultural Events in Africa), No. 31 p.2.
5. J. Kenyatta, op cit., p.21.
6. Ngugi wa Thiong'o, The River Between, (London: Heinemann 1965), p.18.
7. Ngugi wa Thiong'o Weep Not, Child, (London: Heinemann 1964), p.24.
8. The River Between, op.cit., p.20.
9. Ibid., p.20.
10. Ibid., p.22.
11. Ibid., p.65.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid., p.42.

14. Ibid.
15. See C. Wanjala's Ph.D Thesis: Alienation in Modern East African Literature. (UON 1977/78 on the alienating effects of western education in Ngugi's early novels pp.126-153.
16. See Gachukia's Ph.D Thesis: Cultural Conflict In East African Writing. (UON 1980) on the extent to which western education causes cultural conflict within a society. pp. 114-137 & 266-273.
17. J. Kenyatta, (op.cit) p.131 and 273.
18. Ngugi wa Thiong'o Weep Not, Child. op.cit., p.155.
19. Ibid., p.68.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid., p.84.
22. Ibid., p.86.
23. Ibid., p.87.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid., p.64.
26. Ibid., p.94.
27. Ibid., p.142.
28. Ibid., p.143.
29. Ibid., p.149.
30. D. Cook and M. Okenimpke, Ngugi wa Thiong'o: An Exploration of His Writings.
(London:

Heinemann

1963), p.29.

31. Although Weep Not, Child was the first to be published, The River Between had already been written and submitted for an East African Literature Bureau Creative Writing competition in December 1961 thus making Weep Not, Child the second novel.
32. Ngugi wa Thiong'o Weep Not, Child, op.cit., p.6.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid., p.4.
35. Waiyaki's career as a teacher hardly gave him financial gain. The elders who paid him, paid little but Waiyaki did not mind.
36. Weep Not, Child op.cit., p.12.
37. Ibid., p.39.
38. See D. Sifuna: Short Essays on Education in Kenya, Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1980 p.37.
39. Weep Not, Child, op.cit., p.82.
40. Ibid., p.104 - 105.
41. Ibid., p.39.
42. Ibid., p.108.
43. Ibid., p.115.
44. Cultural Events in Africa, No. 31 (June 1967), p.1.
45. Weep Not, Child, p.201.

CHAPTER THREE

TOWARDS AN EDUCATION FOR CRITICAL AWARENESS

In the previous chapter, we discussed Ngugi's treatment of the theme of education in his first two novels. We noted that his perspective of education in The River Between, for instance, was that it would create unity and that unity would pave the way for political liberation. This perspective is mainly projected through the character of Waiyaki. Although there was a certain degree of ambiguity on the author's part as to exactly how education would lead to the desired political liberation, his opinion that education was important stood out clearly. In Weep Not, Child, the role of education took a different dimension. It would not only raise one's economic and therefore social position, it would also bridge the gap between the various ethnic, racial and social groups in the society. We also noted that the author's sentimental approach to the theme of education in these works has been largely influenced by his own society's emotional attitude towards it, manifested in the fiction through their firm convictions that education would politically and later on economically liberate them. That is why on the whole, the author endorses the opinions of both the society and the educated protagonists on the importance of education.

In the following chapter, we continue to examine the treatment of the theme of education, this time in Ngugi's later fiction written after he leaves Makerere, in which a new dimension emerges pertaining to

education. In particular, we shall examine critically A Grain of Wheat and Petals of Blood; the former because in it the author lays ground for the ensuing change of attitude towards education and the latter because it deals with education in a more complex and analytical manner. It is also in this novel that the author most explicitly expounds his firm convictions that education needs to be redefined and restructured.

Ngugi's significant change of perspective of the forces that determine the wellbeing of a society have their foundations in his third novel A Grain of Wheat. This novel marks the author's growth as a literary artist. The presentation of both the themes and ideas, the psychological complexities of the characters, the complexities of their personal and social relationships and the fine narrative structure of the novel, all attest to his growth towards profundity. He revisits his society, highlighting the two now familiar hallmarks of their history: Mau Mau uprising and independence, this time exploring their effects upon both the individual and the larger society. The author deliberately shifts his attention from the single educated protagonist who previously dominated his early works and focuses on ordinary men and women who have survived the emergency period, with varying emotional and psychological scars.

Education, albeit seemingly a minor theme in this novel, emerges as having undergone a deeper scrutiny and hence attains a markedly different perspective. The author has made a conscious effort to detach himself from the sentimental approach to education. The acceptance of

colonial education earlier portrayed is now questioned by the author through Kihika, one of his major characters. There emerges instead a critical outlook towards education that suggests the author's conscious liaison of political process and education. Here, he links education with the fact of colonialism, an observation hitherto absent. Through the character of Kihika, the author makes intrinsic the quality and objectives of colonial education vis-a-vis the society's aspirations.

Missionary schools (which formed the background of colonial education) had one main objective: to recruit young Africans to teach and spread the gospel. Sunday school therefore was an integral part of education. The content of education was consequently heavily Christian-religion oriented, and the students were supposed to be passive recipients of all the missionary teachings. In A Grain of Wheat, the school is portrayed as an institution in which western cultural values are subtly instilled into the students by the African teachers, who have also unconsciously and passively accepted them. The author further portrays the contradiction portrayed by the two cultures, a factor that emerges as detrimental to the students' understanding of their social environment. It is during a Sunday school class that Kihika correctly points out to his teacher Mr. Muniu that the Bible does not condemn female circumcision.

Kihika's keen observation that the Bible does not even mention, let alone condemn, the practice of female circumcision, is a beginning of an awareness in the young student, ignited by the contradictions the missionary education created in the lives of the students. It also marks

the beginning of the author's attempt to substantiate the term 'education'; drawing this time a distinct line between it, western cultural values and the Christian religion - the three of which have hitherto been synonymously referred to as "education". Through this incident, the author has gone to great length in portraying the danger of imposing foreign cultural values upon Africans on the pretext of offering education. Implicitly the author criticises an educational policy which discourages the cultural practices of a people without sound reason.

Ngugi's new student is markedly different from his earlier educated protagonists. Whereas the earlier ones were more compromising on the issues affecting their society as a direct result of the European influence, Kihika is less compromising. He is sensitive and critical and has the rare ability to question the obvious contradictions created through their education. He questions the relationship between the ban of female circumcision and education. Such a daring challenge to his teacher makes the rest of the students cower with fear of the consequences.

The teacher's ignorance that leads to his inability to answer adequately Kihika's question portrays the pathetic situation in which those who accept wholesale everything the missionaries teach, find themselves in. Teacher Muniu, a product of missionary education has apparently never wondered at the contradiction between the missionaries' teaching and the "sinful" nature of women circumcision; a contradiction that is now obvious to his students. He could not perhaps

have dared entertain such doubts for that was not expected of him as a student. Likewise, Kihika's challenge is not only unexpected but it also greatly checks his teacher. Mr. Muniu's role as a teacher has not prepared him to handle such a challenge. He is therefore a victim of missionary education which failed to address itself to any occurrence of such a challenge as Kihika's.

The manner in which the teacher handles Kihika's question portrays how ill-prepared he is for it. Frustrated by his failure to find in the Bible the alleged proof to the claim that female circumcision is sinful, he awaits an appropriate moment during which he assembles the whole school, both pupils and staff. Here, he embarks on exorcising the shame and humiliation now obvious to the whole school, by inflicting on him corporal punishment. He declares that for Kihika's "blasphemy", he would whip him ten times on his bare back "for the sake of the boy's soul and of all the others present".¹ After this, Kihika would have to publicly thank the teacher and also recant the words he had said during the Sunday school class. Through this incident the author suggests that Kihika cannot get answers to his questions related to the right of a people's culture from Mr. Muniu who believes that such a question has no place in school.

Mr. Muniu is portrayed not only as a product of missionary education but also its victim. He is unaware of the damage his response to Kihika's question can cause in the students' manner of perceiving their situation and that of the wider society. It is Kihika who exposes the

shallowness of and the lack of perception in what the teacher propagates. Through this incident the author further portrays missionary education as a crippling agent as regards the development of students' social awareness. Such a learning atmosphere in which the students are threatened through corporal punishment against asking questions, stifles their potential to develop, or to think critically about what they learn at school in relation to the social environment they live in.

Of great significance in this incident is the fact that Kihika refuses to be caned: "he reached the nearest window and climbed out of the church to freedom"². Kihika rejects the world of missionary education which stifled him in his effort to unravel the obvious contradictions in it. Indeed the significance of the word "freedom" cannot be underrated. The author implicitly suggests the stifling nature of such a learning condition and further suggests that for Kihika's critical potential to develop, he has to get away from that condition.

The author, however does not imply that there is nothing worthy in missionary education. In fact, Kihika leaves school having acquired basic literary skills which he will put to great use in his freedom struggle. He later relies on these skills to teach himself further to read and write both Kiswahili and English. He faithfully read his Bible, but this time singles out passages that are relevant to the party and the political struggle of the society. He is able to relate their struggle for freedom with that of the Israelites. Indeed the passages singled out and underlined in his Bible, form the epigrams in the novel, one from which the title is

derived. They constitute an awareness that the same Bible that has been used by the European missionaries to lull Africans into a life of passive acceptance of their lowly place reveals a society's right to justice and freedom.

