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**CULTURAL HYBRIDITY AND INDIVIDUAL'S  
AMBIVALENCE IN CHINUA ACHEBE'S *THINGS  
FALLAPART* AND NGUGI WA THIONG'O'S *THE  
RIVER BETWEEN***

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Requirements for a **Master Degree** in English Language, Literature and Civilization.

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## **Abstract:**

This research paper which is entitled **Cultural Hybridity and Individual Ambivalence in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's *The River Between*** aims at exploring the way colonialism is imposing newness, transitions and changes on the African nations. Hence, in this subject matter, we tackle the issue of colonialism in the African societies, as the case of the Igbo and the Gikuyu nations, in making people live in the cultural interstices because of being introduced to the colonizer's way of life. The difference and the repulsion between the colonizer and the colonized in fact create a third space, which makes them confront each other in a meeting bridge. Therefore, we choose to analyze and discuss the cultural conflicts in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's *The River Between* (1965) for the sake of highlighting the major effects/ outcomes of colonialism in altering the African identity. Both works illustrate the colonial state of such African societies that undergo colonial oppression. Moreover, we find that both novels fit our endeavor of acquiring postcolonial standpoints through which we aim at exploring the issue of African identity and culture and how it balances between the traditional lifestyle and the modern features of western culture and ideologies.

**Keywords:** culture, identity, colonialism, postcolonial, hybridity, ambivalence, difference, African nations.

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I dedicate this humble work to all the people who know me well, starting by:

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- To my brothers, Karim and Lamine.
  
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# **General Introduction**

## **General Introduction:**

African literature consists of a body of works in different languages and various literary genres. This body of writings adopted mainly colonial languages such as French and English, in addition to oral ancestral literature which includes storytelling, proverbs, myths and rites that are passed from one generation to the next and had a didactic purpose in educating children. This tradition serves to remind the whole African communities of their ancestors' heroic past deeds, original customs and traditions which represent a worth cultural heritage.

Orality was a unique dominant form of literature that existed in Africa before the coming of the white man. Very often, local languages act as vehicles for the transmission of those forms of cultural knowledge.

In fact, African literature was the outcome of the colonial control of the African continent. However, many writers interested in the subject of this emerging literature as they tackled and referred to it in their works. In *New Directions in African Literature: A Review*, Ernest Emenyau collects a number of reviews about this newborn literature. Among the critics mentioned in the review, it is worth citing those who praised and dispraised the emergence of African literary works in general. In this context, Charles. E. Nnolim claims that the written African literature of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries was considered to be a weeping literature; a literature of lamentation that portrayed the situations of the Africans that were mostly bad and unhappy because of the enterprise of slavery and the pressure of colonialism (2006: 10).

Accordingly, the very beginning of African literature was marked with a conquering tone of writing, a forum of addressing issues and a literature of a great loss: loss of culture, loss of traditions, loss of religion and loss of land. These losses mainly contributed in the appearance of African literature. In this light, various literary works were written to express the harsh circumstances that the whole continent endured under the colonial control. Eventually, Chinua

Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's *Weep Not, Child* and Alan Paton's *Cry The Beloved Country* can be best examples of weeping literatures. Hence, such writers highlight the early losses in Africa, with a psychic trauma and lachrymal sore of blaming the white man for everything happened in Africa.

Among the African writers whose works are best known for enhancing the need of protecting and rehabilitating the African heritage, we come to point out to Chinua Achebe and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's works. Both writers use literature to resist, protest, by using their literary genius against the western powers which aimed at deconstructing the African identity and destroying their past and history. Indeed, both of them paved the way for the other writers to follow them in the same path of the anti-colonial protest.

Pat Emenyou, in his turn, comments in one of his interviews that African writers are among those who serve literature and push it forward. So, he argues that "the most meaningful work that African writers can do today, will take into account our whole history, how we got there and what is it today, and this will help us map out our plans for the future" (2003). Emenyou in his interview urges the African writers first to go back to the past and stick to their traditions and history. Hence, we find that both Chinua Achebe and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o seriously discuss the same issue in their novels by using identity as a powerful subject of struggle and protest.

Both Chinua Achebe and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o consider the English language very significant since it is viewed to be a weapon for making change. For that, *Things Fall Apart* and *The River Between* are assessed to share the same feature that is the greatness of words that are employed to correct the African image that is distorted by Europeans. The importance of both novels lies on the way of presenting the African identity. While in our comparative study, we will focus on revealing the significant way that both writers followed through portraying the oppositions between the traditional African pagan culture and that of the Christian West.

Eventually, both novels drove our attention to study the standpoint of each writer, Achebe and Ngugi, who similarly based on the strategy of describing the social and cultural state of Umuofian and Gikuyu communities. In fact, both of them arrive to use the same means of fighting but differently. This difference succeeded in creating a great challenge of resistance. The literary greatness of writing such novels is the basis of our curiosity, inspiration and interest. Therefore, the analysis of both *Things Fall Apart* and *The River Between* pushed us to be aware that though African literature is not seen to be mostly significant over the world, yet, we are certainly convinced that both Achebe and Ngugi walked great steps of challenge to shape a new identity for post-colonial social reforms. The two novelists base on identifying the past traditions of Nigeria and Kenya as well as to demonstrate the cultural heritage of the two nations. Indeed, these two novels increased our inspiration and both were the source of motivation that led us deal with the current topic on which we based our research work.

Subsequently, it was until our third year of learning English at Bejaia University, that we discovered the purity of African Literature. The strength of African writers was highlighted in their books, where most of them aimed at correcting the images given to the Africans whether at home or outside, and protesting against the western powers and presence in the African territories.

In the light of conducting a comparative study, we find it more efficient to examine two literary African works through which we aim at analyzing the way both novels tackle colonialism and identity as major common issues. In this case, we have to link both *Things Fall Apart* and *The River Between* for the sake of providing a good understanding stage since the comparative task needs a deep analysis and requires a skillful basis to conduct such a comparative study.

In this research, we will look for the process through which both writers remind their people of their past and culture, taking the basis of including some oral tales such as myths, proverbs and folk tales in both novels under study. Moreover, both African writers stress the

importance of such oral narratives which set to be part of human identity and heritage. Our basis will be on analyzing two different novels. Yet, the process of conducting a research work on two different novels which are both written in English and by two African writers who establish a common ideology that would certainly serve the African literature in all cases will help us provide a wider understanding through exploring two different cultural heritages.

In *Things Fall Apart* and *The River Between*, both Chinua Achebe and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o focused their works on depicting the real image of the purpose behind the arrival of the White Missionaries to both Nigeria and Kenya. Similarly, both writers took the challenge of defending Africa, using only a pen and some sheets to portray the unseen to others. Again, both of them proved that not only Europeans are able to produce such worth literary works and with their works, they come to mark that African literature is also part of the world literature and African identity should be the rehabilitated.

This research is made to establish the importance of the African cultural heritage, which mostly sticks to nature, in portraying the African identity before the arrival of the missionaries. Hence, both novels are characterized with the inclusion of storytelling such as myths and folktales, in which both Chinua Achebe and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o explain and deal with a cultural rebellion for Africans to maintain their beliefs against western colonialism that considered them mostly *savages*. Again, they portray all the changes that may occur in a colonized society that would endure colonial oppressions.

The literary greatness of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Ngugi's *The River Between* makes the works receive a host of critiques, acclaims and evaluations from different perspectives, which can be the outset of our endeavor to guide this research. Hence, we choose some of the critiques that seem to be the most worth reading, as will also fit our concern of studying Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's *The River Between* (1965) from our perspective.

Harold Bloom, in his book *Modern Critical Interpretation in Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart*, collects some essays that deal with *Things Fall Apart*. He defines the novel to be a historical one that is set in the British colony of Nigeria. Hence, he asserts that *Things Fall Apart* portrays the Nigerian history under the enterprise of colonialism. Bloom as being a literary critic and a Professor of Humanities has written more than twenty books in which he explained his perspectives. His interpretation of *Things Fall Apart* focuses on its aesthetic value and spiritual meaning. Thus, he refers to Okonkwo's tragic death to be an aesthetic tragedy set by Achebe since it stands as a sign of refusing change (Bloom, 2009: 8).

*African Novel* by F. Irele Abiola is another book that reviews the emergence of African literature and the influences of many African writers such as Achebe. Irele reveals in his book that a professor of English literature, Dan Izevbaye, considers Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* to be an achievement for the African literature. Thence, Achebe achieved canonization with his first novel, recovering the last half of the twentieth century. Dan Izevbaye praises Achebe's works to be among the landmarks of the scholarship of the African literature and the effect of his romantic view of language and reality as Izevbaye argues is what makes Achebe succeed to portray his love for Nigeria and Africa as a whole.

Language adopted here as a tool becomes one of the key sites of the postcolonial contest, since Achebe strongly understood the way language must tie with identity and nationhood to create the roots of the African literature. Achebe with writing what many would consider "the archetypal African novel" demonstrates that it is also possible to shape literary English features into the language of an ethnic experience the way it is removed from the English homeland.

Achebe's use of the English stylistic feature makes him really achieve in realizing what has been "a utopian dream for the African writer" (Irele: 32). As this, Achebe has a strong and enduring influence on the production, publishing and reception of African literature in English. Therefore, he influences a whole generation on the production of a specific genre, the novel of

Igbo traditional life and the adaptation of English for African experience, led Charles Nnolim to describe the producers of this genre as the “sons of Achebe” (2009: 34) as a demonstration of Achebe’s influence on African literary history.

Furthermore, Lame Maatla Kenalemang, in her dissertation *An Analysis of Pre and Post-Colonial Igbo Society of Things Fall Apart*, aims at analyzing the effects of European colonization on Igbo culture. In addition, she focuses on revealing how the sudden arrival of the white men to Umuofia creates great changes in political structures and institutions, where Europeans started their missionaries by introducing their culture and religion that are later imposed on Igbo people. In *Things Fall Apart*, “Achebe describes both perfections and imperfections of their culture and traditions that made them different from western cultures” (2013: 6). In other words, Achebe’s novel is purposefully describing the cultural heritage of the Igbo society, which endures colonial oppressions and the brought-changes.

Lame in her analysis, argues that the white missionaries’ belief in their superior culture does not serve on establishing a bridge of cultural exchange when both Igbos and Westerners were in need to learn the culture of the other, rather it establishes a great conflict and opposition between the two cultures. Though, the Igbo have mostly benefited from the introduction of school and education that helped them curb the rate of illiteracy in their village, she also explains how Igbo people found it a great problem to shift from their own culture to that of a stranger, but in fact they could learn something new from it (Lame: 10).

In Tsang Sze Pui’s *The Search For Identity in Things Fall Apart, A Man of The Savannah and Selected essays by Chinua Achebe*, she stresses the idea that Achebe “[brought] us a real picture of Africa and she rehabilitates African history and culture that was once denied, the tradition disrupted as well as identity distorted by colonialism” (2001: 28). She deeply explains identity as a concept that needs to be understood and related to other aspects such as history, culture and tradition. Hence, the three terms contribute in the constitution of the human

collective identity “*One True Self*” and shared culture as Stuart Hall explains the term of “collective identity” that we clearly find in *Things Fall Apart*. Thus with a shared history, people come to collectively understand their past, and protest against all the foreign forces that can shake its stability (2001: 45).

Ngugi’s *The River Between* also receives many critiques which discuss the novel’s literary greatness. For instance, *Postcolonial African Writers: A Bio-Bibliographical Critical Source Book* by Pushpa Naidu and Siga Fatima Jagne examines Ngugi’s novel from a stylistic point of view by arguing that Ngugi himself wrote *The River Between* as an allegorical work which portrays an existing conflict between Christianity and the earlier Kikuyu culture (1998: 353). Both writers base on Ngugi’s use of biblical versions within some other Christian principles to portray the way Makuyu stands to embrace the new faith. Ngugi’s allegorical novel achieves in establishing a further understanding by making a possible comparison between the indigenous Kikuyu prophet as being Mugo Wa Kibiro and Jesus to be the Christian prophet and saviour. Both writers discuss the psychological damage and the social ruin of such a tribe that colonialism left behind.

Najla Fahad Al Yabis in her dissertation *The River Between: A Cultural Approach* focuses on highlighting the reflection of culture on *The River Between*. She argues that the central conflict of *The River Between* does not turn around the struggle between the colonizer and the colonized; rather this struggle exists among the natives themselves as a result of division made out of colonization. The latter’s outcome led Ngugi’s *The River Between* to be a novel of both features, either of the colonizer or the colonized, in which characters are presented in an ambivalent attitude towards their Gikuyu culture and of the European one.

In the same context, James Ogude in his book *Ngugi’s and African History* states that Ngugi’s early novels, particularly *The River Between*, carry the ambiguities and contradictions that Ngugi is struggling. As for the influence of Kenyatta’s *Facing Mount Kenya*, which Ngugi

describes as “a living example of...integrative culture” (16: 1999). Ogude in his book also looks at the wider notion of the distinct boundaries between history and fiction that postcolonial literatures sought to question. He links Ngugi’s endeavor of writing *The River Between* to be a sign of his nationality in which he aims at portraying the precolonial identity of his nation and the way history includes the national culture that people must share.

After reviewing the two works, we come to the conclusion that the African novels *Things Fall Apart* and *The River Between* have not been taken similarly under study from our perspective though they have been the subject of various critics both at home and abroad. In order to attain our aim through the work, we have opted for Homi Bhabha’s *The Location of Culture*’s theory (1994) which we think will fit our objective while analyzing the major historical events, issues and characters in Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* and Ngugi’s *The River Between*.

In *The Location of Culture*, Homi Bhabha encourages a rigorous rethinking of nationalism, representation and resistance, and much more the “hybridity” that characterizes the colonial contestation. He even examines the colonial rules and suggests a capacity for resistance in the performative “mimicry” of the “*English Book*”. He argues that individual identity is a result of fixed factors such as education, gender and race, by which the individual comes to be well described through referring to his cultural hybridity. Hence, this multicultural stage influences and affects the individual’s identity (Bhabha, 1994: 20).

In order to succeed this analysis, we choose two novels that are best known in African literature where we intend to analyze both Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* and Ngugi’s *The River Between* and the way both works portray the cultural state of such African societies under colonialism. Our current work will be an interpretation of our endeavor to explore the way colonialism affects the African’s history as for the attempt of Chinua Achebe and Ngugi Wa Thiong’o in depicting the culture and identity of their communities in both novels under study.

In this dissertation, we intend to divide the work into three main chapters. The first chapter is devoted to the historical sketch of Nigeria and Kenya. We present an important literary movement of writing *Things Fall Apart* and *The River Between*. Next, we intend to explain Homi Bhabha's literary thinking in his *The Location of Culture*. Then, we present a biography of Chinua Achebe and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o as being African writers who work for their countries. In addition to this, we deal with the synopsis of *Things Fall Apart* and *The River Between*, in which we present the most important events that occur in both stories. Furthermore, we work to introduce Bhabha's theory that is the Location of Culture and relate it to both novels that are under our objective study, in which we give similarities of the possibility to use it in *Things Fall Apart* as for *The River Between*.

Whereas in the second chapter of our work, we trace our objective of conducting the current research. We deal with the issue of colonialism that affects and alters the African identity in general and then as an important motif in both post-colonial works under study. Lastly, we present the motif of Achebe and Ngugi's portrayal of the traditional life -Igbo and Gikuyu culture- to set as a culture conflict with the modern society that is altered by colonialism.

Meanwhile, in the last chapter, we thoroughly work to link the common issues of colonialism and identity in *Things Fall Apart* and *The River Between* with the strength of both Achebe and Ngugi's perspectives and postcolonial standpoints. The third chapter builds an academic bridge between the cultural basis of orality in both novels and the effects of colonialism in establishing cultural hybridity and ambivalence in characters' attitudes and major events. This chapter includes Achebe and Ngugi's consideration of the effects of colonialism in making people ambivalent, hybrid and completely with distorted identities.

To finish, a conclusion distinctly displays our analysis. This final stage stands to be a scheme of our research sequentially from the very early steps to the last ones. Therefore, we should strongly explain how the reason of Achebe and Ngugi's inclusion of traditions and oral

tales in the two current novels. In *Things Fall Apart* and *The River Between*, both writers come to create a window that reflects the cultural heritage that such African nations would share. This latter, enhances the construction of their identity in pre-colonial eras and the way people become confused by the introduction of the faith and culture in colonial and post-colonial epochs.

# **Chapter One : Theoretical Framework**

## Introduction:

History is important because it teaches us about the past and by learning about the past, you come to understand the present, so that you may make educated decisions about the future.

Richelle Mead in *Bloodlines*, (2011)

Our study is not about a mere history of Africa in general or of Nigeria and Kenya in particular, rather our purpose seeks to analyze some facts related to the period where Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Ngugi's *The River Between* are written and published. In this light, in our study we make reference to the most important movements and events that took place in the same period when the two African works were written, which help us explain our objective of studying both works.

This chapter focuses primarily on giving an insight to how both Achebe and Ngugi respond to all the European literary works, which argue that Africans are merely savages that lack civilization, and it is for their duty to enlighten those Africans. Moreover, Achebe and Ngugi in *Things Fall Apart* and *The River Between* respectively use some strategies that serve to protect the African culture, which is strongly related to their identity as they work to afford a real image about the oppressive circumstances because of colonialism.

This part briefly deals with the historical sketch of Africa so that we can put our analysis into a context. We move to highlight the literary movement of writing *Things Fall Apart* and *The River Between* which make them be postcolonial novels. Then, we shift to the socio-historical backgrounds of the two novels; referring to the historical era of writing *Things Fall Apart* and *The River Between*. In addition to this, we think that providing some biographical elements should help us in our study. At last, we afford the reader with a brief summary of the theory that we think would fit our objective.

## 1- Socio-Historical Sketch:

Africa was seen by the Western world as a “dark continent”, very little was known about its land and people. Africa was crushed mainly under the European powers and greed until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Although there were many theorists who afforded the world with several definitions of Africa and the African man, most of them have never been in Africa. The strangeness and the weirdness of the African cultural practices resulted in naming Africa as “a dark continent” (Awolalu: 1976), and using such misleading terms to identify what they did not even see in Africa. Among these misleading terms that are not well used to define the African religion, we point out *primitive*, *savage* and *juju*, as J. O. Awolalu intends in his book *What is African Traditional Religion?* in which he examines the aforementioned concepts.

*Primitive*: According to *The New Webster Encyclopedic Dictionary*, is defined as “pertaining to the beginning or origin; original; first; old-fashioned; characterized by the simplicity of old times” (1997: 349). So, the Westerners, by using this connotation aimed at distinguishing the great gap which exists between their sublime culture -regarded as a civilized society- and the one of the other -that is in its turn regarded as an old-fashioned society-.

Another adjective that is associated to primitivism is *Savage*: *The Oxford Learners Dictionary*'s meaning is “pertaining to the forest or wilderness; wild; uncultured; untamed violent; brutal; uncivilized; untaught; rude; barbarous; inhuman and fierce” (2008: 391). In other expression, savagery is the opposite of civilization and safety.

*Juju*: The word *juju* is French in origin and it means a little doll or toy (1997). “Its application to African deities has been perpetuated by English writers as the example, P. A. Talbot in his *Life in Southern Nigeria* devoted three chapters to *Juju* among the Ibibio people and discussed the various divinities among them” (1976: 5). Awolalu wonders then of how can divinities, however minor, be described as toys? Africans are not as low in intelligence as to be

incapable of distinguishing between an emblem or symbol of worship and a doll or toy (1976: 6). Thus, the use of this term creates an area of confusion whether is used to ignore the African religion or to abase the civilization at large.

Awolalu argues that the right investigations should not aim at defining any religion in relation to the social life, otherwise it will tend to become a sociological investigation and not a religious one. Therefore, these terms should be presumably used to distinguish between the civilization and the barbarity and not to explain the religion of the Africans (Awolalu, 1976: 10).

In this light, explorations show that the Sahara was initially a fertile area, overflowing in lush vegetation, animal and men. Climatic changes were responsible for the formation of the desert, in spite of the areas with great rivers, thick forests and vast green-lands. Despite the harshness of living conditions in the continent, people in Africa learned how to adopt the Nature's changes since they were so closed to it. They developed a culture specific to them based on religion, myths and nature. Therefore, they worshipped many different gods and goddesses who represented elements of the natural world, oracles who were foretelling the future, and spirits of ancestors who controlled traditions. Religion in Africa is known as a cultural heritage that links the past to the present. Not only Africa is studied to have a pagan religion that forebears left in the continent, rather it is always treated to be the most fundamental feature, which goes hand-in-hand in identifying the African man's existence and belonging.

Moreover, changes occurred with the exploration and eventual economic and social exploitation of Africans by the Western colonial strategies. First, came the Slave Trade that took place in the African history, where Africans were moved from the West Coast of Africa to distant places. Then, the Expansion Policies of many countries or the so-called "The Scramble for Africa" emerged, like Portugal, Germany and Britain who all began to carve out areas of Africa in order to found their colonies.

Those practices culminated in the activities of Christian Missionaries who came into Africa. Those missionaries denied the ancestral local religion of the African people, and proceeded to convert them to Christianity. So far, the universal elements that are still marked in the African history were the initial major factors in destroying what was left from African civilization.

Regarding our fundamental standpoint, making reference to the social framework of both novels would be intrinsically fruitful. Therefore, the essence of linking the issues lies on shedding light on Nigeria and Kenya in pre- and post-colonial periods. On the one hand, the history of territories during the pre-colonial Nigerian era dates back to the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is mainly known for the dominance of the West African kingdoms, such as the Edo Benin Empire and the Igbo kingdom of Onitsha. While on the other hand, the British influence in the regions began with the prohibition of Slave Trade in 1807 and the annexation of Lagos in 1861. Late 19<sup>th</sup> century Lagos was the center for African educated people who were leading for the emergence of Nigerian Nationalism and Pan-Africanism. By the end of the 19th century, Britain began an aggressive military expansion in the region. The proper colonial period of British powers in Nigerian areas has effectively lasted from 1900 to 1960.

The European invaders came to Nigeria by late 19<sup>th</sup> century. They introduced new procedures to the region and displaced the native culture and traditions of those people. There was a great change, development, modernization and all kinds of positive changes. Some *barbaric* traditions were thrown into the abyss; some were reviewed while some others were replaced with new ones. Because, the coming of the Europeans brought negative changes to the heritage of the country, most of regions refused this process of change. They believed that this kind of invasion could not bring any attainment, so that they remained protesting against until they found themselves obliged to follow the tracks.

Regarding religion, Nigerian people were mainly pagan. They followed a traditional religion that the forebears had left. In *African Traditional Religion and the Coming of*

*Christianity*, Dr. Michael F. Strmiska argues that with the coming of the European colonizers, they found it so strange and unfamiliar the way African people were worshipping false gods, so they brought Christianity to the land as a religion of enlightenment and civilization. With the conversion of many people, shrines and houses of gods were burnt, and churches were newly built as a sign of converting to the new religion (2013: 15).

The variety of the ethnic groups in Kenya, such as the Bantu and Nilo-Saharan, which settled in the land, led it become in fact a multi-ethnic state. The Kenyan culture was born out of influential sources, though it stills purely Kenyan where life-style was basically accorded to the traditional system and custom.

The root of the colonial history of Kenya goes back to the Berlin Conference in 1885, when East Africa was first divided into territories owned by the European powers. The British Government founded the East African Protectorate in 1895 and opened the fertile lands to white settlers. The colonial white settlers began to move into those territories, thus effectively had created barriers that separated the different societies, for example, Thika District between the Kikuyu and Akamba people or in the Limuru area between the Kikuyu and Maasai. Therefore, the traditional African cultural constitutions -often unwritten- were predominantly supreme during the pre-colonial period. Such constitutions governed the management of natural resources and ensured a system which conserves those traditional practices.

However, with the emergence of colonialism, the imperial masters suspended the essence of that traditional governance and aimed at destroying it mainly by force. Thus, the European constitution appears to deny indigenous social rights since the interpretation of modern laws regards traditional practices and regulatory norms as being repugnant and repulsive. Hence, it led to the emergence of Kenya's political movements that fights for freedom and security, such as the Mau Mau revolution by Jumo Kenyatta in 1953, who became the first Prime Minister of Kenya that finally gained independence in December 1963.

## 2- Achebe and Ngugi: Life, Times and Influences:

This section, aims at presenting both Chinua Achebe and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's lives and influences on the African literature, where both writers similarly work to defend their identity that is destroyed and altered by the colonial enterprise. Moreover, the two classic novels reflect the way both writers followed to protest against the colonizer and its attempt to seed the western culture in such African territories as in the current novels.

### 2.1. Chinua Achebe's Life and Art:

Being an African writer who writes about and for his country, Chinua Achebe depicts the real image of his people. A writer who uses beauty to communicate important truths to his society or abroad, which led his novel *Things Fall Apart* to be a work that sets out to correct the ugly perception of Africans. Chinua Achebe was born in 16 November 1930 and died in 21 March 2013. His parents in the Igbo town of Ogidi in South-Eastern Nigeria raised Albert Chinalumogu Achebe which help him become a Nigerian novelist, a poet, a critic and a professor, he won in fact a scholarship to study Medicine. However, he changed his studies into English literature at University College in Nigeria. He was a University student when he started writing stories about traditional African cultures.

He is a prolific writer who wrote over twenty books- novels, short stories, essays and collections of poetry. Including his first novel *Things Fall Apart* that was published in 1958, by which he gained worldwide attention and was translated into more than fifty languages. His second novel was *No Longer at Ease* that was published in 1960. Later on, *Arrow of God* in 1964, *A Man of the People* was in 1966, and *Anthills of the Savannah* in 1987 and *Home and Exile* in 2000.

Achebe wrote his novels in English and defended the use of English, a "language of colonizers", in African literature. In 1975, his lecture *An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's*

*Heart of Darkness* featured a famous criticism of Joseph Conrad as “a thoroughgoing racist”; it was later published in *The Massachusetts Review*. Therefore, he won the commonwealth Poetry Prize as he also received honors from around the world including the Honorary Fellowship of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He is a recipient of Nigeria’s highest award for intellectual achievement, the Nigerian National Merit Award. Soon, in 2007 Achebe won the Man Booker International Prize for Fiction.

In this light, many fellow-writers positively acclaimed Chinua Achebe either from Africa or abroad. Among the writers who acknowledged him just after writing *Things Fall Apart* are Toni Morrison, Nadine Gordimer and Kwame Anthony Appiah, as in the following best statements:

“His courage and generosity were made manifest in the work”

Toni Morrison (Achebe, 1958: 1)

“A writer who has no illusions but is not disillusioned, loves the people without necessity for self-hatred and is gloriously gifted with the magic of an ebullient, generous, great talent”

Nadine Gordimer (Achebe, 1958: 1)

“In the English language, he is the founding father of modern African literature”

Kwame Anthony Appiah (Achebe, 1958: 1)

## **2.2 Socio-Historical Background of *Things Fall Apart*:**

Starting with Chinua Achebe’s novel, *Things Fall Apart* was written just before the Nigerian independence. Achebe intended his novel for audiences outside Africa, because he wanted to build a direct bridge that links his African writing-tone with his endeavor to show that Africa has also a cultural heritage. Thanks to the Nigerian independence that the Nigerian educational system sought to encourage a national pride in reference to the study of Nigerian

heritage in schools and universities. The educational system required Achebe's book in high schools throughout the English-speaking countries in Africa, as it could be widely read outside Africa.