In this respect, Ngugi concedes that a foundation of literary skills is important. Indeed he only rejects the kind of education that does not enlighten one about his, as well as his society's rights. An educational system that is designed to dull one's reflections, such as this, is portrayed as inadequate to a society whose cultural cohesion is being threatened by foreign cultural influence. It is a fallacy, he suggests, for one to continue with such an education. Thus, Kihika's break from the school is an indication that there is a need to break away from an educational system that hampers the development of one's critical awareness.

Karanja, the other relatively learned character in the novel, is sharply contrasted to Kihika. Although his educational background is not highlighted like that of Kihika's, that he is quite learned is a fact. A few days before independence, he is found working at Githima library, dusting books, keeping them straight in their shelves and writing labels. This library is used by the whites and Karanja's duties also include running personal errands for them, a duty that makes his heart glow with a feeling of self-importance. His idiotic appearance as a faithful servant for the whites is contrasted to the society's jubilation over the coming political independence. His unswerving faith in the white man's power is

shattered on realisation that he is leaving to give way to African rule.

The character of Karanja marks the beginning of Ngugi's expression of his disillusionment about the educated who continue to serve the colonial government in spite of the society's wish for political liberation. Such disillusionment is a recent perspective of the author and is absent in the early works. In *Karanja* emerges the possibility of the educated rejecting to serve their society towards liberation, a probability that is highly criticised. In contrast to Kihika who uses the little education he has to serve his society, Karanja would rather work as homeguard, and later as chief, government agents used to suppress and oppress any political movement. In this respect Karanja becomes Kihika's antithesis. The faith the author had portrayed in the educated characters like Waiyaki, has been critically re-examined as he writes his later works and hence the merging perspective of the possibility of the educated betraying their society. He no longer trusts the educated, and he criticises their betrayal and their self-centredness.

In *A Grain of Wheat*, therefore, education has been portrayed as worthy only if it serves the interests of the whole society, so that those educated become sensitive to their society's needs and focus their efforts on realising them. Kihika, for instance, uses his knowledge of the Bible to instil the concept of sacrifice for a cause he believes in. Indeed his strength lies not in spreading education, like Waiyaki in *The River Between*, but in inspiring people through his own example, to sacrifice their lives in order for a new grain to be born. The responsibility of

liberation has been shifted from the single educated protagonist and made the responsibility of every individual; "Salvation may indeed come from the hills, but it rests with the people".³ Such a realisation however can only be achieved if a critical analysis of the type of education available is done. Such an analysis would assist in reviewing the aims and objectives and the desired goals by the society itself. Such a critical analysis will consequently extricate the overtly sentimental attitude to education by society. A Grain of Wheat marks the beginning of the author's search into the kind of education that is relevant and functional in the independent African society, a theme that pre-occupies him in his fourth novel, Petals of Blood.

In Petals of Blood, Ngugi has developed further various themes found in the earlier novels and has conveyed them in more abundance. Such themes as education, religion, alienation of land, struggle for independence and betrayal, are all familiar. He has however given them a deeper treatment, re-analysing them as it were, and incorporating more articulately his perspective upon some of the issues. The novel thus confirms the author's thematic consistency. His move towards a more socially committed art⁴ has contributed significantly not only to the author's views of various issues but also to artistic presentation. His belief for instance, "that a people have a right to know how wealth is produced in their country, who controls it and who benefits,... that every Kenyan has a right to decent housing, decent food and decent clothing"⁵ is evident in the way he handles both the themes and the characters.

Education is a central theme in this novel and carries along a large spectrum of other related social issues. Several aspects of education have been analysed and his concern for it is confirmed and made more succinct. He stresses the stifling effects of colonial education which to the author's amazement is still carried on in an independent African country. He goes further to portray the need for an education system suitable for an African state. Because he projects the need for a society to understand their own surroundings, which are a reflection of their history, in order to shape their future, the role education would play in realising this goal becomes significant. We will therefore embark on analysing education in this novel as a means to create a critical awareness among the members of the society.

Siriana Secondary School, a now familiar institution, becomes a macrocosm of the larger African society, in their struggle against colonial domination. The crises at school at various intervals are representations of the unrest in the rest of society in their attempt to fight off colonial rule. The school undergoes several developmental phases, all a reflection of the desire to bring closer the content, function and objectives of education to the society's needs. In Siriana emerges a pattern through which the author's hope for the ideal education finally appears in the horizon. Through the strike motif, the author traces the growth of a critical awareness growing among different generations of students. These are students who in various ways reject the oppressive system of colonialism which is manifested through the very education

system they are in.

Reverend Ironmonger, the first headmaster of Siriana is portrayed as patronising in his treatment of students and the entire school administration. Like Reverend Livingstone in The River Between, his objective in educating the Africans is one; to bring forth young men who would serve God and the British Empire. He therefore carefully and tactfully injects into them values that would persuade them to identify with the British Empire rather than oppose it. This subtle manner of ascertaining that the students always look up to the headmaster may appear harmless as it does to the almost naive students. The author, however, scrutinises the seeming facade of honesty and exposes its roots deep in colonialism.

The manner in which the Ironmongers hamper and pet Chui, for instance, may on the surface be seen as their extension of parental love and friendship. However, on close examination, it is neither prompted by sheer love for him, nor is it by chance. It is well calculated and designed to safeguard their positions of authority in the school. Chui is an outstanding sportsman and has already portrayed signs of popularity among his peers. He is well versed in events both in and outside school. The headmaster realises his potential to influence his peers and uses this fact to his own advantage. They pet him, take him for long rides in their car, to music concerts and puppet shows, all these in an attempt to make him identify with them. Indeed on reaching form three, Chui is made the school prefect instead of the normal time - at form four -, a

gesture that we understand as their way of reciprocating his friendship towards them. Such an honour is a suggestion that the Ironmongers trust that he will carry out his duties to their absolute satisfaction. Since his loyalty as a headboy is directly to the headmaster, he provides a sense of security for them.

The hypocrisy of Rev. Ironmonger is further exposed when Chui assumes the nickname of "Shakespeare". Ironmonger would affectionately call him so, acknowledging that Chui identifies with European heroes and encouraging him to further recognise their heroic achievements. Soon after, Chui assumes the nickname of "Joe Louis", one that gains instant popularity in the school. However, Rev. Ironmonger ignores it, a refusal to acknowledge the existence of Joe Louis himself". Accepting that Joe Louis, a black man, has excelled to be the world's top champion in boxing, is tantamount to Ironmonger's acceptance of the black people's capability of proving themselves and portraying abilities that have been long believed to be a domain of the whites. Thus, the Ironmongers conveniently assume complete ignorance of the nickname, yet in spite of this, the nickname persists among the students.

Shortly after, Cambridge Fraudsham replaces Ironmonger who retires in Europe. His appearance at Siriana creates immediate impact upon the students. Having come straight from the war, he already has his own notions about how an African school should be run. His name is deliberately revealing; that he is a fraud and a sham. A product of

Cambridge, a famous British University, along which educational models were derived for British colonial countries, he embarks on converting Siriana into an elite institution and model for elitism, yet at the same time emphasises the innocence and simplicity of the Africans. For him, Siriana has to be an institution whose primary objective is to make students "grow up strong in God and the Empire"⁷, but of crucial importance is to ascertain that education does not "turn out black Europeans but true Africans who would not look down upon the innocence and simple ways of their ancestors".⁸ The implied Darwinian mentality does not escape our attention. It is not surprising therefore that for him the African should never be encouraged to aspire to a European lifestyle, ranging from the food he eats to the clothes he wears. An inferiority attitude towards themselves is therefore inculcated in them. The success of his educational policy depends on immediate implementation on a daily routine. Munira recalls:

We saluted the British flag every morning and every evening to the martial sound from the bugles and drums of our school band. Then we would all march on orderly military lines to the chapel to raise choral voices to the maker. Wash me, Redeemer, and I shall be whiter than snow. We would then pray for the continuation of an Empire that had defeated the Satanic evil which had erupted in Europe to try the children of God.⁹

With such a demanding daily routine that starts at five in the morning, Fraudsham ensures that fear for God and the British Empire is instilled in the students. They are indoctrinated to believe in the supremacy and the worthy intentions of colonial rule, hence the

salutation of the flag every morning and evening. Without realising the significance of their prayer, they naively continue to pray that colonialism persists in their country, that they continue to be faithful subjects of the empire and that God should change their sinful nature (reflected in their black colour), to make them "whiter than snow". The cynical tone underlying this quotation, reflects the author's strong criticism of the manner in which missionary institutions brainwashed the students to believe in the might and indispensability of the colonial rule.

Not long after Fraudsham takes over headship of Siriana, the students, led ironically by Chui, go on strike. They demand that their former rights which include their former school uniform and good food, be restored. "And why should teams from Europe schools get glucose and orange squash after a game while our own teams only get plain water?"¹⁰ they argue. However minor this latter grievance may seem, it is an expression of their observation of Fraudsham's racist attitude towards them and is symbolic of their loud protest against it. Nevertheless, their naive cry to have Rev. Ironmonger back portrays the psychological and mental alienation that has been their lot, for Ironmonger is only a more subtle version of Fraudsham. Meanwhile, Fraudsham does not tolerate the students' defiance and calls in riot police. He wins.