### **2.3. Literary Movement in *Things Fall Apart*:**

Chinua Achebe and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o respectively wrote *Things Fall Apart* and *The River Between* in the purpose of providing true pictures of pre-colonial Africa for those people who had no previous knowledge of traditional African societies. According to Charles Larson in *The Emergence of African Fiction*, Chinua Achebe is recognized as "the most original African novelist writing in English" (Larson, 1979: 20). Therefore, critics throughout the world praise *Things Fall Apart* as being the first African novel that is written in English, and the founding father of African-English Literature.

In fact, many writers wrote about Africa and in fact were not Africans. Among those writers, we find Joyce Cary who wrote *Mister Johnson*, a story about Africans and Africa. It was this novel, which prompted the writing of *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe. According to Achebe, *Mister Johnson* contains distorted pictures of the African society, which he tried to correct in his *Things Fall Apart*. Moreover, Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* is also about Africa and Africans but mostly in a negative manner of description in which Conrad worked to attack Africa as whole by showing it in a distorted image.

The African works are best known in the West from the period of colonization and the Slave Trade where literature of slave narratives appears as a new literary genre. Olaudah Equiano's *The Interesting Narrative of The Life of Olaudah Equiano* (1789) emerges to be best known as a slave narrative which sets to describe the Equiano's experience in enslavement.

In the colonial period, Africans exposed to write with Western languages, where Joseph Ephraim Casely Hayford (known as Ekra Agi-man) of the Gold Coast (nowadays

Ghana), published his book *Ethiopia Unbound: Studies in race emancipation* in 1911, which is probably seen to be the first African novel written in English. Hence, colonial African literature was also marked by the emergence of plays and performances. Among these works, Herbert Isaac Dholmo's *The Girl Who Killed To Save* in 1936, and Ngugi's *The Black Hermit* in 1968 who was the first to write the East African Drama. Consequently, Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* is another African work that received significant worldwide acclaim and critical assessment, for that people believed on the creativity of writing this novel, which depicts the early pre-colonial Nigeria.

Abiola Irele acclaims in his book *The African Novel* that Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* is a work that deals with the African experience. Achebe's example influences Igbo writers such as Flora Nwapa, Onuora Nzekwu, as it extended later on to non-Igbo writers including Ngugi Wa Thiong'o and T.M. Aluko.

It is in Achebe's work that the African experience is brought into definite focus, and assumes its full human and narrative scope in the modern novel. His definition of the terms of the fictional representation of Africa established the novel as a modern narrative genre on the African continent, indeed, as an autonomous mode of imaginative life in Africa. The native grasp of an Igbo communal living and individual awareness, that underlines and legitimizes Achebe's imaginative expression has given powerful impulse to the effort by other writers to convey the sense of a specific location in the world that his work evinces (Irele, 2010: 9).

#### **2.4. The Synopsis of *Things Fall Apart*:**

*Things Fall Apart* is a novel that deals with the pure rural lives of the Africans with the tragic effect of colonialism. Everything fell apart as the real values of life were thrown into the abyss, while a strange culture, law and values were imposed on the Igbo people. African writers are concerned with their society, their cultures and traditional mores. In *Things Fall Apart*, Chinua Achebe presents the typical Igbo society before the coming of colonial missionaries.

Accordingly, Achebe worked to create a clearer picture of the cultural values and mores of the African people.

Again, *Things Fall Apart* responds to European novels that depict Africans as savages who needed to be enlightened by Europeans. The novel's setting is in the outskirts of Nigeria, in a small fictional village called Umuofia, just before the arrival of White missionaries into the Igbo lands. The events of the novel unfold around the 1890s; people of the village in this period encounter a great problem of how to react against the sudden arrival. They considered the white arrival to be a sudden cultural change, and as a cultural clash which is greatly described in Achebe's novel.

*Things Fall Apart*'s subject centers on the life of the story's protagonist Okonkwo. The novel starts by giving a full description of Okonkwo, "a man of eighteen, he had brought honor to his village by throwing Amalinze the cat" (Achebe: 3). Thus, the first chapter depicts Okonkwo's life being a wrestler with personal achievements and fame. By contrast, to his father's description Unoka who seems to be mostly lazy, drunkard and weak. These features on Unoka are strongly abhorred by Okonkwo; that is why he works hard and owns many titles just to break down his father's weakness because he does not want to turn out like his father.

Okonkwo being a wealthy and respected warrior of the Umuofia clan is appointed as a guardian of Ikemefuna. The story of a small boy from the rival village who comes along with a virgin to atone for the murder of Udo's wife. Thus, the newcomer lives in Okonkwo's house for three years as the elders decide that the lad should be in Okonkwo's care for a while (Achebe: 21). Okonkwo becomes clearly pleased with Ikemefuna's attachment to his son Nwoye because he knows well that Nwoye's development is due to Ikemefuna's partnership.

When the Oracle demands Ikemefuna be sacrificed, Okonkwo though being warned by Ogbuefi Ezeudu -a respected elder in the clan- not to take part in Ikemefuna's death, does not wish to appear weak among his fellow tribesmen who have attacked the boy after several hours of

walking. Okonkwo finds himself obliged to react as any strong man must do as in Achebe's words: That boy calls you father. Do not bear a hand in his death... Umuofia has decided to kill him. The oracle of the Hills and the Caves has pronounced it. They will take him outside Umuofia as is the custom, and kill him there. But I want you to have nothing to do with it. He calls you his father (Achebe: 41).

As the novel develops, Okonkwo accidentally kills a man and he and his family are exiled from Umuofia for seven years. They are sent to his mother's village Mbanta, where they are warmly welcomed and helped to build their huts and proceed the farms.

In this period of his exile, white missionaries arrive to Umuofia and change the village. Okonkwo being unhappy for these changes decides with some other villagers to drive the whites out of their land. Therefore, together they burn the new church down. However, they are caught up and humiliated.

Later on, Okonkwo kills a colonial messenger, an act that really chokes the villagers who allow the other messengers to escape and flee from the crowd-meeting. As this, Okonkwo realizes that his tribe is not ready for any war. By the end of the last chapter, the District commissioner arrives to him where he finds that Okonkwo already hangs himself.

In response, Okonkwo's suicide is considered to be a sinful act and according to the custom, Okonkwo's body will not be touched by the clansmen. The commissioner who is writing his book about Africa, thinks that Okonkwo's death suggests a personal rebellion that he would speak more about in his book, where he chooses "The Pacification of The Primitive Tribes of The Lower Niger" (Achebe: 152) to be his book's title.

The novel's title is adopted from William Yeats's poem *The Second Coming*. The poem describes the gyres of the present conditions in the world like anarchy, chaos and how things fall apart. It also foresees the end of the present age, as most critics described the poem to be an apocalyptic vision of the universe' end.

Turning and turning in the widening gyre  
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;  
Things fall apart; the [centre] cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,  
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere  
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;  
The best lack all conviction, while the worst  
Are full of passionate intensity.  
William Yeat (1865- 1939), *The Second Coming* 1921

### **3- Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's *The River Between*:**

Whereas, this part is devoted to Ngugi's life, in which we should refer to his major literary works in general and to *The River Between* in particular. Like Chinua Achebe, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o also works to protest against the European missionaries who come to invade the Africans and alter their destiny. Again, Ngugi's work is still studied in both African and foreign universities since it is mostly known to have the national sore of defending one's culture and belonging.

#### **3.1. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's Life and Art:**

Ngugi Wa Thiong'o was born in Limuru, Kenya, in 1938. He was educated at the Alliance High School, Kikuyu, at Makerere University, Uganda and at the University of Leeds. He is a Kenyan writer whose works were in English and are nowadays translated to Gikuyu. His family was caught up in the Mau Mau War, his half-brother Mwangi was actively involved in the Kenya Land and Freedom Army, and his mother was tortured at Kamiriithu home guard post.

Ngugi published his first novel, *Weep Not, Child*, in 1964. It was the first novel in English to be published by a writer from East Africa. His second novel, *The River Between* was in fact written in 1961 and is not published until 1965, which was published while he was attending the University of Leeds in England, has as its background the Mau Mau rebellion, and described an unhappy romance between Christians and non-Christians. *The River Between* is currently on Kenya's national secondary school syllabus. His novel *A Grain of Wheat* that

was written in 1967 marks his embrace of Fanonist Marxism. He subsequently renounced English, Christianity, and the name of James Ngugi as colonialist. He changed his name back to Ngugi Wa Thiong'o and begun to write in his native Gikuyu and Swahili. Then, he wrote *Petals of Blood* in 1977, *Devil on the Cross* in 1980 that was written during Ngugi's one-year detention in prison, in Kenya, where he was held without trial after the performance of his play *Ngaahika Ndeenda (I will Marry When I want)*. This play was Ngugi's first work to be published in his own language Gikuyu, and then translated into English as to other languages. Later on, he published his *Matigari* in Gikuyu in 1986 and translated into English a year after.

After Ngugi's release, he was not reinstated to his job as professor at Nairobi University, and his family was harassed. Due to his writing about the injustices of the dictatorial government at the time, Ngugi and his family were forced to live in exile. Only after Arap Moi was voted out of office, 22 years later, that it was safe for them to return.

In 1992, Ngugi became a professor of Comparative Literature and Performance Studies at New York University, where he held the Erich Maria Remarque Chair. He is currently a Distinguished Professor of English and Comparative Literature, as well as the Director of the International Center for Writing and Translation at the University of California, Irvine.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of August 2004, Ngugi returned to Kenya. While on 11 August, robbers broke into his high-security apartment where they assaulted Ngugi, sexually assaulted his wife and stole various items of value. Since then, Ngugi has returned to America. In the summer 2006, the American publishing firm Random House published his first new novel in nearly two decades, *Wizard of the Crow*, translated to English from Gikuyu by the author.

Ngugi's recent books are *Something Torn and New: An African Renaissance*, a collection of essays published in 2009 making the argument for the crucial role of African languages in "the resurrection of African memory", and two autobiographical works: *Dreams*

*in a Time of War: a Childhood Memoir* in 2010 and *In the House of the Interpreter: A Memoir* in 2012.

Actually, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o is an active campaigner for the African language and form, as he writes and lectures extensively on this theme. His works are known throughout the world and create impact both at home and overseas. Therefore, our focus of study is on analyzing Ngugi's *The River Between*, in which we have to refer to the socio-historical background of such a well-known novel.

### **3.2. Historical Background of *The River Between*:**

In the 1960s, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o produced a worth literary material including stories, novels, plays, and a newspaper column. His first major play *The Black Hermit* was performed in 1962, which introduced Ngugi into the literary scene in East Africa. After publishing *The River Between* in 1965 following his novel *Weep Not, Child*, which were then followed by the critical success of *A Grain of Wheat*. In fact, these four works set a firm foundation for his writing. According to Simon Gikandi, Ngugi wrote *The River Between* and *Weep not, Child* in a time of reading Franz Fanon's works that set in post-colonial Kenya, which are also criticizing the repression, chaos and corruption that people experienced while Jumo Kenyatta ruled Kenya.

Hence, *The River Between* whose title was previously to be *The Black Messiah* focuses on the lost heritage of Eastern Africans through the characters of Waiyaki and his tribe. Ngugi was the first English-educated African writer to develop fiction portraying the Kikuyu view of the colonial war, the Mau Mau Emergency or Rebellion, which was consequently a violent uprising by the Kikuyu people against the British control. This event put the region in a state of emergency from 1952 to 1960 and pushed Ngugi Wa Thiong'o to write his novel *The River Between*.

Through *The River Between*, Ngugi appears as an anti-colonial writer, for which he describes the conflict between Christian missionaries and the indigenous tribes. It is in this novel, that the author focuses on exploring the long-lasting period and effects of colonialism, as he also highlights the consequences of struggling for independence.

Ngugi's aim in writing *The River between* can be seen as a challenge of restoring the dignity of his beloved country. In his novel, he illustrates the chaos and division that the introduction of Christianity brought to the Gikuyu people during Kenya's colonial period.

Subsequently, African novelists who are calling for unity characterized the Independence era of Africa at that time. In this light, the postcolonial writers like Chinua Achebe and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o aimed at establishing unity in Africa in order to overcome the colonial legacy of the white's hegemony. Hence, the subject of colonialism and Christianity is historically linked in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Ngugi's *The River Between*. So far, the novels examine the cultural heritage, where both writers are appealed to present the traditional African practices that are enhancing the identity of the African tribes.

### **3.3. The Literary Movement in *The River Between*:**

Africa's 1950s witnessed an emergence of many writers who developed their literary writings for the sake of serving the African literature. Both Achebe and Ngugi tackle the issue of colonization's effects in their works. Likewise, Ngugi aimed at fighting against the way the new African leaders were governing, as he also shares the same perspective of blaming the colonizer's dominance for breaking the traditional system of the African tribes in general. For that, the context of writing both *Things Fall Apart* and *The River Between* indicates the end of the White colonization.

Ngugi referred in his novel to the ethnic divisions and splits between tribes resulted by the colonizer's enthusiasm of replacing the ritualistic practices. According to his perspectives,

colonization is still the source of numerous problems, such as the exploitation of African people by the new leaders, the division between tribes, loss of identity and the corruption of the new governing system.

In this light, Ngugi as Achebe appears take the same mission of raising the people's awareness which make them comprehend the reality of the misleading government. Moreover, Ngugi worked to heal and cure all the problems that African people experienced under and after the colonial brutal system in Kenya and abroad.