This strike marks the beginning of the students' awareness that Fraudsham's rule is tinted with racism, and that they have the ability and the right to protest against it. This is an important realisation, before any

attempt to solve the issue of racism is made: Indeed considering the fact that the overall social awareness among the larger society is not deep, the students' strike, albeit not a success, is a daring attack on colonialism. However, they lack a deeper awareness that whether the school is headed by Ironmonger or Fraudsham, the total effects of their rule are eventually the same. That is why in such ignorance, they cry to have Ironmonger back. Fraudsham too has proved his might by suppressing the strike and expelling a few students. It takes several generations at Siriana to pose a threat to Fraudsham's educational ideology. This is the second strike in which Karega is involved, and like Munira in the previous one, gets expelled. Fraudsham's pet dog's death whose circumstances lead to this strike signifies the now strained relationship between the missionary school administration and the students, a further reflection of the strain between the colonial government and the African society.

Lizzy's death makes Fraudsham shudder with disbelief for his attachment to her is similar to that of one towards his spouse. The students are shocked that a mere dog's death could unsettle a man like Fraudsham, a man who was feared by both students and teachers alike. True, Fraudsham loved the dog and often she dictated and influenced his moods. But such an intensely emotional reaction over her death was totally unexpected and incomprehensible to the students. To them dogs are good only if they can hunt, or if they are brave and guard cattle or protect man, otherwise they are of no use to him. Fraudsham, however,

sees the matter differently.

Fraudsham demands that the students mourn with him, and accord Lizzy a dignified human burial. Some students should therefore dig a pit for her, others should make a coffin and others yet should be pall bearers. He further emphasises that "in all civilised countries, learning to care for pets and animals enriched one's appreciation of human life and God's love".¹¹ The boys' thunderous laughter at such a seemingly ridiculous suggestion signifies the difference in their values, manifested in their diverse reaction to the dog's death. They have misconstrued the seriousness with which Fraudsham attaches Lizzy's funeral. The laughter, however, only confirms to Fraudsham that Africans are not only uncivilised but they also have no feelings.¹² Fraudsham is clearly imposing his values upon the students using his position. He gets furious at the boys' outrageous refusal to bury Lizzy, which he interprets as the height of defiance of order. Indeed the very thought that the students would disobey his orders is unimaginable and when it does happen, it becomes unbearable. For him, total obedience was their primary duty at school irrespective of the circumstances. Lizzy's death and the consequent events, expose the students' world view as socially and culturally different from Fraudsham's. He fails to accept this fact and instead views the incident as defiance of order. His ideology is plain:

In any civilised society, there were those who were to formulate orders and the others to obey; there had to be leaders and the led; if you refused to obey to be led, then how could you hope to lead and to demand obedience? Look at heaven, there was God on a throne and the angels in their varying subordinate roles, yet all was harmony.¹³

Herein lies the primary objective of education as perceived by Fraudsham: to civilise the Africans through education so that they appreciate the fact that some have to lead and others have to be led. For him there is no compromise: either one leads or he is led. The fact that the students do not realise this is testimony of their "uncivilised" state. Yet the image of God and the angels, which has deliberately been drawn to imply the seriousness of the students' defiance of Fraudsham's leadership, does not escape our attention. Clearly Fraudsham perceives a similarity between the two situations, and fails to understand why the students show ingratitude to him. He regards their disobedience as a challenge to God's purpose of creation.

The tactics used to suppress the previous generation of students prove ineffective here. Fraudsham is dealing with a different generation of students : these are students whose critical awareness clearly surpasses that of Chui or even the lawyer's generations. The lawyer, for instance, who also studied at Siriana after Chui and before Karega, is prompted by Karega's recollections of the strike to recall his own experience. In particular, he recalls an incident in which a white man shoots to death an African boy for frightening his dogs by throwing a stone at them. The students feel that justice has truly been done when

the white man is punished by a death penalty on him. Fraudsham however, calls a school assembly during which he stresses the importance of man's sensitivity to animals. His sympathies clearly lie with the frightened dogs and not the dead African. In defence of the white man's action, he argues that "he had been prompted by the highest and most noble impulse to care for and defend the defenceless".¹⁴ The students' joy is shortlived, for Fraudsham has tacitly turned it into guilt. So intense is the guilt that they even weep with Fraudsham for the white man, for the dogs and for their own shame in their inability to perceive the incident like Fraudsham. The lawyer laments that he could not understand the whole thing:

How could I, the education we got had not prepared me to understand those things; it was meant to obscure racism and other forms of oppression. It was meant to make us accept their superiority.¹⁵

The author's perspective of colonial education is directly related to the lawyer's observation above. Indeed we should note that the lawyer is "Ngugi's unproblematic consciousness..." and "has yielded too much of himself to the authorial ideology".¹⁶ Indeed the proximity of attitudes of the two can be observed in similar sentiments the author has expressed with regard to colonial education:

I was living in a colonial situation but I did not know it. Not even when I went to school. I went to a missionary school where we were told over and over again that we were potential leaders of our people... Education was not aimed at a knowledge of self and

the reality of the black man's place in the world... our schools and universities... were monuments of lies and half truths.¹⁷

This perspective of education is radically different from what his earlier works portray. He does in fact confess his ignorance of colonialism then. Consequently he attacks his earlier position that education could politically liberate a society from colonialism. Here, he portrays the fact that education in the colonial period deliberately masked the fact of colonialism from the students; hence the need to see this kind of education changed. These changes have their beginning in the strike led by Karega.

Instead of grieving with Fraudsham for Lizzy, the incident serves to open the students' eyes and they see the contradictions caused by colonial education. They realise that Fraudsham's racist administration has influenced his disregard for humanity. They demand an overhaul of the school system, ranging from the immediate replacement of Fraudsham with an African headmaster, to the abolition of the prefect system which, they felt, "perpetrated the knightly order of master and menials".¹⁸ The students further demand that both the content and objectives of education be changed so that through it they can know and understand themselves better in relation to their social environment. For why, they argued "should ourselves be reflected in white snows, spring flowers fluttering by on icy lakes?"¹⁹

↳ The author's position on the need to change such an education system is closest to Karega's who in many respects represents the

author's conscience.²⁰ Ngugi proposes, through Karega, that the Siriana type of education be changed to give way to an education in which there is a close relationship between what students learn and their social conditions. Their own history should be taught, he implies, in order for the students to have a sound reflection of themselves and their past. The similarities between Karega's and the author's perspective of colonial education is plainly obvious. Karega, for instance states:

we wanted to be taught African Literature, African history, for we wanted to know ourselves better... we wanted an African headmaster and African teachers.²¹

In an essay published shortly before the publication of this novel, the author in words similar to Karega's states:

I believe that only the nationals of a country have a right and the responsibility of running their education system, and this over-reliance on foreigners is dangerous for our country's future.²²

Whereas we acknowledge the author's worthy sentiments that education needs to be Africanised in an independent African nation, the manner in which he has portrayed this in the novel has its own flaws. In the above quotations, Ngugi seems to have put his own words in Karega's mouth. Although the students' demand may at a glance seem in order, they obviously over-reach themselves when they cry out "Black Power" and "African Populism". Their tender age also makes their demands and the circumstances seem contrived. Eustace Palmer

observes of this situation:

... but when they [students] cry Black Power... call themselves African populists etc they reveal themselves as immature adolescents who are capable of making discriminations of value. They would throw away the baby with the bath water.²³

Like Palmer, we feel that Ngugi has let his students too loose to convey any sound objective of change for an education system. Indeed when the lawyer asks Karega what they really wanted, it is not surprising that he does not really know. We are thus inclined to view the sentiments surrounding some of these demands as part of a youthful idealism in which the youth know what they do not want yet they cannot explain what they would like in its place. Ngugi's perception of students as young and sentimental, perhaps unrealistic in some of their demands is quite realistic and allows for their kind of riot.

Rather than see what he has believed in and protected, the "God ordained order" be destroyed, Fraudsham resigns. The boys feel they have won. Their triumph, however shortlived, is a reflection of the author's conviction that colonial schools have no place in independent Africa. Just as Fraudsham's name revealed, his educational policy is a counterfeit. "Cambridge" too, an elite institution and the model for elitism practised in Siriana-comes to an end. Fraudsham gives way to African administration.

With bated breaths, the students await the arrival of their new African headmaster who, as irony would have it, is Chui. They foresee a

new beginning that would ultimately lead to the birth of a new society. Their anxiety and eventual joy at his long awaited arrival, is only shortlived, for the Chui who appears before them, is not the Chui whose heroism has remained a legend at Siriana. Instead, he turns out to be a black replica of Fraudsham. "... he had khaki shorts and shirt and a sun helmet".²⁴ The students' fears and doubts are soon confirmed by Chui's first address to them. Karega recalls:

He spoke and announced a set of rules... It was his desire, nay, his fervent prayer, that all the teachers should stay, knowing that he had not come to wreck but to build on what was already there: there would be no hasty programme of Africanisation, reckless speed invariably being the undoing of so many a fine school... obedience was the royal road to order and stability, the only basis of sound education. A school was like a body; there had to be the head, arms, feet, all performing their ordained functions without complaints for the benefit of the whole body.²⁵

Chui emerges as the intended product of colonial education: the white/black man, who has not only aped their mode of dress and mannerisms, but also demands with even greater vigour than Fraudsham, that the "God-ordained" hierarchy of the rulers and the ruled be obediently and faithfully observed. Having replaced Fraudsham he dare not appear any less powerful or any less demanding of absolute obedience; for herein lies his feeling of authority. He further believes that succeeding Fraudsham in office must be accompanied with Fraudsham's mode of dress, thus he has taken Fraudsham in his entirety as his role model. In Chui is embodied the "success" of the objective of colonial

education. For as long as Siriana is headed by Chui or Fraudsham, there is bound to be no difference in their approach to education. The students' anxiety, the momentous joy at having an African headmaster and their consequent hope for change are all doomed to be shattered.

Chui's educational policy is deeply rooted in Fraudsham's. As though he fears being underrated, he swears to reinforce the same values that Fraudsham emphasised. That is why the students' hopes and aspirations in Chui, to restructure the education and the school's colonial environment are frustrated when Chui further maintains that he did not want to hear "any more nonsense about African teachers, African History, African Literature, African this, African that, what mattered were good teachers and sound content,"²⁶ (emphasis mine). For him however, the yardstick for measuring the extent of goodness or soundness is foreign and Eurocentric. The support he gives the white teachers, his confirmation that European content education must be continued and not replaced with African studies and finally his aped Fraudsham characteristic are all evidence of this Eurocentric yardstick. It is unfortunate and shocking to the students that it is the same Chui who had led a strike against Fraudsham, who has now come to reinforce the same value that Fraudsham instituted. Chui has been brainwashed to believe that anything and everything good must be foreign: even great scholars and thinkers were foreign. Therefore, if Siriana has to maintain the standards set by Fraudsham, it must continue with his education policy. He emphasises like his predecessor, the importance of order by

quoting a lengthy verse by Shakespeare on the need to maintain order lest chaos and discord set in.

The students' dream of a better Siriana have been betrayed by Chui. Their hopes for a new beginning for a realisation of themselves through an Africanised curriculum of education is also betrayed. The author's sympathies lie with the students, who with all their anxiety for change, have to put up with the self-same foreign studies. Their desire for a complete revision of the entire education system, has indeed been the author's desire. In their youthful idealism, their yearnings are contained in such phrases as "African populism" and "Black Power", terms which project a rejection of foreign education, foreign rule; in a nutshell, a rejection of colonialism. Because what the students expect and what the school now offers are poles apart, there is bound to be a degree of resistance, and there lurks in the background some explosion. Shortly after, they go on strike against Chui and all that he propagates.

The strike against Chui, which results in Karega's expulsion, is indicative of the fast growing awareness in a society as a whole, of the need to rely on themselves, the need to see their past in their own manner through which they can shape their future. The lawyer through the strike foresees, a different youth emerge; a youth that gives him the assurance that better conditions can be achieved.

... a youth freed from direct shame and a humiliation of the past and hence not so spiritually wounded as those who had gone before... here is our hope.. in the new children who have nothing to prove to the white man... ²⁷

The lawyer sees a glimmer of hope in this generation which has dared to question what older Siriana students could not. They have openly criticised Fraudsham's and Chui's ideology, thus threatening the "ordained" order of things. The autocracy of colonial education has been shaken, and since its success lies in the student's ignorance, their challenge shatters its very foundation.

The fact that colonial education here represented by Siriana, is unsuited and undesirable to the African situation has thus far been established. Through Karega, the author embarks on a search for an education that would be relevant to the needs and aspirations of the African society. He perceives it as that in which students are able to see the reflection of themselves along role-models that are familiar and closer to their reality. Further this education should be promoted by the African people themselves in order to enable them to assert their own worth. In this respect, Karega's expulsion from Siriana ceases to be a tragedy as it was for Njoroge in Weep Not, Child. Instead, it marks the beginning of a different and difficult path for him; a quest for a purpose in life, in a society where a small fraction of the population exploits the larger population. Karega conceives that society should know their rights through education but, this time a different sort of education. The objective of this education is portrayed as that which will create a critical consciousness in the students, enabling them to understand their social, cultural, political and economic environments. He begins the search

which first takes him to Munira.

Munira is an ex-Siriana student who together with Chui were expelled during the first strike against Fraudsham. He had been Karega's teacher at Primary School and ironically, had been his signatory to enter Siriana. It is further revealed through similar coincidences that Munira and Karega's late brother, Ndinguri, had been friends; that Karega had been friends with Munira's late sister Mwihaki; and that Karega's mother had lived on Munira's father's land as a squatter (*muhoi*). Of importance here, is the coincidence that Karega like Munira becomes a teacher in Munira's school after undergoing similar experiences, albeit separately, at Siriana. To Munira, the strike and the expulsion resulted in his present drudgery of a teaching life. His settlement at Ilmorog is a sense of withdrawal into himself, a kind of escape from what he considers contributed to his failure.

Through Munira's role as a teacher, the author further expounds the issues of a stifling kind of education spreading from the boundaries of Siriana. Because of his disinterest in life generally and in teaching in particular, Munira is incapable of instilling life giving values in his students. His manner of teaching comes under severe criticism from the author, suggesting that he is unsuitable to teach the curious pupils. In an actual classroom lesson Ngugi portrays how harmful his approach to learning is and how it can hamper the development of the pupil's creativity. So critical is this lesson that the title of the novel is derived from it. Munira takes his pupils out of class to study nature, when one of

them exclaims: "Look! A flower with Petals of Blood", to which Munira promptly replies:

There is no colour called blood. What you mean is that it is red. You see? You must learn the names of the seven colours of the rainbow. Flowers are of different kinds, different colours. Now, I want each one of you to pick a flower... count the number of petals and pistils...

The children's association of colour with blood, a familiar colour no doubt, demands imagination and association skill. Munira, however, stifles this manner of learning through association. For him colours must be learnt in their abstract form, not in relation to the environment in which the students live. Such a teacher consequently is unable to answer questions that the curious children ask; questions related to the nature study lesson, seeking to understand the fundamental aspects of life. Such questions as "what is law? What is nature? Is he man? Is he God?"²⁹ cannot get answered. Munira feels insecure about this inability to answer his pupil's questions, whose attention he had never paid any seriousness. He therefore breaks off the lesson and swears never to take the pupils outside again because they drew him into "problems". He prefers to teach them "ready made stuff"³⁰ which need not take him outside the classroom where he feels safe, aloof and a master, dispensing knowledge. His primary objective of education becomes that of drilling students to pass examinations and thereby earn himself credit. He explains to Karega:

You see, what they [students] need to know are facts. Simple facts. Information just so they can pass their C.P.E. Yes, information not interpretation... I say let's teach them facts not propaganda about blackness, African peoples, all that because that is politics, and they know the tribe they belong to...³¹

Such an approach to education in which pupils are treated as empty vessels to be filled with facts is not an altogether new observation by literary artists. As early as 1854, Charles Dickens in his novel Hard Times³² satirised this type of learning, which was then prevalent in 19th Century England. In words very similar to Munira's, Mr. Gradgrind opens the events of this novel with:

"Now, what I want is Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else and root out everything else... stick to Facts, Sir!... In this life, we want nothing but Facts, Sir; ... nothing but Facts."³³

George Lamming too in, In The Castle of My Skin,³⁴ satirises the events that happen at school during the celebration of Empire Day. He portrays how education in Barbados mystifies the fact of colonialism. The similarity between Munira and Thomas Gradgrind becomes apparent. This is evidence that Ngugi has borrowed from these authors their portrayal of irrelevant education in order to further stress his own observation that the "facts only" approach is damaging in a situation that calls for creativity, imagination, and of importance, association of what is learned to what is already familiar. Paulo Freire refers to this kind of learning as "The banking concept of education"³⁵, in which the objective

of education has been reduced to that of filling students with contents that are far removed from the totality that engenders them and would give them significance.

Having dismissed colonial education as irrelevant and the "facts only" learning as stifling the pupil's imagination, the author suggests the need to replace them with a better alternative. He does this by contrasting Munira's with Karega's approach to learning in favour of Karega's. Karega, as the name implies is translated from Gikuyu and stands for "one who refuses". Through him the author extrapolates a reform of colonial education that raises the students' critical awareness, so that they can relate better to their social environment. The author's suggestion is that facts alone are not enough, in fact if these facts are used to cloud the reality of the pupils' lives, then they are undesirable. Passing national examinations also is worthless, if those students have no idea of their social environment - to them learning would continue being useful only if it opens doors to yet higher realms of learning. The need to reform this type of learning and the entire objective of education has adequately been portrayed: It is Karega who embarks on this reform.