### **3.4. The Synopsis of *The River Between*:**

In *The River Between*, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o focuses his writing on contextualizing the struggle between the Kenya's tribes and the European colonization. The effects of this colonization is portrayed to take place between two indigenous towns named Makuyu and Kameno, and both are near to the colonization of the white settlers. These two ridges were in fact united peacefully under one common system of traditions, beliefs, ethnicity and values.

The story opens with a description of the area of two ridges, Makuyu and Kameno, and the river, Honia which runs between them. The river is strong, even in the dry seasons, and the name means "cure" and "bring back to life". It is believed to be the soul of the two ridges, Makuyu and Kameno.

However, the sudden arrival of the White missionaries was to be only an indignation brought to two tribes that were separated by these Christian missionaries. In Ngugi's novel, Makuyu is represented to be the home of the Christians. It pictures the stronghold for the Christian integration, led by Joshua's conversion to the Siriana Mission that is established by the colonials. This latter lives with the whites for he renounced his tribe's faith and rituals, and becomes with his followers preachers of God. Moreover, he outspokenly preaches against the tribe's beliefs and ways out of abhorrence and self-hatred. His adopted biblical name represents

this extreme hatred, which totally blinded him against his initial belonging to the tribe's ethnicity.

In contrast, Kameno is portrayed to be the home of the tribe, and the stronghold for the traditional Gikuyu beliefs. Kameno being represented by Chege (Waiyaki's father), sees the Siriana Mission as a mind's corruption indignation, though he sent Waiyaki to learn the wisdom of the White man but still scared of the corrupted school.

Waiyaki is described to be a strong man from his childhood. He is able to stop a struggle between two young children, though he is the youngest one. His father informs him that he will be the savior of his people, and almost described to be "Christ-Like". The three boys, Waiyaki, Kamau and Kinuthia are sent to the Siriana School and all will become teachers. Another person, whose name is Kabonyi, also knows Waiyaki's legend as being the savior. He is mostly described to be jealous from Waiyaki. Therefore, he works to take this high respectful position from the boy and wishes it for either himself or his son, Kamau.

Muthoni (Joshua's little daughter) ends with the decision of being introduced to circumcision. Such a ritual practice is highly rejected in Makuyu, the Christians' homeland. Hence, her father renounced her being his daughter as her choice was for circumcision. However, with Muthoni's death matters went worse because it was for Siriana to confirm now about the barbarity of Gikuyu customs, because she died out of the circumcision's practice. So far, a great split was in fact coming between the two ridges. Chege becomes ill and so feared about his son's responsibility to acquire his wisdom and lead his tribe. By now, both men Joshua and Chege become representatives of two sides of the conflict. "Makuyu was now home of the Christians while Kameno remained the home of all that was beautiful in the tribe. Who would ever bring it together?" (Ngugi: 54).

Chege dies, and it is to Waiyaki's turn now to lead the tribe. He comes to believe that only through education; he can get the key to save his people. Consequently, he establishes schools and becomes a respected teacher in the tribe. Then, Waiyaki and Joshua's first daughter Nyambura fall in love. This fact angers Joshua and his fellows, thus Kamau is behind spreading rumors about Waiyaki, which pushes people to hate him and consider him a seller of his country where he is called "traitor" rather than "teacher".

At the end of the chapters, Waiyaki realizes that education is not the real key to solve the two ridge's conflict; rather it is to them to establish unity, which in fact will end with an efficient outcome. For all that, Waiyaki is not able to face people and make them believe that rumors cannot guide to the righteous direction.

#### **4. Homi Bhabha's Life and Theory:**

Homi Bhabha is a Professor of English and American Literature and Language, and the Director of the Mahindra Humanities Center at Harvard University. He is born in 1949, and is one of the most important figures in contemporary post-colonial studies, he is mostly known for discussing important fields, as in which he develops many aspects like hybridity, mimicry, ambivalence, interstice and difference. Such significant aspects are also discussed in his book *The Location of Culture*, where Bhabha aims at portraying the way the colonized resisted the colonizer's influence and power. He is a popular lecturer and he is regularly invited to speak at universities across North America, Europe and Asia.

Bhabha is influenced by many theorists who dealt with the subject of culture, among them we can refer to Julia Kristeva and Edward Said, a writer who mostly influenced his thoughts. Bhabha's work in postcolonial theory owes much to post structuralism. Accordingly, a great influence of Jacques Derrida's deconstruction, Jacques Lacan and Lacanian psychoanalysis, and the works of Michel Foucault can be greatly observed in his writings. He

is considered the leading voice in postcolonial studies, as he has also presented brilliant thinking in postcolonial criticism, where he explains many challenging concepts such as Otherness, the Nation, the Uncanny, Hybridity, Ambivalence and In-Betweenness.

#### **4.1- Definition of Concepts: Hybridity and Ambivalence:**

The chapter's importance lies on highlighting Homi Bhabha's basic perspectives in his *The Location of Culture*. For that, our focal point is on explaining the major concepts of our research through Bhabha's theoretical standpoints. Bhabha identifies his empirical notions in three major chapters.

The significance of the first chapter lies on the heart of explaining the subject of "Hybridity". Bhabha calls the western cultural analysis to retrieve their way of seeing the culture of the *other*. Hence, he attacks all the binary oppositions that aim at dividing the world into *first* and *third*, *civilized* and *uncivilized*, *West* and *East*, *master* and *slave*, *the self* and *the other* and *the center* and *the margin* as well.

In Bhabha's book, he tries to break down the principles that divide the world into mainly two parts, and through which the western culture finds a gap of variation. Hence, he focuses his studies along with Franz Fanon, Aroui Abdellah on explaining the real relationship that links the colonized to the colonizer, and which helps creating the Colonial Discourse.

Bhabha's hybridity deals with studying the identity and the culture of the self and how it comes to be mixed or hybrid. In colonialism, people were fleeing to find a refuge of safety to flee the brutality of the western colonial powers. This fact allows the first culture of the refugee to be mixed with the refuge's culture, which is the second one. Consequently, this mixture gives birth to a new culture, a culture of third position, which is so called by Bhabha to be "the culture of hybridization" or "cross-cultural relations".

The concept of Hybrid refers to the interaction and mingling of two channeled cultural values, practices and principles, from the colonizing and the colonized cultures. Bhabha states that the fact of seeing colonization to be so bad and negative is mostly logic, since it is oppressive for the colonized. Nevertheless, Bhabha, by discussing such a concept aims at breaking down the limitedness of western culture that asserts the colonized to be savage, uncivilized and weak. Moreover, according to Bhabha's writing, every single culture is an original mixedness of interact cultures, and no one should pretend to have the sublime culture.

To deeply explain Homi Bhabha's term of hybridity, we can refer to a long quotation from Ania Loomba's book *Colonialism/Post colonialism*:

It is Homi Bhabha's usage of the concept of hybridity that has been the most influential and controversial within recent postcolonial studies. Bhabha goes back to Fanon to suggest that liminality and hybridity are necessary attributes of the colonial condition. For Fanon, you will recall, psychic trauma results when the colonial subject realizes that he can never attain the whiteness he has been taught to desire, to shed the blackness that he has learnt to devalue. Bhabha amplifies this to suggest that colonial identities are always a matter of flux and agony. It is always, writes Bhabha in an essay about Fanon's importance of our time, in relation to the place of the other that colonial desire is articulated, correct. (Loomba, 1998: 148)

Bhabha's use of the term hybridity in postcolonial texts enriches the colonial discourse. Therefore, Bhabha's hybridity fully identifies the way of refilling such an interstice or gap - resulted by colonization- between the colonizer and the colonized. In other words, Bhabha finds how to bridge the center and the border, as a way of enhancing the idea that any single culture is not of its own, rather it is hybrid and this hybridity makes it appear complete.

In Bhabha's second chapter, he goes on explaining the ambivalence. Westerners claim that culture and civilization only exist in "the North", that is why they give themselves the right to enlighten the "South". Bhabha's idea of ambivalence sees culture as consisting of opposing perceptions and dimensions.

This ambivalence is a duality that represents a split in the identity of the colonized and the colonizer, therefore, he argues that any culture after being colonized must be hybridized and ambivalent, due to the cultural system which changes in this colonized nation. Hybridity and ambivalence are enough different from each other. Hence, ambivalence can be seen as a belonging feature to hybridity.

Bhabha's explanation of this term suggests a critical rejection of the Western culture that enhances on its sublime culture. Moreover, his ambivalence initiates the dual perceptions and dimensions, which relate the colonizer to the colonized, but in another way which newly emerges in the colonial discourse. Hence, Bhabha is in-between the two dimensions of the colonizer and the colonized and argues that the location of culture does not belong to the binary oppositions as in Said's *Orientalism* (*Self* and *Other*), rather it is a third location that is in-between, hybrid and ambivalent. Bhabha's third location represents the location of identity and culture, which welcome the differences of other cultures and the new relations that links the two.

### **Conclusion:**

In this initial chapter, we deal with the historical sketch of Africa which bridges the socio-historical background of the two African novels that will be analyzed in the coming chapter. Then, we refer to the literary movement of Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Ngugi's *The River Between*, which makes them be recognized as post-colonial novels. Next, we move to present short biographies of the two African writers and their major works as mainly *Things Fall Apart* and *The River Between's* plots. Finally, we expose our pertinent theory that will guide the objective of our analysis, where we reveal the two major features of Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* that our analysis will rely on. Thus, we think that explaining both

Hybridity and Ambivalence in this theoretical part would help us map our essential standpoints when shifting to the textual study of analyzing the two novels in the coming chapter.

Accordingly, our aim through dealing with this chapter lies on the importance of introducing both African novels and bringing the major events of the historical and theoretical framework familiar to the reader. As we also aim on shaping an easy understanding of our work before moving to its practical phase.

**Chapter Two: Exploring the  
Most Important Issues:  
Narrating African History  
via Literature**

## **Introduction:**

In this chapter, we investigate on the two important issues that guide our current analysis. Indeed, our concern is on explaining identity and myth that both Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Ngugi's *The River Between* contextually embody. In so doing, we cannot thoroughly shift to the second phase of our work without referring to the linguistic significance of the two terms as they are referred to in our research.

Most of the African writers dealt with the subject of identity, and most of their literary writings consider the quest for the African identity -that is altered and changed and why not distorted under colonial powers- a compelling mission to serve their nations. Hence, an analysis of colonial eras should be initially provided in this work for the sake of establishing the Nigerian and Kenyan stereotypes that Achebe and Ngugi respectively picture in their fictional plots.

Accordingly, historians define colonialism as a direct and overall domination of one country over another on the basis of state power being in the hands of a foreign power such as the British direct and overall control of Nigeria between 1900 and 1960. The objective of colonialism is establishing a political domination over its colonies as also to make possible the exploitation of the colonized country. Colonialism in Africa took place between 1800 and 1960s, a phenomenon which is part of another phenomenon called imperialism.

The discussion of colonialism needs a crucial exploration that seeks to understand the situation in which the colonizer restrictedly oppressed its colonized. Most of the colonial powers adopted social and political policies that would destroy rather than help the colonized. They would consider the process of colonization an expedition to deliver those nations from darkness and primitivism. In fact, colonialism remains the wind of change, confusions and destructions, for it made nations encounter imperial incidences.

Consequently, colonialism made African literature embrace important subjects such as the quest for identity by defending their own culture and regaining their dignity. In order to study this subject matter, we have to know that colonies underwent several changes before, during and after being colonized. Hence, the suffering of alienation and exile both at home and abroad led such postcolonial writers create a type of literature that describes the emergence of the colonial period in their countries.

Colonialism transforms and displaces everything. Through this process, traditions, beliefs and cultural standards of the imperial canons are forced by the introduction of the new culture and faith of the colonizer. This is where the displacement of their traditional culture begins. Therefore, the process of colonization imposes a channel of communication between the colonizer and the colonized, where the colonized feel obliged to learn the language of the colonizer, and gradually find themselves mixing their native language with that of the colonizer because of the linguistic friction and the brutal encounter which take place between the two.

After a very long time of experiencing the consequences of suffering and brutal contacts with the colonizer, the colonized unconsciously incorporates aspects from the colonial ways in their original identity. Furthermore, one of the ways that the colonizers use to control their colonies, and change their identities is education; they control the thoughts and ideas held by the younger generation through implanting colonial ideologies in their minds. Indeed, the original culture and identity for the coming generation are lost in the new world order. One would ask the question what if Africa has never been colonized. In fact, diversity is good but forcing diversity is so bad; that is why the colonizer would often remain blamed and responsible for all the divisions and the changes that happened in Africa.

From the colonizer's point of view, his culture is sublime and correct, thus he should ignore, replace and amend the culture of the *other*. In fact, this established an ideology of

racism and differences and allowed the creation of opposing binaries of *self* and *other*, West and East, civilized and primitive, sublime and savage, first and third world. Such binaries aim at praising the colonizer either European and/or American, and mistreating the colonized whose identity is not complete as they argued and justified.

For a long time, all kinds of myths and prejudices conceal the true history of Africa from the world at large. African societies were looked upon as societies that could have no history. In fact, with colonialism it could be possible to have western writings that underestimate the African identity as a whole. Although the Iliad and Odyssey were rightly regarded as essential sources for the history of ancient Greece, African oral tradition, the collective memory of peoples that holds the thread of many events marking their lives, was rejected as worthless. Boahen in *General History of Africa: Africa Under Colonial Domination 1880-1935* argues that the only sources that are used in writing history of a large part of Africa were from outside the continent, and most of the western writings presented a misty picture about Africa and Africans (1985: 16).

The entire European intervention during the colonial period was based on the assumption that to bring about development, African culture had to be modified if not destroyed altogether. Since African culture was so intricately coiled with religion, it is easy then to see how even a European colonial policy could clash violently with some of the tenets in African traditional religion, which underpinned African society. Hence, it is from the very beginning that African traditional religion was facing with the challenge of survival and the need to strengthen itself.