Karega has been developed from a youth at Siriana whose vision of Africanising education is clouded by youthful idealism, to an adult, who, like his author, perceives education as a means to interpret history in order to shape a society's destiny. This rapid development however seems contrived in the novel. Between his expulsion from Siriana, for

instance, and his appearance to Munira at Ilmorog, two years have elapsed. This is crucial if we are to accept Karega's capability and promise of a better education. We also believe that this period must contribute to Karega's transformation of his youthful ideals into sound and practical approach to the kind of education he envisages for his pupils. We wonder for instance how Karega has concretised his concept of education, what experiences he has undergone, whether he has done any private reading and if so, what material or scholars have interested him. In class, for instance, his knowledge of African history is amazing. There is an implicit suggestion that Karega is a self-trained, self-disciplined man, factors that should help him put into focus his sensitive attitude to the economically stratified society and the role education should play to curb the imbalance. We share Munira's enthusiasm about Karega's past, especially between his Siriana days and Ilmorog. In a dismissive tone, however, Karega utters a statement that would lead to our understanding of the author's new perspective to education, but one in which the author himself treats most casually. In reply to Munira's questions about his past, Karega tells him dismissively, "... well, I have not been to anybody's university - well - except maybe the university of the streets."³⁶

This concept of the informal "university" education has directly been borrowed from Gorky's autobiographical trilogy, the last of which is entitled My Universities. In this book Gorky's hopes of attaining a formal university education are frustrated. There is a sense though in

which we can share Gorky's observation that he attains university education informally through his interaction with all sorts of people, sceptics, atheists, idealists, epicures and ordinary peasants whose miserable lives create self-doubts and suspicion of both fellow peasants and strangers. From all these people, Gorky learns about man and life. He acquires deep insights into man's place in the world which in turn help him to concretise his own concept about man's rights to struggle against nature's hostility and that of man against fellow man.

Ngugi clearly shares Gorky's observation that one can acquire adequate knowledge informally that helps raise his awareness of the surrounding. However, Ngugi does not define articulately this informal education, neither does he convince us that Karega's two years out of school have made indelible marks in his critical thinking. He leaves the matter at the mere suggestion level. His implication that there is plenty to be learnt informally, however, is not sufficient evidence to make us confidently conclude that he has lost faith in formal schooling. Rather the author suggests that experiences out of school, do contribute to one's overall conception of his society. That is why Karega is portrayed as a knowledgeable person, especially regarding the economic strata of society.

Karega has been requested by Munira to teach at Ilmorog Primary School, a young school with only the first three classes. Karega's first duty as a teacher has been handled with care by the author. It is an attempt to understand the pupils, the world which shaped and influenced

their lives and the chances available for their future. His major objective therefore, is to enlarge the pupils' consciousness so that they could see themselves, Ilmorog and Kenya as part of a larger whole, a larger territory containing the history of African people and their struggles. He begins by teaching them the relationship between Ilmorog and Kenya and with the rest of Africa. This is in line with his belief that education should begin with the pupils' knowledge of themselves, their environment and later its relation to the rest of the world. His logic is simple: for a society to shape their own destiny, they must look back into their history, in order to understand who they are so that they lay the foundation for their future. Education should teach them to take pride in and value their history. His view of education amounts to a rejection of the objectives of colonial education, particularly in the latter's attempt to erase the peoples' own history. He embarks in essence to undo what the colonial education designed to do.

This approach to education soon conflicts with Munira's "facts only" approach. Munira's personal discomforts about Karega leads him to ultimately see fault in his teaching. Karega strongly opposes Munira's approach. In an emotionally charged argument, Karega declares:

I do not agree with that approach [the facts only approach]... I cannot accept that there is a stage in our growth as human beings when all we need are so called facts and information... Are there pure facts?... Even assuming that there were pure facts, what about their selection? Does this not involve interpretation? What is the propaganda we are accused of teaching?... the oppression of black people is a fact. The scattering of Africans into the four corners of the earth is a fact... That our people

fought against the Arab slave raiders... resisted European invasion... that Kenyan people have had a history of fighting and resistance is therefore a fact.³⁷

In this strong rejection of the "facts-only" approach to education the author uses Karega to project his own rejection of an education system that fails to raise the pupils' critical awareness of their social surroundings. This, Karega observes, will be realised only if their historical achievements are learned as a reflection of their capabilities and their worth. Indeed Karega's convictions echo the author's own ideas in Writers in Politics: that the principle guiding the teaching of literature, for instance, should begin with the study of African peoples followed by Asians and Latin American societies for they too have struggled against racism, and colonialism ...³⁸ He goes on to say:

In this way we shall develop a critical mentality in our students. People who can critically assess and evaluate their total environment in Kenya and using the tools gained therefrom, look at other words and similarly assess and evaluate.³⁹

That man should relate to his world in a critical way through reflection, not reflex, becomes the core of the author's perspective of the education that will replace colonial and "facts only" type. This kind of education adopts the concept of man as a conscious being, capable of understanding nature and utilising it to his own advantage. In this kind of education the teacher ceases to be a "bank"⁴⁰, and becomes instead, a participant in a dialogue between himself and his pupils, a process in

which both teacher and pupils teach each other and each party learns from the other. In the words of Paulo Freire, "they become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow"⁴¹.

As opposed to Munira's objective to help pupils qualify with top marks, Karega's is radically different. For him the success of education should be evaluated by how well the pupils are critically aware of their social surroundings. In this respect the role of their past becomes significant. He explains the relationship he past, to both the present & the future:

Our children must look at the things that deformed us yesterday, that are deforming us today. They must also look at the things which formed us yesterday, that will creatively form us into a new breed of men and women...⁴²

This is how Karega perceives the significance of the past. In it the people can evaluate their mistakes, and achievements respectively, which have contributed to their present situation, and which should further be used as a reference in the shaping of their own future. Such should be the relationship between assessing and shaping the past, the present and the future, which should be incorporated in the pupils' learning.

In line with these ideals, Karega teaches the pupils through recitation: "I live in Ilmorog... which is in Chiri District: Chiri which is in the republic of Kenya; Kenya which is ..."⁴³, but he soon realises that this seems too abstract to the students. He realises that for any learning to take place he must begin with the most immediate realities that the

pupils directly experience at Ilmorog. The poverty and the drought-stricken wasteland in which both him and the students live is a basic fact that must be confronted. Failure to do so, Karega discovers, would be tantamount to escape, or "burying his head in the sand of a classroom, ignoring the howling winds and the sun outside."⁴⁴

Through the drought which severely affects the society of Ilmorog, Ngugi introduces yet another dimension of education. The idea is that whatever crisis is faced by society, education should address itself directly to it with a view to solving it. Indeed this is a radical change of perspective from the earlier Ngugi who in Weep Not, Child safeguarded his pupils from participating or even attempting to understand the crisis of war. In this novel, the school is portrayed as a haven of peace amidst a war torn society. In Petals of Blood, The author portrays the need for the school to address itself to the problems of drought that is fast devastating the whole society. Indeed, the history lessons Karega teaches, seem irrelevant to the students whose eyes search for an answer from their teacher, to the solution to the hunger brought by the severe drought. The drought is not limited to the outer walls of the classroom. Inevitably it confronts both teacher and his pupils when a student faints of hunger during a lesson. Karega's role as a teacher has been drawn into the problem of drought. He realises that teaching under such circumstances, "where theory seemed a mockery of reality",⁴⁵ is equivalent to escape yet there is no escaping such a reality. The role education plays in such an environmental and consequently,

social crisis, becomes the author's subject of concern which takes him to the next part of the novel, the journey to the city.

The journey to the city is a motif which serves among other things, to reveal to the society of Ilmorog the social and economic disparity in the country. They realise that whereas they are suffering from the menacing effects of drought at Ilmorog, there are others, including their own parliamentary representative, who are ignorant of this fact, and are living a life of comfort and affluence. Of importance to our study however, is that Karega's suggestion that the people of Ilmorog go to the city is portrayed as his manner of solving the drought problem. To understand the root causes of the drought is more important than treating the mere symptoms. Underlying this move, emerges the author's rationale that it is more crucial to understand the causes. In effect, Ngugi postulates a link between the creative process and political action.

Embodied in the physical journey is Karega's difficult search into what education has to say about the social and economical disparities in the country. He begins his search for knowledge among African scholars and requests the lawyer for some books in which "there is bound to be an answer". In his hope to find "a vision of the future rooted in critical awareness of the past",⁴⁶ the historians take him to precolonial times and make him wander purposelessly from Egypt or Ethiopia or Sudan only to be checked in his pastoral wanderings by the arrival of Europeans. He discovers that these professors of history hold similar observations with European historians: that before the arrival of

Europeans, their history "was one of wanderlust and pointless warfare".⁴⁷

In despair, he turns to political science and imagined literature where he is confronted with the same incoherence and confusion. Karega's search for the truth among African professors and scholars, for the answer to the questions of colonialism and imperialism, becomes futile. This futility leads to the author's disillusionment not only with the scholars, but also with their very institutions of learning. This disillusionment is reflected in the lawyers reply to the obviously disappointed Karega:

You asked me for books written by black professors. I wanted you to judge for yourself. Educators, men of letters, intellectuals. These are only voices - not neutral disembodied voices - but belonging to bodies of persons, of groups of interest...⁴⁸

This observation establishes the author's conviction that education either serves to perpetuate autocracy or serves the larger society in its attempts for survival and self actualization. For the author, his perspective stands clearly; that education cannot be neutral. An educator must consciously choose his side, either to serve the poor majority or the affluent minority. The author further dismisses the notion earlier held by Karega that the truth to his questions must necessarily be found among the intellectuals in the highest institutions of learning. Through Karega, he observes that university professors, despite their long academic careers, do not portray the kind of critical awareness in their various disciplines, which reflect an awareness of the social

injustices in the country. They have continued in the mainstream of colonial education, evading the damaging effects of colonialism.

Like their professors, the university students lack a deep insight into social and economic problems of their country. In their academic pursuit, they turn social incidents, natural disasters and political calamities into mere topics for academic and seminar papers. For instance, after the trek to the city and the "successful" return home, several groups of people come to Ilmorog; church leaders, to build a church, government officials to ensure effective administration, charity organisations, to sell charity tickets "and a group of university students who later wrote a paper relating droughts and uneven development to neo-colonialism...". The author is sceptical about these groups. He portrays their unpractical assistance to the people of Ilmorog and further suggests that their primary objective is to exploit the disaster for their own gain. It is important here to observe that the university students are seen in the same light as the churchmen, government officials and those who sell charity. The author criticises particularly the university students because all they apparently learn from the disaster only provides material to write academic papers which do not in any way help the Ilmorog people. It is not evident exactly what the author would rather they did, but nevertheless their far removed "assistance", and lack of direct involvement with the plight of Ilmorog society comes under attack. The education they have received has not prepared them to handle such a situation. In the highest institutions of learning, their professors too have

also been portrayed as of little assistance in this respect.

The pattern of Karega's life repeats itself in Joseph, a brilliant pupil at Ilmorog, who passes his examination with distinctions. As fate would have it, he is enrolled at Siriana. The author maintains that Joseph completes the cycle in which Chui, Munira and Karega had taken part. Karega has already joined the workers union and soon becomes one of the leaders. They advocate for political solutions as the only way to combat the prevalent social injustices. He continues the struggle at a more complex level than that of a classroom teacher. Joseph on the other hand has been prepared to continue where Karega stops. The conditions in Siriana have not improved since Karega's days. Joseph for instance complains about the disinterested manner in which Chui runs the school. This and a host of other complaints are reminiscent of those of Karega's when he led a strike against the same Chui. The school is yet again threatening to go on strike against Chui, who has now become so involved in money making activities that

he ran the school from golf clubs and board rooms of the various companies in which he was director, or else from his numerous wheat fields in the Rift Valley"³⁰

Chui now uses his position of educator, to acquire more wealth. Because he neglects his duties, the students suffer adversely. Teaching is not a priority for him and it is not surprising that the students want him replaced.

Joseph echoes Karega's hope of a society whose education does not sweep them away from their social responsibility. He confides in Abdulla his hope for the future:

When I grow up and finish school and university I want to be like you: I would like to feel proud that I had done something for our people. You fought for the political independence of this country. I would like to contribute to the liberation of the people of this country...⁵¹

Here Joseph portrays an awareness that despite the country's political independence, there is need for another kind of struggle. Although he does not define it, it is clear in the novel that it is the struggle against neo-colonialism and imperialism. Joseph's upbringing at Ilmorog and close interaction with Abdulla, Wanja, Munira and Karega at various levels has contributed significantly to his later distinct view of the need to directly involve himself with the liberation of society from any form of injustice. As a young boy he had taken part in the journey to the city in which virtually all Ilmorog society was involved. He thus imagines and earnestly hopes that he would later be of use to his country like Abdulla had.

It is not a coincidence that Joseph is seen reading God's Bits of Wood a novel by Sembene Ousmane whose theme is the rise of a society against socio-economic oppression and exploitation. He confesses to have also read history, both Kenyan and foreign, which portrays man's efforts towards realising freedom. The hope that Joseph

would achieve more than those he succeeds is expressed by Abdulla in this complex metaphor:

... history was a dance in a huge arena of God. You played your part, whatever your chosen part and then you left the arena, swept aside by the waves of a new step, a new movement in the dance. Other dances younger, bright, more inventive came and played with even greater skill, with more complicated footwork, before they too were swept aside by yet a greater tide in the movements they had helped to create, and the dancers were thrown up to carry the dance to even newer heights and possibilities...⁵²

This observation conveys the message that Joseph has joined the mainstream of those before him in their attempt to change their social environment for the better. He carries forward Karega's hope that the education system be changed and give way to such one that raises one's critical awareness of his society. He has been reading privately.

"a lot about the Mau Mau ... about what the workers and peasants of other lands have done in history... about the people's revolutions in China, Cuba, Vietnam, Cambodia, Lagos, Angola, Guinea, Mozambique.. Oh yes, and the works of Lenin and Mao..."⁵³

Indeed one of the demands in the strike was to have been that "all our studies should be related to the liberation of our people..."⁵⁴ Although the strike never takes place (Chui is killed in a house fire with Mzigo and Kimeria before this) there persists the desire for education to yet be changed. This time the focus is not merely on African scholars and African disciplines, but the demand that education should focus on studies related to the liberation of their society. This is why Abdulla's

metaphor adequately describes the differences in each generation and further confirms that each is made more critically aware of their social environment and less compromising on their demands than the previous one. With each generation beams a ray of hope, brighter than that before. The Nyakinyuas and the Abdullas have consequently given way to the Karegas and later the Josephs.

By the time Ngugi publishes his next novel, Caitani Mutharabaini²³, certain significant changes have occurred in the author's perspective of society which greatly affects his view of education. Of great importance here is his conviction that language is not only a carrier of culture, but it also expresses and confirms the new direction Ngugi's latest art takes. The debate on language and its use in literature is complex and lengthy and our scope does not allow us to go into its various effects. However is appropriate to point out that it is a major characteristic of Ngugi's most recent development. His sudden shift from the use of English to the use of Gikuyu, his mother tongue, to write fiction can be explained as an honour to a pledge made several years earlier not only to write about the peasant society, but for them. He particularly recalls the crisis that finally led him to his use of Gikuyu:

After I had written A Grain of Wheat, I underwent a crisis. I knew whom I was writing about, but whom was I writing for? The peasants whose struggles fed the novel would never read it. In an interview in 1967 with Union News, I said, "I have reached a point of crisis. I don't know whether it is worth any longer writing in English."²⁴

The author's faith in language as a carrier of cultural values and practices, thought processes and self-image has influenced him to make a firm stand on its importance in education. He says, "in a country where ninety per cent speak African languages, it is very unwise not to teach these in schools and colleges."⁵⁷ For him his use of Gikuyu is simple: "I believe that my writing in Gikuyu language, a Kenyan language, an African language is part and parcel of the imperialist struggles of Kenyan and African peoples."⁵⁸

Ngugi's most recent perspective of education is that education should be for all, not just the youth attending formal schooling but even for those who have completed the formal education course. He turns to those who have never been to school and sees in them a knowledge of history, culture and traditional values. They too can educate the young if the two got together and discovered their need for each other. This new proposition begins with the author's personal experience with the society at Kamirithu Community Education and Cultural Centre in which broad lines of adult education and culture soon opened up theatrical activities. Ngugi recalls his experience thus:

The six months between June and November 1977 were the most exciting in my life and the true beginning of my education. I learnt my language anew.⁵⁹

He discovers through personal experience that educational knowledge is not limited to teachers and professors. Even society that has never

been to school has a lot to teach the educated. Indeed this becomes his proposition in Devil on the Cross, that education should be for all. Both the educated and the uneducated should learn from each other. Characters created in this novel are deliberately made to undergo such experiences as to portray the author's latest perspective.

Devil on the Cross is thematically a logical development of Ngugi's earlier fiction. Education, a major social welfare is transformed into big business. Kihaahu wa Gatheeca has discovered that wealthy parents can only be attracted to fraudulent schools with illusory standards since their prospectuses are based on a glittering facade of westernised educational programmes. This is the secret of attracting rich status seekers. In his school therefore, he deploys plastic puppets of white children and a decrepit white headmistress in order to entice the parents who had earlier withdrawn their children from the school when it emphasised indigenous education. Ngugi portrays the situation with a view to illustrating that as the wealthy status seekers continue to exist, the problem of irrelevant western education will continue. However, he further goes on to suggest the better form of education, education for all, leaving the satiric world of villains like Kihaahu wa Gatheeca to assert their villainous deeds.