## **1 - *Things Fall Apart* and *The River Between*: The Issue of Colonialism:**

The borders established by colonialism are strongly shown in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* as long with Ngugi's *The River Between*, where both post-colonial novels relate the impact of colonialism to the very early situation of the nations that witnessed the imperial period. Both novelists similarly make of their works best examples of how should a nationalist writer react against any foreign influence that would certainly harm the whole nation. Achebe and Ngugi experienced the harshness of colonialism that brought all kind of change and chaos, so that they worked to regain the dignity of their people. Both of them created an area where they could valorize their history, culture and identity as well.

Accordingly, European's vision about the Africans was so negative such as spreading the ideology that primitive people who have no sense of religion and social organization inhabit Africa. Instead, *Things Fall Apart* affords another different image with representing Umuofia's people to be well organized and self-conscious. They mainly give the tribes' elders a high position in guiding and leading, and each time they turn to them in case of help or dilemma. For instance, Achebe reflects the importance of elders in organizing the social lives of those tribes saying that "the elders of the clan had decided that Ikemefuna should be in Okonkwo's care for a while" (Achebe: 21). As long with "your wife was at fault, but even if you came into your *obi* and found her lover on top of her, you would still have committed a great evil to beat her" (23), when Okonkwo broke the sacred week by beating his wife. Moreover, in Achebe's novel it is also described that the leadership of those elders portrays their high position. Hence, people keep track of their restrictions to whom they maintain to give total respect, as it is illustrated in the following quotation of Achebe "We have men of high title and the chief priests and the elders" (Achebe: 109), where a man from the clan answers the white man who asks for the tribe's king.

This tribal organization appears very strange and nasty to the Europeans because their culture is so different. Hence, how can it be possible to judge such culture merely out of difference, and how can we prevent that we have the sublime culture and others live in a primitive way, if we are not familiar to their culture?

In order to confirm that traditional practices are also a kind of civilization that is specific to them, Achebe describes the history of Igbo land at the level of language, traditions and beliefs that make Ibo people appear so different from the Western civilization and culture. Hence, his novel *Things Fall Apart* shows the reality or the portrayal of Igbos that the Europeans found with their coming to the lands. In fact, it presents an Igbo culture made of oral and traditional system.

In *Oral Tradition in the Criticism of African Literature*, Iyasere asserts that “the modern African writer is to his indigenous oral tradition as a snail is to its shell. Even in a foreign habitat, a snail never leaves its shell behind” (2008: 107). Iyasere’s book reflects the description of Ibo culture that Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* sheds light on the literary significance of including the native Igbo oral tradition in his novel.

The oral tradition is manifested in this novel in many facets. Achebe primarily uses proverbs, myths and folk tales in *Things Fall Apart* to illustrate the Igbo tradition. Iyasere affirms that Achebe uses proverbs both to infuse the English language with traditional African wisdom and perceptions. Indeed, Proverbs are mentioned in the first chapter of the novel when the tradition of passing the kola nut for fellowship and alliance is addressed. “He who brings kola brings life” (Achebe: 6) is the proverb used and would have been a popular oral saying in that culture since the kola nut has different uses. When Achebe uses proverbs in such novel, he aims at acquiring basic standards of the Ibo culture as a portrayal of such pre-colonial society. Moreover, Achebe’s use of proverbs, myths and folktales in his novel would certainly be used for a specific purpose which is to defend his identity and regain the dignity

that his people lost. Hence, the inclusion of certain oral tales in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* mirrors the fluidity of oral culture in its history.

In this novel, we are compelled to consider how the title itself is a reflection of the effects of colonialism on the protagonist, Okonkwo. Thence, he fights a losing battle to prevent missionaries from taking control of his community. He struggles throughout the novel to keep from becoming lazy like his father, and works madly to keep the culture of his tribe undamaged. The title given by Achebe underlines the destructions that occurred in Umuofia, Mbanta and other neighboring villages, for that it represents the drastic consequence of colonialism in Africa. When things really fall apart in a society, it means that the apogee of destruction is highly recorded. In this context, Okonkwo struggles for the survival of the indigenous culture and traditions of his people, though it was too late when he realizes that his people are not ready for war to reject the white men's policy.

In most instances, Achebe's representation of this period in Nigeria's history depicts conflicts in the Igbo society, generated partly by the impact of colonialism and by tensions within the society itself. Achebe narrates a world where violence, war and sufferings of people are balanced by the strong presence of tradition, rituals and social coherence. The disruption of the balance is depicted through the ruin of Okonkwo in the novel. In fact, his individual tragedy does not represent the destruction of an entire culture rather it shapes a great failure of protesting against all the tensions. Okonkwo, though being the leader and well known in Umuofia to be strong and ambitious, he fails on leading his people to cooperate for the sake of defeating the White men's dominance. While narrating Nigeria's colonial encounter of the Igbo community's contact with the British, Achebe presents stories of the political and economic upheavals and that resulted in social change, which completely altered the destiny of the traditional tribes.

In *Things Fall Apart*, Chinua Achebe writes about colonization of Africa. He gives his readers a portrayal about the missionaries that came to the village of Umuofia and told the people about the new God, the Creator of all the world and all the men and women. He told them that they worshipped false gods, the gods of wood and stone. People of the village were told that their worshipping of stony gods are false because “the true God lived on high and that all men when they died went before Him for judgment” (Achebe: 106).

Evil men and all heathen who in their blindness bowed to wood and stone were thrown into a fire and burned like palm-oil. But good men who worshiped the true God lived for ever in His happy kingdom. He goes on to write, we have been sent by this great God to ask you to leave your wicked ways and false gods and turn to Him so that you may be saved when you die (106).

With the emergence of European colonial powers, Umuofia is put in an ambiguous state because it becomes more oppressed by the colonial control in the level of cultural, social, psychological and political dimensions as Achebe states “the missionaries had come to Umuofia. They had built their church there, won a handful of converts and were already sending evangelists to the surrounding towns and villages. That was a source of great sorrow to the leaders of the clan” (Achebe: 105) and “[b]ut I am greatly afraid. We have heard stories about white men who made the powerful guns and the strong drinks and took slaves away across the seas, but no one thought the stories were true” (106).

The sudden coming of white missionaries to the village makes people live sorrowful days. Many of them consider people’s conversion to the new faith a betrayal of the indigenous cultural system. For the tribe, Nwoye’s conversion (Okonkwo’s son) is not a stunning act because as in Achebe’s words: “None of his converts was a man whose word was heeded in the assembly of the people. None of them was a man of title. They were mostly the kind of people that were called *efulefu*, worthless, empty men” (105).

Accordingly, we can consider *Things Fall Apart* a bridge through which Achebe tries to link the pre-colonial to the post-colonial Igbo's life. Therefore, he well portrays the Igbo simple life that is basically channeled to the ancestral organization in pre-colonial era as it is written in the *International Journal of English Literature and Culture* in Pona Mahanta and Dibakar Maut's introduction:

Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* portrays a stunning moment in African history when colonial rule destroys the integrity of the pre-colonial life of the Igbo people. The "modern" European cultures were also primitive in their past. Development came to them in course of time and with different degrees. (2014: 1)

In this context, the colonizer uses religion as a weapon for establishing the new culture which occurs many changes in the tribes. In order that he attains such a complete establishment, he must start by introducing Christianity that appears strange and with new principles for the tribesmen. Moreover, the colonizer's ultimate goal is to change the beliefs and the traditions of the tribes, along with distorting and neglecting the tribal culture. If we consider the most important effects of colonialism in the novel, we would first shed light on the way both Okonkwo and Nwoye are torn at last, where none of them seems to accept the ideology of the *other*. Undoubtedly, as it is for Okonkwo to struggle for the rejection of the Christian missionaries in his tribe, he must strongly thwart his son in embracing Christianity as well. In turn, Nwoye could not bear his father's fanaticism; therefore, he decides to leave behind all what links him to his father. He could hide his attraction to the new faith for fear of his father, so that he secretly attends the white men's preaching in Mbanta. Though Nwoye is severely beaten by Okonkwo, his decision would not change as he could finally take a decision to get rid of his father's own beliefs.

The introduction of Christianity to the nine villages creates another issue that is well discussed in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. Thus, it is almost a factual fearfulness among the

tribe's members about their future, ancestral beliefs and spiritual gods. The white man argues that their worships are overall wicked as in Achebe's words:

He told them about this new God, the Creator of all the world and all the men and women. He told them that they worshipped false gods, gods of wood and stone... the true God lived on high and that all men when they died went before him for judgment. Evil men and all the heathen who in their blindness bowed to wood and stone were thrown into fire that burned like palm-oil. But the good men who worshipped the true God lived for ever in his happy kingdom. (Achebe, 1958: 106)

The people of Umuofia and other villages are put in a great dilemma of not knowing what to do and how they should react. They are almost afraid of the new faith that urges them to leave their religious practices and follow the white man's religion of God and Son, as Achebe would express: "your gods are not alive and cannot do you any harm, replied the white man. They are pieces of wood and stone...These men must be mad, they said to themselves. How else could they say that Ani and Amadior were harmless? And Idemili and Ogwugwu too?" (Achebe: 107). Therefore, the conversion of only few of people to the new faith does not explain only the fear of leaving the first ritual life, but also it explores the way those people completely refuse this colonial introduction of Christianity. Achebe then, aims at demonstrating the pre-colonial Ibo's life and the agitation of its system that is well established by colonial powers.

With the introduction of the white man's religion, the natives find Christianity to be completely the opposite from what they are accustomed to, since their indigenous religion does not have the same standards. Christianity is rather intriguing to many of the natives and many of them turn away from their families and everything they are to become a member of this new religion. Before this, the natives were very superstitious, but as the new religion flooded over the peoples, their superstitions began to lessen and their beliefs in the several gods they previously believed in are also shaken.

As many of the natives ran to the new Christian faith, many family bonds were broken. Before colonialism took place, family was an important element in the Igbo society. It was not often that a man would give his son away for any reason, but because of the English men's arrival and the spreading of the new faith, many families were forced to surrender their sons, daughters, and even some men were forced to give up their wives. The new religion also affected the way certain customs took place in the Igbo society. This idea can be illustrated when one of the newly converted Christians dared and killed the highly honored snake or "the sacred python, the emancipation of god of water" (Achebe: 116).

The impact of colonialism is clearly portrayed in Umuofia and almost other neighboring villages. It brings social changes and affects the collective identity of the tribe. In other words, the cultural heritage of Umuofia and other villages undergo a complex stage of an ambivalent culture that Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* explores.

Ambivalence basically refers to a state of social, mental or/and cultural condition of people which can be either positive or negative or both at ones. Bhabha's idea of ambivalent state reflects the way he combines both *Saidean* sense of culture with *Derridean* sense of text that the text is a *world-thinking* and that the study of any text is always linked to the prior given texts. Likewise, Bhabha's interpretation of colonial state from this combination of thoughts aims at explaining that the culture is not singular, rather it includes other multifarious practices, impressions and directions under a colonial wave of power.

The change in the cultural system remains a linking-process which bounds the oppressed to the oppressor or the colonized to the colonizer, as we can clearly notice the confusion of the tribe's members either to follow the new faith or to remain faithful to the ancient traditional way of life. This state of hesitation could not be created without the notation of such oppressing factors as colonialism in African nations. For that reason, Ngugi's

*The River Between* also shares to some extent the same themes and issues that Achebe explores in his novel.

In 1965, Ngugi published *The River Between* as a portrayal of Kikuyu under colonialism. He clearly referred to the impact of the white man's coming and all the changes that occurred thoroughly. In this novel, Ngugi draws upon Gikuyu cultural practices, in order to challenge the concept of history through which he attempts to recover the suppressed African history, which existed in fact before the advent of colonialism.

The novel's synopsis occurs all over "the two ridges that lay side by side. One was Kameno, the other was Makuyu" (Ngugi, 1965: 1). In fact, Ngugi's opening description of both ridges may demonstrate the way both tribes are interrelated and channeled since they face each other. Nevertheless, as the story develops hither and thither we come to understand that the linking-axis is that both ridges became antagonists as never. The split between the two ridges gave birth to too many conflicts; of traditions, of beliefs, of decisions, of religion as of directions, as in Ngugi's words that enhance on the conflict of both ideologies such on circumcision that is imposed in Kameno and abhorred in Makuyu as follows:

But father will not allow it. He will be very cross with you. And how can you think of it? Nyambura could visualize Joshua's fury if he heard of this. 'Besides', she continued, 'you are a Christian. You and I have now wise in the ways of the white people. And you know the missionaries do not like the circumcision for girls...Jesus told us it was wrong and sinful'...Every man of God knew that this was a pagan rite against which, time and time again, the white missionaries had warned Joshua (Ngugi: 25).

From this passage, we can notice the impact of colonialism all over the directions and the religion of Joshua's tribe. Hence, this latter embraces white men and Christian world by rejecting the old culture and traditions of the second village whose people pursue to preservation of the tribe's independence. Instead, the river, which once was a sign of unification, of cure and of join as it lies between Kameno and Makuyu becomes now the river

which divides under colonial powers as with the arrival of the white men. Again, Ngugi designates change and split to be the crucial impact of colonialism in these areas, by venerating the value of Honia River before the arrival of missionaries saying that “Honia was the soul of Kamenno and Makuyu. It joined them” (Ngugi, 1965: 1).