In support of his perspective of education for all, Ngugi manifests great confidence in his bold socio-political stand. His creation of Gaturia, a junior research fellow in African culture and music at the university, becomes his conception of the intellectual who is swaying in the middle

not realising which way he should go. In his search for national culture through music, dance and narratives, it is ironically an old man who has never been to school that guides him. Gatuiria asks him to tell him "old stories, tales of ogres or animals", to which the old man replies:

There is no difference between old and modern stories. Stories are stories. All stories are new... All stories are about human beings. Young man, I can't understand the kind of education you all receive these days, or the kind of learning you went to acquire overseas during the course of so many years...⁶⁰

The author portrays here the need for the young to understand and appreciate the role played by the traditional artists. The old man tells him three stories, the third of which he vividly recalls and attempts to retell, but he realises he cannot. He discovers that story telling is an art which, unfortunately, was overlooked by the colonial education yet could not die among inborn. Common in the three stories is the theme of resistance to the forces of oppression. It is through such a situation that both the educated and the uneducated learn from each other, and the educated, here portrayed through Gatuiria are urged to take sides; either to be for the exploiters or for the exploited who have to rise against their exploiters. It is not an easy choice to make especially for Gatuiria, a young educated man, who has apparently renounced his father's rich style and culture. However, in the end he does not appear ready to choose intelligently. His negation is therefore more theoretical than practical. Muturi observes as he hands the pistol to Waringa:

And do not show this [pistol] to anyone or tell anybody about it, not even Gaturia. Those educated people are often not sure whose side they are on. They sway from this side to that like water on a leaf...⁶¹

The author shares Muturi's view that there is need for the educated to take sides with the exploited. Indeed this becomes the author's challenge to the educated. However, unlike in earlier novels, where university students are portrayed as passive observers of events, in Devil on the Cross, they take an active role in the affairs of society. By printing the invitation cards that explain better the nature of the feast, they create an awareness in many about its very existence and the need to witness it with a view to putting an end to such villainy. Through the narrator of the epic, the author explains that education should not elevate people high from their society; instead it should bring them closer. The march in which Muturi and the University students demonstrate against exploitation of the poor by the rich, becomes a projection (as in Petals of Blood), of the author's faith in the victory of the masses. However shortlived, this victory foreshadows the author's faith in a greater and final victory in the future. Through the narrator, the author expresses the need for the educated to join the masses thus:

These brave students have shown which side education should serve. My friends, you should come and join us too. Bring your education to us, and don't turn your backs on the people. That is the only way.⁶²

The students have harkened to the voice of a worker calling upon them to choose the side on which they would use their education. This further portrays the author's desire to see the educated join the masses and together achieve a common victory. The author's sincere wish is that through education, the students will be able to consciously and critically relate to their surrounding and actively struggle to create an environment in which exploitation and injustice is gotten rid of.

We have observed in this chapter, the author's success in portraying the crippling effects of colonial education before independence as the case is in A Grain of Wheat and in post-independent Kenya as is the case in both Petals of Blood and more recently in Devil on the Cross. He has convincingly portrayed the need to change colonial education into one in which a critical awareness of the learner's social environment is instilled. The role of history, especially the society's struggle against foreign domination and exploitation, is significant, for through it, the author projects an understanding of the present which would provide adequate plan for the future. Colonial education has been rejected by Kihika and Karega because in their different experiences, it has hampered their creativity and mental development particularly towards the social concerns of the day. Through these two, and the Siriana environment, the author has sufficiently demonstrated the problems of colonial education. Through Karega's role as a teacher the author foresees an answer to Muniira's

defective "facts-only" approach to education. Later still, he envisages a situation in Devil on the Cross, in which the educated and the masses join to fight a common social and economic enemy - the exploiter. In the horizon appears hope for a new era in which education would play a great role in raising people's critical awareness of themselves and their socio-political and economic environments and the subsequent need for immediate change.

ENDNOTES

1. Ngugi wa Thiong'o, A Grain of Wheat, (London: Heinemann, 1968), p.76.
2. Ibid.
3. R. Clifford, Ngugi wa Thiongo, (London: Macmillan Press Limited 1979), p. 70-71.
4. Several critics have pointed out Ngugi's move towards socialistic writing. See Killam G., An Introduction to the Writings of Ngugi, (London: Heinemann 1980, p.96, Cook, D. and Okenimpke, M. Ngugi wa Thiong'o: An Exploration of His Writings, (London: Heinemann 1983), p.90, and E. Ngara, Art and Ideology in the African Novel, (London: Heinemann 1985), p. 75-85.
5. Africa Report No. 90 (February 1979), Ngugi's interview by Magina Magina, p. 30-31.
6. Joe Louis, a famous black American heavyweight boxer held the championship title longer than anyone else - almost 12 years.
7. Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Petals of Blood, (London: Heinemann 1977), P.29.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid. p. 170

12. Ibid. p. 169
13. Ibid p.170.
14. Ibid, p.164.
15. Ibid, p.165.
16. S. Gikandi, Reading the African Novel, (Heinemann 1972), p.49.
17. Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Homecoming, (London, Heinemann) 1972 p.49.
18. Petals of Blood, op.cit., p.170.
19. Ibid.
20. Gikandi refers to him as the "consciousness" of the novel op.cit. p.140. E. Ngara points out that he marks Ngugi's own understanding of a committed person's growth in ideological orientation and conscientization. op.cit. p.79.
21. Petals of Blood, op.cit., p.17.
22. Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Writers in Politics, (London: Heinemann 1981), p.40.
23. African Literature Today 10 "Ngugi's Petals of Blood" by E. Palmer p.164.
24. Petals of Blood, op.cit., p.171.
25. Ibid., p.171-2.
26. Ibid., p.172.
27. Ibid., p.167.
28. Ibid., p.21.
29. Ibid., p.22.

30. Ibid., p.23.
31. Ibid., p.246.
32. First published in 1854. Published in Penguin English Library 1969.
33. Ibid., p.47.
34. Longman, London, 1953.
35. P. Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed. (Translated from Portuguese) by M. B. Ramos (New York: Seabury Press 1970), p.45.
36. Petals of Blood, op.cit., p.51.
37. Ibid., p.246.
38. Writers in Politics, op.cit. p.38.
39. Ibid.
40. P. Freire Ibid., p.50.
41. Ibid., p.53.
42. Petals of Blood, op.cit., p.247.
43. Ibid., p.109.
44. Ibid., p.110.
45. Ibid.
46. Ibid., p.198.
47. Ibid., p.199.
48. Ibid., p.200.
49. Ibid., p.185.
50. Ibid., p.,338-339.

51. Ibid., p.339.
52. Ibid., p.340.
53. Ibid., p.339-340.
54. Ibid., p.339.
55. Later translated from Kikuyu into English under the title Devil on the Cross, (London: Heinemann 1982).
56. Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Decolonising the Mind, (Nairobi: Heinemann 1981), p.72.
57. Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Homecoming, (London: Heinemann 1972), p.16.
58. Op. cit., p.28.
59. Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Detained : A Writer's Prison Diary, (Nairobi: Heinemann 1981), p.76.
60. Devil on the Cross, op.cit., p.61-62.
61. Ibid., p.211.
62. Ibid., p.205.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has examined the treatment of education, one of Ngugi's most prominent themes, in several of his literary works. We have particularly paid close attention to the development of this theme from its earliest portrayal in The River Between to the present. In the course of this study we have also closely examined the author's perspective of education which has developed and undergone significant changes in the course of his literary career. The development of the author's social vision, we have noted, has significantly influenced his perspective of education as seen in the various works analysed in this thesis. Our intention in this thesis therefore was to analyse the complex manner in which Ngugi has handled education with a view to illustrate that the changes in perspective constitute the author's awareness and social consciousness at various periods. It is in this respect that the thesis has reflected upon the author's changing perspectives of education in various works.

In the first chapter, we noted that Ngugi's keen interest in the theme of education has been largely determined by its pervasive importance in his society. Education is deeply rooted in his society's historical and social circumstances and has continued to affect the society in various ways, some of which have caused great concern to the author. This is why in all, Ngugi's works reflect both the historical and the social development of education. We have also noted Ngugi's deliberate elaboration of this theme in many of his literary works,

portrays an artistic response to the issues pertaining to education at various periods of his writing. Many of Ngugi's scholars and critics have observed the author's keen interest in the effects of education in his society and we have highlighted a number of them with a view to justifying the need for further analysis of this theme.

During the course of this study, we have identified the fact that the author's society places education in a very central place in their welfare. In this society, education has continued to be the most sought after constituent of the colonialist. The objective of this education upon its introduction by the early Christian missionaries and its reception by the local community has evidently been the root cause of the conflict that is evident in the works analysed in this thesis. The actual control of education was in the hands of the missionaries and the local colonial government, whose aim was to recruit young Africans to preach and spread the gospel among the rest of the Africans, and a few who would become efficient administrators of a colonial government. The African society on the other hand, perceived education as an urgent necessity in understanding the white man and acquiring his wisdom which would ultimately facilitate the reclamation of their lands and fighting the colonial control. Ngugi himself underwent an education system closely akin to that which he portrays, and experienced feelings close to those of his protagonists; it is against this background that his early works have been understood.

We have noted that Ngugi's works have reflected both the

historical and the social development of education in his society. In the course of our study we have analysed the effects of this education as portrayed by the author with particular attention to the educated individual and his relationship with the larger society. We have alongside this noted the author's development from the general and descriptive approach to education, to the particular, analytical perception of education.