The collision that is created between Kamenno and Makuyu reflects the strength of colonialism in making each village strange to one another. So far, the effects of colonialism is not only establishing such oppositions of *other* and *self* between the colonizer and the colonized, rather it seeds a grain of the same struggle between the colonized tribes themselves. Moreover, the Makuyu’s disavowal of the previous rites such as girls’ circumcision, witchery and the fortune telling of the Gikuyu seers like Mugo Wa Kibiro who foresaw the coming of the white men as Ngugi states “There shall come a people with clothes like butterflies. These were the white men” (Ngugi: 2), also creates an area of struggle between the opposing tribes. In this context, colonialism imposes an ideology that the sublime culture and civilization are strongly stucked to the first tribe that is Makuyu, whereas primitivism is; therefore, affixed to Kamenno where traditions and rites are well respected by the clansmen.

*The River Between* explores the attempt of the Christian missionaries to ban what they considered the barbaric practice of female circumcision. As a result, it fundamentally creates an impossibility of existence that both villages were living upon the two colliding ideologies. Hatred, envy and animosity blinded both sides, for that conflicts underline the refusal of alien culture that Ngugi’s characters aim at portraying. For Joshua, Christianity was only the best path to follow power and knowledge. He renounced his tribe’s rituals since he realized to what extent this tribe’s lives are in deep darkness, as he heard these words for the first time:

Those who refuse him are the children of darkness;  
These, sons and daughters of the evil one, will go to Hell;

They will burn and burn [forever] more, world ending  
(Ngugi, 1965: 29).

From the very title itself and the description of how the river separates the community into two, *The River Between* introduces very swiftly the idea of division as a result of colonialism. As we are gradually introduced to the characters, we come to understand the way colonialism results in a massive mix of beliefs and religions, where individuals find themselves trapped against a larger backdrop of tradition and behavior that they may or may not agree with. Again, colonialism not only affects massively on the ideologies of both tribes, rather it separates tribesmen into two opposing groups; those of Kameno and that of Makuyu. Ngugi's implication of the opposing characters is to depict the conflicts that are created out of colonialism.

Waiyaki as having a double insight of both his ancestral culture and that of the white man creates a hybrid subject himself. The mixture that holds the character embodies overall his confusion though being the central character in Ngugi's novel. Waiyaki believes on the ancient prophecy of his tribe that he would be the savior of his people as Chege told him "salvation shall come from the hills. From the blood that flows on me, I say from the same tree, a son should rise. And his duty shall be to lead and save the people... remember that you are the last in this line" (Ngugi: 20). The prophecy led Waiyaki grow in mind from his childhood, for that he could understand that salvation is needed to unify both tribes. Hence, Waiyaki works to heal the wound of conflicts between the two tribes. Besides, in order to get rid of colonialism the protagonist aims at establishing education as a process of raising awareness among the coming generation.

In fact, Waiyaki followed his father's instructions as he warned him not to follow the white men rather to get his wisdom. As this, he became a mixture of both worlds since the Siriana School influenced his ideas. Hence, Waiyaki could understand that education may be

the source of salvation for the two tribes. His father Chege has an influential involvement on him, for he belongs to the same tribe where culture remains always tied to the traditions.

## ***2- Things Fall Apart and The River Between: the Issue of Identity:***

In this work, we discuss the notion of identity and how it is shaped and constructed through the works of postcolonial writers -Chinua Achebe and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o-. For, it is very common that postcolonial literature deals with the concept of identity at length since most of the postcolonial writers witnessed the process of colonization that greatly affects their writings.

Identity as a concept is well defined in the *Oxford Learner's Thesaurus Dictionary* to be all the characteristics, feelings and beliefs that make a person or a group of people seem or feel different from others, as it is a sense of national/cultural/personal/group identity (2008: 375). To carry on with our focus, we have to shed light on the importance of this connotation in presenting the real image of the African nations that we aim at highlighting in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Ngugi's *The River Between*, which seem to be an embodiment of past and present African identity.

In Tsang Sze Pui's work, she considers identity to be a stage of an unfixed formation, whose process is still incomplete (Pui, 2011: 12), Achebe also argues in an interview with Kwame Appiah when saying that: "It is of course true that the African identity is still in the making. There isn't a final identity that is African" (1993: 20). However, it does not mean that we do not need to consider our history while rehabilitating a new identity and much more regaining dignity as Achebe strongly discusses as follows:

African people did not hear of culture for the first time from Europeans; that their societies were not mindless but frequently had a philosophy of great depth and value and beauty, that they had poetry, and above all, they had dignity. It is this dignity that many African people all but lost during the colonial period and it is this that they

must now regain. The worst thing that can happen to any people is the loss of their dignity and self-respect. The writers duty is to help them regain it by showing them in human terms what happened to them, what they lost. (Achebe, 1973: 8)

The passage above demonstrates the importance of African works in aiming at regaining the African identity. Such writers as Achebe and Ngugi show that identity is mostly related to history. Therefore, identity is not a simple concept that one can study without indicating the fundamental role of history in shaping it. Thus, history is the essence of identity's recognition, for that it links the present-identity to the past of people since it sets to be the evidence or the eyewitness of their culture. History allows people to recognize their origins, belonging, their own traditions and civilization that even undergo many changes brought by the western colonization.

Identity does not seem a very simple concept. Every one of us has an individual identity, but in fact, there is a common standpoint of beliefs, values, and traditions to which our present-identity remains related. Indeed, if we really consider identity to be an individual matter we should also acknowledge the collective identity that people share between them. In other words, people remain recognized through their history, values, and culture which all go hand in hand to construct the collective directions where cultural principles are shared and ancestral heritage is hold.

According to Stuart Hall, people are identified with those with whom they share common history. The idea of collective identity asserts that "one true self, hiding inside the many other selves" (Hall, 1994: 394), in which historical and past experiences aim at portraying the unity of nations. Nevertheless, identity is the essence, which is transmitted from generation to another, taking into account all the factors, which may occur to change it such as colonization through all its forms. In this case, identity could be explored to be unfixed. Therefore, the external factor that threatens the fixity of identity embodies the

contact between the *self* and the *other*. In other words, if there were no friction between the two cultures, the identity -of the colonized in particular- would not be altered or oppressed, because it is in fact the colonized whose identity must be threatened by such external factors.

Identity formation is related to both the features that identify us, our beings and culture and the way people could see our being. That is to say, identity is both what defines our existence and what makes others define us. Both Achebe and Ngugi focus on the idea of how the others would define us, because it is neither enough to define one's self nor to show him the way through which he should identify himself, rather, it is how he should prove that identifying one's self and being identified would be similarly accepted. Stuart Hall asserts again that one must do well in representing himself, as he should focus on the way that others will represent him (1994: 394).

Learning about the identity and culture of the other is mainly a result of social connections or personal explorations. With the coming of the white men, they thoroughly went on portraying the Africans as being barbaric, inferior and savage because they found the African culture so strange and unfamiliar to them and because of this matter, they give themselves the right to identify those Africans basing on their own imagination and personal interpretation. If really people do not have an identity, they would lack the means of identifying with, as also they would lack history, culture and belonging. In *Things Fall Apart*, when the colonizers arrived to Umuofia, they found it a world of rituals and traditions that really appear unfamiliar to the colonizer himself, because the two cultures are strongly different to each other.

Colonialism changes, destroys the nations and disorients their destiny. Both postcolonial writers -Achebe and Ngugi- understand that the African identity is clearly denied in colonial times, and that the colonizer uses the African identity to devalue them. In *Things Fall Apart*, Umuofia is portrayed to be wholly enveloped by traditional customs and

ritualistic culture; so that people show a great respect to the traditions, and know well what will be the result if they would disobey as Okonkwo does when he beats his wife in the sacred day. “[Okonkwo] walked back to his *obi* to wait Ojiugo’s return, [and] when she returned he beat her very heavily. In his anger he has forgotten that it was the Week of Peace” (Achebe: 22). People of Umuofia care much about the traditional system of their tribe; it is a proof that the tribesmen are shaken by Okonkwo’s reaction against his wife by beating her in the *Week of Peace*.

Though Achebe is defending the culture of his people, he goes on showing both the perfections and imperfections of those cultural standpoints. Hence, he knows well that each culture may have both positive and negative sides, but it does not mean that this culture should be an outcast and rejected. Achebe’s novel depicts the Ibo culture in the very early colonial era that is similar to that of Achebe’s birthplace of Ogidi. In Ogidi, Igbo-speaking people lived together in groups of independent villages ruled by titled elders. The customs described in the novel mirror those of the actual Onitsha people, who lived near Ogidi, and with whom Achebe was familiar. Though Achebe’s father is Christian, “when he grows up he knew to reject ‘all that rubbish [about]the evil forces and irrational passions prowling through Africa’s heart of darkness’...a man might be lucky and return to his people with the boon of prophetic vision” (Achebe, 1958: viii)

So far, the respect of the elders and the traditional system is highly depicted in Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*. Everyone in the village backs to the elders in case of help in organizing ritualistic ceremonies. In fact, they represent the male democracy of the village, for that, decisions of the tribe were made according to them as they consult with the Oracle for advice and recommendation. For instance, Unoka (Okonkwo’s father) who is described to be an ill-fated man stood and tells his story about how the laws made by elders should be well

respected, by saying that “[e]very year... before I put any crop in the earth, I sacrifice a cock to Ani, the owner of the land. It is the law of our fathers” (14).

## **2.1- The African Identity: Tradition vs. Modernity:**

In *Things Fall Apart* and *The River Between*, both writers urge the depiction of a fundamental portrayal that would always remain faithful to the culture of their people. One of the main reasons that pushed colonized peoples to rebel against colonial powers is the feeling that they began losing the components that forge their identity. In order to attempt an objective that both Achebe and Ngugi strongly share, they went on describing how simple and traditional life was in early ages before the arrival of the white men. Therefore, the theme of change that is brought by the enterprise of colonialism is similarly discussed in both novels, in other words change from traditional life to the axis of modernity was not smooth. However, it went through tragic moments, characterized by resistance by some, acceptance by others and a desire for reconciling the two cultures by others would be possibly established. Moreover, if we consider the use of myths and traditions in both works, we would certainly need to understand the importance of employing such essentials to enhance the precolonial identity of people that is later on affected by colonization.

In the process of exploring both concepts of tradition and modernity, we come to relate tradition as the way through which we interpret the past, whereas modernity is how we understand the present and future in an independent way that does not consider the importance of the past and tradition. In this light, The British Philosopher H.B Acton defines tradition as “a belief of practice transmitted from one generation to another and accepted as Authoritative, or differed to, without argument” (1955). Therefore, tradition can be considered as a tool to enhance one’s modernity since there would be no existing-modernity without being initiated first to tradition. Whereas modernity is an application of oppressing factors

that seem to impose an ideology of bringing changes, which would certainly, reject the traditional basic canons.

In order to explore the importance of using myths and oral traditions that are evoked in both works, we have first to know that Africans are basically rural, village-conscious and traditional oriented people caught in a state of transition between tradition and modernity. So that, the duality of the two forces is considered as an outcome of colonization, where the conflicts between tradition and modernity are imposed just with the coming of white missionaries. Tradition in African works symbolize the pre-colonial periods of African countries, where the indigenous culture rises to be the self-respect and dignity of the tribes. Modernity, in its turn, represents the post-colonial era where the indigenous culture is finally corrupted and contaminated by the western one. When the purity of African culture is exposed to modern urban culture, we can notice certain ambivalence in the attitude of people towards alien culture and behaviour patterns. In this case, the split of culture comes to identify another impact of colonialism in such society where tradition and modernity come together to create a controversial debate.

Subsequently, oral tradition is any cultural material transmitted orally from one generation to another by folktales, myths, songs, proverbs or heroic stories. Thus, we can witness it in both Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Ngugi's *The River Between*. The novels present vivid illustrations of African life including traditions and customs that both the Igbo and Gikuyu people used to follow. For this, it becomes important to consider that the African culture was primarily an oral culture which history transmitted by stories to the young future generations. Within Achebe and Ngugi's novels, songs, myths, folktales and proverbs are highly found to be used for the sake of describing the characters as well as the African nations' present situation.

Before going so far, it is convenient to provide the reader with some very concise definitions of the aforementioned terms as myths, folktales and proverbs:

**Myth:** is defined in the *Oxford Learner's Dictionary* to be a type of story/ies from ancient times, something that many people believe but that does not exist or is false (2008: 290). Isidore Okpewho, in *Myth in Africa*, explores the significance of myths in the African literature as being a fundamental element of the African oral wisdom. Okpewho refers to Richards Chase's statement when he states that "myth may be like a dream and it may like philosophy, but it is art", "believes in turns that myth is a sacred tale that is believed by its tellers" (1983: 262).

The use of myths in *Things Fall Apart* and *The River Between* suggests a reference to the indigenous culture of African people, which represents an original legacy and heritage. To make it simple, the concept is defined to be "a traditional or legendary story, usually concerning some being or hero or event, with or without a determinable basis of fact or a natural explanation especially one that is concerned with deities or demigods and explains some practice, rite, or phenomenon of nature" (*Oxford Dictionary*, 2008). In this light, the Scottish social anthropologist James Frazer also deals with the concept of myth in his *The Golden Bough* where we find some definitions like "a myth is a fiction devised to explain an old custom, of which the real meaning and origin had been forgotten" (1890: 69). In fact, using myths in *Things Fall Apart* and *The River Between* depicts the worthy uphold of an identity that the given people are proud of.

By considering the *Oxford Dictionary's* definition of a folktale, we would bear in mind that it is "a tale or legend originating and traditional among a people or folk, especially one forming part of the oral tradition of the common people. In addition, it can be also "a belief or a story passed on traditionally which can be considered to be false or based on superstition" (2008).

In addition to folktales, proverbs also should be referred to in our study. A proverb is a well-known phrase or sentence that states the truth or gives advice (*Oxford Learner's Dictionary*, 2008: 354). In this case, proverbs as considered to be the traditional wisdom are in fact a way that African writers use to define the oral mode of their culture.

In *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe acknowledges the crucial role of the elders in guiding the Igbo society. The elders represent the high leadership that the society bases on as they could link themselves to the heritage of the indigenous culture and the traditions that they preserved from generation to another. In this light, if we consider the duality of tradition and modernity, we would certainly mean the struggle between the elders of the tribe and the new comers who are the white missionaries. For this, our present part would shed light on the way traditionalists defend their identity for the sake of regaining their dignity and self-respect by referring to the importance of oral narratives in their society.

As well, the Ibo society underlines a cultural confusion just after the coming of the white men. People understand that colonialism would of course bring changes to their society and culture as a whole. However, what they could not realize is the way they would get rid of such an oppressive factor. Unity of the tribe restricts the respect that people owe to their elders as well as the obedience of spirits and the indigenous practices. Again, Umuofians consider disobeying their culture a betrayal that would bring curse to the tribe. For instance, Nwoye, Okonkwo's son, betrays the society with embracing Christianity. For this, his father abandons him as if he is no longer his father the way it appears in Achebe's word; "[to] abandon the gods of one's father and stood out with a lot of effeminate men clucking like old hens was the very depth of abomination... Perhaps he was not his son. No! [He] could not be" (Achebe: 112).

Nature appears in both *Things Fall Apart* and *The River Between* to be an element which ties the tribesmen to their culture and traditions, for that their culture imposes a well-

organized social life which seeks to preserve its heritage the most beneficial as possible. In this light, Achebe refers to the significance of oral narratives or stories in such a society, which believes on the power of its heritage though being humiliated with the coming of the white men. In some instances, myths would be regarded as the stories that unify societies and generations since they are part of culture and history as well. According to Alagoa, a myth is a “historical information [that is] transmitted orally by processes peculiar to each community (1979: 9). For this, we can relate Achebe and Ngugi’s attempt of using myths in his novel to be an explanatory stage through which we come to understand different societies since they give us an access of discovering the historical background of these elements.

A further discussion is needed to highlight the significance of using myths and proverbs in Achebe’s novel. In *Things Fall Apart*, the writer uses some mythical tales through which we come to grasp the crucial channels which exist between the culture and this kind of tales. So far, Achebe’s use of myths and proverbs in his novel detects his endeavor to glorify their significance in preserving one’s culture and building the basis of such a society. For instance, he highlights the *osu* myth which relates to a person “dedicated” to a god. The *osu* are in fact the “outcasts...seeing that the new religion welcomed twins and such abominations, thought that it was possible that they would also be received” (Achebe: 115). The community in *Things Fall Apart* seems always to be feared because of the dirtiness of these *osus* which may make the gods unhappy, as this everyone in the village wanted them to be apart. In this light, Basden asserts in his article that the origin of the *osus* may be unknown but they are regarded as one of the historical tradition of the Igbos in Nigeria (1966: 296). In *Things Fall Apart*, the *osus* live in the forest and these forests are sacred and often dedicated to the gods. Forests to them are not a place of death but that which preserves them to fulfill the purpose why they exist as Achebe expresses in his novel:

The *osu* is a taboo forever, and his children after him. He was in fact an outcast, living in a special area of the village, close to the Great Shrine. Whenever he went he carried with him the mark of the forbidden caste –long, tangled and dirty hair. A razor was a taboo to him. An *osu* [cannot] attend an assembly of the free-born, and they, in turn, could not shelter under his roof. He could not take any of the four titles of the clan, and when he died he was buried by his kind in the Evil Forest. (Achebe: 115-116)

For this, *osu*'s existence remains always related to the forests and it stands to be united with it too. They ended up among the first that benefited from western education since they shaved off their hair, and soon they had been converted to Christianity too (115). The *osus* are revealed in *Things Fall Apart* as being the ones of the early converts that came to the church. The *osu*'s myth is portrayed in Achebe's novel to establish a comparison that Christianity is rejected, abhorred and corrupted the way *osus* are corrupting the purity of the tribe. Hence, the *osus* being marginalized in the society, they lived on the edge of the forest and were allowed neither to cut their hair nor to take shelter with a normal Igbo person. As a result, many of the *osu* saw the new Christian church as a place for refuge and as a place to be accepted despite their conversion is considered an abomination for the tribe since they betrayed the custom of their ancestors.

The use of the mask to draw the spirit of the gods in to the body of a person is also portrayed in Achebe's story. It is considered a great crime in the Ibo culture to unmask or disrespect the immortality of an *Ogwugwu* or an *egwugwu* which represents an ancestral spirit in front of his people. "Each of the nine *egwugwu* represented a village of the clan. Their leader was called Evil Forest" (65). By the end of the novel, a warrior converted into Christianity un.masks and kills one of his own ancestral spirits "[it] brought the church into serious conflict with the clan a year later by killing the sacred python" (116). The clan weeps, for it and seemed as if the very soul of the tribe wept for a great evil that was coming.

Moreover, Nwoye's mother usually tells her son the myth that explains the quarrel between the Earth and the sky or between hell and heaven. Achebe describes Nwoye as a young boy that is always in love with the story whose mother always tells him. However, his father Okonkwo, sees a weakness in his son Nwoye because of his love for his mother and a quiet semblance for what his father stood for which he hated. Thus, Nwoye's mother tells one of such motherly story as in Achebe's words:

[Nwoye] remembered the story she often told of the quarrel between Earth and Sky ago, and how sky withheld rain for seven years, until crops withered and the dead could not be buried because the hoes broke on the strong Earth. At last Vulture was sent to plead with Sky, and to soften his heart with a song of the suffering of the sons of men. Whenever Nwoye's mother sang this song he felt carried away to the distant scene in the sky where Vulture, Earth's emissary, sang for mercy. At last, sky was moved to pity, and he gave to Vulture rain wrapped in leaves of coco-yam. But as he flew home his long talon pierced the leaves and the rain fell as it had never fallen before. And so heavily did it rain on Vulture that he did not return to deliver his message but flew to a distant land, from where he had espied a fire. And when he got there he found it was a man making a sacrifice. He warmed himself in the fire and ate the entrails. (Achebe: 39)

Therefore, through Nwoye's attachment to this story we may recall how the story of the Vulture would ironically appear as the same as Nwoye's story. Hence, the way the Vulture embraces the Christian faith and deserts his father's traditions appears to be so similar to Nwoye's position that becomes in fact in a mediate point. In fact, this folktale portrays the manner in which people should be grateful towards others for what they have done for them. The myth can be considered with a didactic intention from which we can understand how Nwoye's mother cares much about seeding virtues and morality in her young son's brain. Okonkwo, when seeing that his son prefers hearing such stories rather than the stories of war and bloodshed that he usually tells him, makes him feel so angry because he wants his son to become a strong wrestler as possible as he could.

Proverbs are also among all the different media through which traditions can be transmitted among people. They are metaphorical and popularly sayings, which encompass

the truth, based on humanity's common sense or experience. Thus, Achebe shares and integrates many proverbs in *Things Fall Apart* in order to explain that the Ibo conversation cannot be stripped from the inclusion of proverbs.

In the fourth chapter of Achebe's novel, he appeals to using proverbs which indeed enhances the orality of Ibo people that is "when a man says yes his *chi* [personal god] says yes also" (Achebe: 21). This proverb reflects the African thoughts towards the human nature in making his life prosperous as he really wants. Because "the art of conversation is regarded very highly in the Ibo culture" (Achebe: 6), the use of proverbs makes conversation classier. In this light, Achebe asserts that "proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten" (6). Indeed, with including such a proverb, Achebe attempts to explain how African life is strengthened with oral tales the way cultural dishes cannot be complete without palm-oil. Moreover, as Okonkwo says "a man who pays respect to the great paves the way for his own greatness" (15). In fact, the proverb explains the reason why Okonkwo visited Nwakibie, who becomes a successful man and who should always be respectful by others and since the respect is established between such a successful man and other members, it will always result in making others successful too.

In *The River Between*, Ngugi bases his novel on the incidents that arise from cultural prejudices in order to show the bad consequences of such prejudices and how they can disrupt the harmonious unity that a given society entertains. In this light, with examining the characters' attitudes and reactions we come to notice various positions held by the Gikuyu people toward those diverse cultures, which are created because of colonization considering the divisions and hostilities that emerged among the natives.

At crucial moments, the narrator in *The River Between* appears to link the rhythms of the natural world to those of the human world, as he seems to be suggesting that the human world derives its founding authority and fundamental legitimacy from nature. For instance,

the opening description of the two tribes suggests a complementary duality between nature and humanity. For this, Ngugi ironically shows the outcomes of colonization in terms of geographical divisions, where Kameno and Makuyu represent a concrete struggle and the Honia River symbolizes the unity and the reconciliation of both opposing tribes as follows:

The two ridges lay side by side. One was Kameno, the other was Makuyu. Between them was a valley. It was called the valley of life [the Honia River]. Behind Kameno and Makuyu were many more valleys and ridges, lying without any discernible plan. They were like many sleeping lions which never woke... When you stood in the valley, the two ridges ceased to be sleeping lions united by their common source of life. They became antagonists (Ngugi: 1).

In this context, presenting some mythical tales from Ngugi's *The River Between* would also establish another understanding about the way identity was fundamentally tied to local culture, traditions and beliefs in precolonial era. For instance, with introducing the character of Chege we come to imaginatively portray his persona to be such a wise old man since many stories run around him, "some people said that he had the gift of magic. Others said that he was a seer and Murungu-that would save people in their hour of need- often spoke to him...They said he could see visions of the future like Mugo wa Kibiro -the great seer" (Ngugi: 3).

The opening pages of the novel reveal the Gikuyu myth of origin. Ngugi's choice of making the origin mythical represents his awareness about the substantiality of the theme in pre-colonial Kenya. Thus, rising such a theme makes us grasp the historical rivalry between the two ridges that emerges from their contradicted myths of origin, which describes the infusion of western culture with that of Gikuyu as Ngugi's words suggest:

It began long ago. A man rose in Makuyu. He claimed that Gikuyu and Mumbi sojourned there with Murungu on their way to Mukuruwe wa Gathanga. As a result of that stay, he said, leadership had been left to Makuyu. Not all the people believed him. For had it not always been whispered and rumoured that Gikuyu and Mumbi had stopped at Kameno? And had not a small hill grown out of the soil on which they stood south of Kameno? And Murungu had told them: This land I give

to you, O man and woman. It is yours to rule and till, you and your posterity (Ngugi: 1-2).

Murungu is further described as having a “seat on the mountain of He-who-shines-in-holiness... the seat of Murungu. He made Gikuyu and Mumbi [father and mother of the tribe]” (Ngugi 17). As Chege was showing the land to his son, he referred to the sacredness of the mountain and the divine origin that all his people share. Therefore, he supported this sacred belonging by showing to Waiyaki that “it was before Agu; in the beginning of things. Murungu brought the man [Gikuyu] and woman [Mumbi] here and... He gave the country to them and their children of the children” (18). For this, the portrayal of Murungu to be as the Christian God, whereas Gikuyu and Mumbi are both presented in the form of Adam and Eve. Hence, using such Christian principles by Ngugi himself appears to be a confession of having an ambivalent culture of both Christian and indigenous faith. This friction highlights in fact another issue that is established in colonial eras. In the basis, Kameno and Makuyu share the same belief, but the difference in their versions of the story relies on the place in which their fathers stopped as a sign of their political struggle from an early era.

Like the myth of divine origin, the myth of Demi na Mathathi provides an evidence of the Gikuyu's claim to land where is portrayed to be “the giants of the tribe. They lived a long way back at the beginning of time. They cut down trees and cleared the dense forests for cultivation. They owned many cattle, sheep and goats and they often sacrificed to Murungu and held communion with the ancestral spirits” (Ngugi 10). As an illustration, we come to support it with Mathuray's discussion of Demi na Mathathi in his book, “Demi na Mathathi refers to the first two generations of the Gikuyu: the Demi are the “cutters” who cleared the forests for cultivation, and the Mathathi are the generation that protected the gains made by the preceding generation” (Mathuray, 2009: 50).

In addition, prophecy occupies an important role in *The River Between* to symbolize an anti-colonial resistance in Kenya and Africa in general. Waiyaki, despite his beliefs in the value of British education, is prophesied as the “saviour” of Kameno traditions. In the following passage, Waiyaki's, Chege, discloses to Waiyaki his foreseen responsibility:

Now, listen my son. Listen carefully, for this is the ancient prophecy...I could not do more. When the white man came and fixed himself in Siriana, I warned all the people. But they laughed at me. Maybe I was hasty. Perhaps I was not the one. Mugo often said you could not cut the butterflies with a panga. You could not spear them until you learnt and knew their ways and movement. Then you could trap, you could fight back. Before he died, he whispered to his son the prophecy, the ancient prophecy: "Salvation shall come from the hills. From the blood that flows in me, I say from the same tree, a son shall rise. And his duty shall be to lead and save the people!" He said no more. Few knew the prophecy. Perhaps Kabonyi, who has betrayed the tribe, knows about it. I am old, my time is gone. Remember that you are the last in this line (20).

From this passage, we come to grasp an ironic comparison that Ngugi uses in his novel. In addition to what is said previously, while Joshua promises his convert people of a white saviour, Chege also promises of an African saviour that must rise from the hills. Again, this makes an emergence of dual forces of traditional and modern principles which both promise a Christian or an indigenous salvation for people as follows:

[Joshua] saw the muddy water through which they waded unaware of the dirt and mud. His people worshipped Murungu, Mwenenyaga, Ngai. The unerring white man had called him the Gikuyu god the prince of darkness. Isaiah, the white man's seer, had prophesied of Jesus. He had told of the coming of a messiah. Had Mugo wa Kibiro, the Gikuyu seer, ever foretold of such a saviour? No Isaiah was great. He had told of Jesus, the saviour of the world (29).