The works studied in chapter two comprise the author's attempt at a literary career, and more important to our study, his early attitude to education. In this early phase education is seen as a means to fast development, particularly by the educated, both in the social and economic areas of life. The author shares with his society the desired political liberation. In The River Between, for instance, the close relationship between education and political liberation is an issue that the author has belaboured to a great extent. The social expectation that the educated shoulder the burden of leadership towards political freedom, has been juxtaposed with the individual's shortsightedness, inadequate preparation for this role in the school and the conflict that is evidently created in him in respect to traditional and social expectations.

Through Waiyaki, the author has clearly brought out certain social effects of education. On the one hand, education destroys cultural and traditional values, through its rejection of rites like circumcision. On the other hand, it creates unity among the youth. Because of its close association with the Christian teachings, the missionary school

discourages its students from involving themselves in traditional African practices. With the introduction of independent schools by Waiyaki, the society's hope that education would bring political liberation begins to take roots. Waiyaki's aspiration for education to liberate is not however realised due to the complex nature of the social events of the times.

In Weep Not Child, we saw Ngugi's perception of education as directly related to the uplifting of a society's economic level and also in its ability to unite the youth. Ngugi's sympathy to Njoroge's futile attempts to come to terms with his condition as educated youth, in a difficult and uncertain social and political environment, have been observed. The author endorses the social and economic gains brought about by education. This is reflected in his portrayal of the three families in the novel; Ngotho's, Jacobo's and that of Howland. Education is perceived as being able to socially and economically elevate the Ngotho family liberating them from dire poverty and strain. Unity through education however, becomes the author's ideal in a society suffering from the Mau Mau uprising against colonial domination. The school youth are made to ignore the war around them; Ngugi condones their attitude and goes on to describe the school as an abode of peace.

The basic perception of education as a means to liberate society both politically and socially has been projected by the author in the two novels handled here. This has been clearly portrayed through the educated protagonists who are in turn made to realise the society's expectations of them resulting from their acquisition of education.

Nevertheless, an ambivalent attitude to education, with reference to the programme of the achievement of political liberation has been noted. The author does not subject education to a thorough and critical appraisal, instead he is more descriptive in his approach. Consequently we have observed that lack of critical distance between the author and the situations faced by his educated protagonists is a result of the author's own social background which is similarly influenced by some of the forces these characters experience. In this early phase of his writing career he has not transcended the effects of these forces both in him and in society. Education in The River Between is viewed as a means of faster development, a place between the die-hard traditionalists and the staunch converts of Christian religion, and in Weep Not Child, education becomes the neutral ground between the forest fighters and the homeguards. That education could bridge the gap between these factions has emerged as the author's ideal hope. In Weep Not Child particularly, education has been reflected as a means to achieve individual positive gains. The structure and activities of the European community before independence demonstrated that education led to greater power and prosperity. In this novel therefore, the earnest desire for education by the entire family of Ngotho, has largely been influenced by this pattern. The Jacobo's are testimony to such power and prosperity. Like his educated protagonists, the author portrays an eagerness that education brings unity and peace for fast social, economic and political development. The early works have thus been

understood to bear a close analogy between the author and his educated protagonists in several respects. His academic and social background account for the sympathetic treatment of these characters. It was evident that the author has not consciously set about to unravel the complexities of education: however, he adequately describes them. Ngugi, himself a product of a conventional colonial education system, is puzzled, indeed overwhelmed by its complexities and does not thus stand outside to evaluate it. This literary phase that ends with the completion of his education at Makerere evidently comprises a moralist outlook to human affairs, coupled with a firm hope for a better future for society through education. This attitude gradually changes and is reflected in his later works.

The works discussed in chapter three portray a change in the author's approach to the subject of education. He revisits this theme, reflects upon what education offered his society, what it omitted and its overall effect upon the society. He also gets concerned about the role of the educated in an independent African nation, widely populated by non-educated people. He observes issues related to education with a keener and more analytical eye and makes succinct his criticism and appreciation respectively. The author's extrication from the entanglement of the complex effects of education starts with A Grain of Wheat. It is from here that Ngugi closely examines education, particularly its effects in the struggle for political independence. It is in this phase too that such adjectives as "colonial", "missionary" and "foreign" are used to describe

what was previously referred to simply as education.

Through our analysis of A Grain of Wheat, we observed that although education is not as prominent a theme as it was in the earlier works analysed in chapter two, it has projected the author's change of perspective towards it. We have noted that this novel marks the beginning of a critical approach to education. It marks too the author's development both in the manner that he handles his themes to the style and language used, the result of which is a more complex work than the earlier ones. The author, for instance, has shifted from the single educated protagonist who is basically perceived as a saviour of society or family, and instead, focuses on a wider society in which several characters, their relationships with each other and their perception of issues affecting their society are closely examined and highlighted. Education too becomes closely tied to the practical lives of the society. Political consciousness and education are closely related.

As already demonstrated, Kihika abandons the missionary school on realising that the missionary ban on female circumcision is based, not on the Christian religious faith but on western cultural values which were clearly imposed upon the Africans. His abandonment of school is testimony of the development of the author's perception of education. In this respect the missionary school is associated with the hindrance of one's social and political awareness. Here he succinctly criticises the deliberate attempt by colonial educators to divert the students' attention from understanding their social, cultural and political situation. The

author further notes its effects of dulling the students' sensitivity to issues around them. Only when one gets away, like Kihika, can he enjoy the "freedom" to serve his society particularly in the political movement. The author perceives education as only worthy if it could raise the students' critical awareness so that they can understand themselves and their social and political environment better. The author has propounded the thesis that education should take the responsibility of relating social and political issues to students in their immediate environment.

In Petals of Blood, education occupies a prominent place through which the author not only severely criticizes colonial education, but calls for immediate change. His proposal for an overhaul of the colonial system in independent Africa is also portrayed in some of the essays in Homecoming and Writers in Politics. He proposes an education system that would raise the students' critical awareness, which would in turn make possible the changes in the social setup. Through the strike motif, he portrays the need to overthrow the elite, who through the acquisition of education, are now in positions of influence and power, and use these to exploit the society. The need to re-define the function of education is clearly portrayed through the experiences of students at Siriana, from the time of Fraudsham to the time when Joseph is enrolled there, when it is headed by Chui. Karega's attempt at Ilmorog Primary School, to inculcate in the students a knowledge of themselves, their social, political and economic environment, is a radical change from the "facts-only" approach employed by Munira. Karega's is favourably contrasted to

Munira's, a further manifestation of the author's development towards a perception of education in its role of creating critical awareness in the students.

The stifling effects of colonial education have been traced from Fraudsham's reign in Siriana to Chui's. The students' demand for the Africanisation of the education system, especially with reference to the content and the teachers, has been supported by the author through tracing the development of the students' awareness in Siriana. Karega's dismissal from Siriana projects the author's conviction - albeit unconvincingly portrayed - that one need not learn from school but from his social environment, the problems faced by the larger society. The colonial school deliberately avoids any involvement with any such issues. Ngugi provokes his society to acquire the desire for the knowledge of their social environment in an effort to understand their predicament and attempt to solve it. The journey to the city and back is testimony of the need for society to critically analyse their problems with a view to solving them. The artist's conscious effort lies in his attempt to bring about desirable social changes through an appropriate and relevant educational system.

By viewing missionary education as a debilitating agent, Ngugi projects in this novel his growing conviction of the need to re-define and restructure education in order to relate it to the needs of society. Here Ngugi ties missionary education to the fact of colonialism and regrets that despite political independence education has not been freed from

the influence of colonialism, to accommodate the needs of Africans in an independent nation. Petals of Blood has particularly demonstrated that there is a growing need to conscientise society so that it does not continue to uncritically accept foreign values. It is in this respect that we justify Ngugi's observation that education should be restructured to enable society to reflect upon the past and adequately plan for the future.

We cannot underrate Ngugi's successful portrayal of the issues related to education that have had far reaching consequences since its introduction among the African society. He has traced the initial need for the acquisition of education for literacy, development and unity to its more complex need for critical awareness. This is in line with his vision that education should address itself to the changing needs of the fast changing African society. His discontent about the financial attachment accorded to education is apparent, for it is later manifested in the economic and social exploitation of the larger uneducated population. It is for this reason that the author advocates the need for change in the educational objectives so that the whole society realises the need to critically assess their capability vis-a-vis their social environments. Ngugi has successfully justified his ardent call for an education that would create a critical awareness especially among the youth, by highlighting the defects of colonial education.

This study is not a final statement on education. We have noted the diversity of this theme and indeed certain aspects would not

adequately be contained in our scope. It would be of interest for instance to research into the effects the current educational changes would have on the Kenyan society, in close relation to what Ngugi hopes for in his more recent works. This would constitute adequate research work.

This thesis wishes to re-emphasise that the development of Ngugi's perspectives have been influenced by his social environment and also by his sensitive concern for issues affecting society over a long time. That is why in his recent works written in Gikuyu, his pronouncement on education is that it should be for all, both the university professor and the illiterate peasant learning from each other with a view to making their society understand their social predicaments, their causes and possible means of solving their own problems. He further projects that such an understanding must begin from one's immediate environment, an appreciation of who one is, his roots, history and culture, all of which should be manifested in the appreciation of his language from which all other values stem.

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