Kameno is the central uphold of traditions and cultural status. It suggests a severe resistance since it represents a world of self-identity where people prefer to remain faithful to the ideological standards of the tribe. Since traditional concerns are highly preserved in Kameno, circumcision would be always practiced the way it has to be. For that, the elders

relate its significance to the offering and the sacrifice of the new generation who seek to purify the tribe from any conflicting wave.

Circumcision is believed to be the stage of complete manhood and womanhood. “[It] is the biggest of all rituals” (11) in Kameno. With Waiyaki’s initiation to manhood, things changed for him the way he grows up. The pride of being circumcised helps him create a world of self-confidence and responsibility as he could manage to create later on a school for all the children who were expelled from the Siriana School. As a result, Waiyaki is believed to be the messiah, for people consider him the leader who will bring unity to the tribes. He himself considers the process of enlightening the tribe through education a messianic role that should mark an achievement by the end.

Culture conflicts are deepened when Muthoni rebels against her father and submits herself to circumcision to attain full woman. Her death is interpreted to be the result of her rebellion as people would ask, “is she paying for the disobedience?” (49), and as Chege would certainly confirm to be “[a] father’s curse” (47) since she disobeyed her father by submitting to circumcision. Joshua and his followers consider circumcision to be so barbaric and a sinful practice for that they almost view Kameno to have a dark culture.

The discussion of male and female circumcision would open a critical debate where Ngugi locates this indigenous rite to the place where children would be circumcised. The ridges of the river witness the ceremonies of circumcisions, as children are initiated into their second birth. The sacrifices, which occur in the borders, symbolize the linking culture to the daily lives of the tribe’s members, as it can also portray the trepidation of the coming colonization. Moreover, circumcision dramatizes the gender portrayal of both ridges, where male circumcision stands as an allegory of masculine competitions for patriarchal dominance in both tribes, and female circumcision genders the ridges mountains as female zones where the threat of corruption and colonization is always turning around as Ngugi affirms:

What surprised Waiyaki were the unprecedented feelings of hatred roused by Muthoni's death. Yet the event by itself looked small. Perhaps it was one of those things in history which, though seemingly small, have far-reaching consequences. Girls had been initiated before. But even the one or two who had died never aroused such ill-will between the people... Waiyaki saw greater splits coming (Ngugi: 59).

For Muthoni, to be circumcised does not mean to betray her faith since her mother is also circumcised though her father is strictly against this indigenous rite for he strongly considers it sinful. She wonders how could such a faith disavows her embracement just for being circumcised as follows:

Father and mother are circumcised. Are they not Christians? Circumcision did not prevent them from being Christians. I too have embraced the white man's faith. However, I know it is beautiful, oh so beautiful to be initiated into womanhood...Surely there is no tribe that does not circumcise. Or how does a girl grow into a woman? (Ngugi: 26)

Again, Muthoni's submission to circumcision expresses her attempt to reach both her beliefs on Christianity and the belonging to the ritual culture of the opposing tribe, Kameno. She therefore aims simultaneously to reconcile both tribes as she wishes to persuade her sister that circumcision is an indigenous rite that would not force the disavowal of one's faith for the sake of healing the conflicts, which exist in Kameno and Makuyu.

According to the previous feedback, we deduce that colonialism imposes divisions and conflicts. It is because of the oppression that people find themselves in that culture conflicts. Those conflicting sides would establish opposing ideologies where the enlightened Christianity appears to be highly an oppressive element for the tribal indigenous culture. In this light, the duality of modernity and traditions can be also another portrayal of colonialism's effects where huge tensions aroused among people of both tribes.

As opposed to tradition, modernity is capitalized by Joshua and his followers who renounced the culture of the tradition just before. "There were the Christians led by Joshua, men of Joshua as they were sometimes called, [t]heir home? Makuyu" (69). This latter

illustrates how the geographical division could turn to physical and political divisions under colonialism. Therefore, instead of establishing unity and cooperation in the two ridges to regain self-respect, both sides went on deepening the bottom of conflicts. As this, the missionary could easily take the advantage of the existing conflict to expand and extend in the territories of both Kameno and Makuyu.

The sparkles of enlightenment reach Joshua and all his followers to be the pride of embracing Christianity. For that, Joshua's efforts appear in the way he daily preaches in his church "to win more and more people to Christ" (99). Since the missionaries brought the Christ into the country, many people from Makuyu were baptized in order to become "completely identified with the white man" (101) and his culture. As a result, embracing the new faith symbolizes the status of modernity in Makuyu, where Joshua and his followers have admitted that the traditions of the tribe are likely to "be cursed things such as circumcision" (99).

### **Conclusion:**

Eventually, this chapter explored the impact of colonialism in shaping the African history of such societies. Therefore, our aim through portraying the identity of the colonized nations relates to our endeavor of demonstrating the social and cultural changes that the enterprise of colonialism brought into such societies as Igbo and Gikuyu. Thence, the analysis of character's attitudes in both Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Ngugi's *The River Between* affords a further understanding of how the issue of colonialism introduces changes with dividing nations into traditional and modern one. Because of a colonial policy of divisions, cultural identity shifted from its stability to hybridity and ambivalence, as we would see in the coming chapter.

**Chapter Three: The In-  
Betweenness in *Things Fall  
Apart* and *The River Between***

## **Introduction:**

After analyzing the impact of colonialism, in making nations floundering under the struggle between the roots of their identities and the new cultural atmosphere, which imposes changes and social friction in the two novels under study, we provide another explanatory phase which analyses the way most important characters are affected by the new culture. In this light, we attempt to apply Homi Bhabha's hybridity and ambivalence by mirroring the two concepts in this analytic stage. The friction, which exists between the colonizer and the colonized, is defined by Bhabha to be an encounter with 'newness' that is not part of the continuum past and present (1994: 7). For this, in our current chapter we aim at defining the in-betweenness of the characters of the two novels under study.

### **1- Hybridity in *Things Fall Apart* and *The River Between*:**

Homi Bhabha's hybridity appears to be clearly current in both novels. In fact, its emergence here lies on the way it comes to bridge the pre-colonial and post-colonial states of nations. Considering Bhabha's definition of hybridity, we notice that both Achebe and Ngugi successfully embody this concept through implying fictional characters, where the analysis of the attitudes of most important characters will certainly help in understanding the influences of colonialism in this chapter.

Hybridity develops a stage to stop the old culture and traditions and creates a mixture of the new one. According to Homi Bhabha, "hybridity is the sign of productivity of colonial powers" (1994: 111). In other words, hybridity is the outcome of colonization because it always imposes a new ideology. For instance, culture and social life appear to be strongly different in comparison to the indigenous culture of the colonized where a process of shifting from fixities becomes clearly noticeable by disavowing their own culture and embracing the one of the *other*. Therefore, the process of colonialism involves changes in the culture of both the colonizer and

the colonized in a way that neither side is *independent* of the other (1994: 116). As this, colonialism appears to be a major element which evokes the stability of one's culture under the social friction and the encounter of both cultures, of the colonizer and the colonized. The result of this friction highlights the inclusion of the culture's duality of both *self* and *other*. However, breaking the symmetry of duality will urge a creation of another space which neither belong to the *self* nor to the *other*, therefore, this leads to deepen the relationship between the colonizers and the natives and transform it, in turn, to a hybrid and ambivalent location which asserts the *in-betweenness* of both cultures.

As long as the concept of hybridity occupies a central place in postcolonial discourse, it is "celebrated and privileged as a kind of superior cultural intelligence owing to the advantage of *in-betweenness*, the straddling of two cultures and the consequent ability to negotiate the difference" (Hoogvelt, 1997: 158). As a result, Bhabha's discussion of cultural hybridity, in his postcolonial study *The Location of Culture*, appears to develop such a concept from literary and cultural theory to describe the construction of culture and identity within conditions of colonial antagonism and inequity (Bhabha, 1994). For Bhabha, hybridity is the process by which the colonial governing authority undertakes to translate the identity of the colonized (*the other*) within a singular universal framework in which it ameliorates a third space of a new subject-position as an emergence of newness.

Therefore, in *The Location of culture*, Bhabha investigates the question of cultural identity regarding the identity's formation of the colonized under the oppressive circumstances of colonialism. His third space explores how colonized nations are always in contact with the colonizer the way social lives are linked to external factors. Moreover, such a cultural contact and interaction lead "to cultural mixed-ness, hybridity and ambivalence" (1994: 296). Bhabha's definition of hybridity stresses the "interaction between the colonizer and the colonized and the interdependence and mutual construction of their subjectivities" (Ashcroft et al, 1998: 118). In

this light, Bhabha maintains that all cultural statements and systems are constructed, as it is mentioned before, in a space that he calls the “Third Space of Enunciation [...] that may open the way to conceptualizing an international culture based on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity” (qtd in. Ashcroft et al: 124).

According to, the Indian literary scholar, Ania Loomba the notion of hybridity underestimates the clash between the colonizer and the colonized and therefore misrepresents the dynamics of anti-colonial struggle (*Colonialism-post colonialism*, 1998: 181). In this light, hybridity becomes an object of a transcultural interaction that affects the traditional stereotype of the African nation under colonialism. Again, both Achebe and Ngugi respectively discuss this subject matter in their novels where *Things Fall Apart* and *The River Between* appear as analytic windows of the cultural and the social hybridity of such fictional characters.

In *Things Fall Apart*, Nwoye who is the son of a man of titles seems to be a hybrid character. He is brought up in an environment that is wholly embedded by traditions and rituals. Nwoye is described to be different from his father, for he is always seen to lack the masculine character that a man of the tribe must have. Moreover, Okonkwo wants his son to be strong and prosperous, so that he purposefully tells him stories of violence and bloodshed (Achebe: 39). Although, Okonkwo's support to make his son appear more masculine, Nwoye still has preference to his mother's stories, he always seems to be happy when his mother asks him for help in the *obi*. For that, Okonkwo finds him more similar to his grandfather Unoka, who has nothing to do with male strength, hard-working, wrestling and affluence as follows:

Okonkwo was popularly called the 'Roaring Flame'... How then could he [has] begotten a son like Nwoye, degenerate and effeminate? ... Nwoye resembled his grandfather, Unoka, who was Okonkwo's father (Achebe: 112).

With the arrival of the white man, things went worse for Nwoye. Thus, his thoughts become in fact hybrid between what he inherited from his father and forebears and with what the white

man came with to the nine villages. Nwoye was in Mbanta when he heard for the first time the head of the missionary who was speaking to the crowd. As he starts introducing the new faith, Nwoye's awareness went on discovering to what extent this faith is connected to love, charity and help between people. He could easily find of this faith the refuge for his personality, feelings and psyche, for that, he thinks that Christianity would be the savior boat from his father's extremism, and although Nwoye was attracted to the new faith from the very first day, he kept it secret. He dared not go too near the missionaries for fear of his father (Achebe: 110).

Nwoye's decision to renounce his ancestral uphold shows the strong influences of colonial missionaries in persuading the boy to embrace Christianity. Thence, Nwoye's disavowal of the tribe's ancestral heritage makes Okonkwo sink in his inner conflicts, because he could not understand why Nwoye would finish with such decision. Nwoye's age expounds how the European missions could easily overthrow his culture and own traditions. Moreover, Nwoye's conversion denotes that the future generations of any colonized society would certainly be hybrid, since they witnessed the process of colonization from an early age. He was only eleven years old when he was introduced to the new faith, so that his thinking endures two opposing ideologies: First, he is brought up in a ritual society whose culture stands to be the pride of their lives, and whose identity is mainly shaped through the respect of these rites, customs and the leadership of their elders. Then, the coming of white missionaries attract him to embrace the new faith that makes him aware about the darkness of his lifestyle.

Therefore, Nwoye is confused about his own culture's customs. He finds some aspects of it to be wrong. One such example is when someone gives birth to twins and is forced to kill them, which is something he considers to be cruel. When he learns that the new religion is more compassionate towards twins being born, he becomes curious: "Nwoye passed and re-passed the little red-earth and thatch building without summoning enough courage to enter" (Achebe

110). He is hybrid, he wants to know the message and context of the religion but he struggles with his emotions whether to be a part of the new church or not.

In addition to the cultural hybridity of such characters in *Things Fall Apart*, we observe another typical hybridity as of Ezinma, Okonkwo's daughter. Hence, she is always described with a strong psyche the way her father wishes. Okonkwo as being strong, prosperous man and strict towards his family and traditions reflect his delicacy since she reacts in an intensive manners. Moreover, Okonkwo as being a man who basically values only masculine qualities finds the masculine character, that his son Nwoye lacks for, in Ezinma. For that, he appears to be repulsive towards Nwoye's behaviors and pleased with Ezinma's qualities. Therefore, this quality makes Ezinma a hybrid character since she adopts the strong personality of her father though she is only ten years. Hence, Okonkwo when describing his daughter's actions is strongly wishing that she is a boy, "she should have been a boy" (83). Ezinma's hybrid character of being balanced between feminine tenderness and masculine strength as Okonkwo makes her live the duality of the two qualities.

Ezinma is Okonkwo's eldest daughter and Ekwefi's only child to survive past infancy. Ezinma resembles her mother who was once the village beauty. She understands her father well, and he in turn wishes that she had been born a son. The little girl also shares a close relationship with her mother, who considers Ezinma to be a companion as well as a daughter. She reflects the obedient child that Okonkwo is always proud of, as she also mirrors such a traditionalist woman the way is her mother. Ezinma's hybridization between her mother's sensory character and her father's attitudes that are overwhelmed with strength and intensity makes her adopt an awareness that is full of maturity from her childhood. Such a hybrid character prescribes the cultural state of being bounded by multiple factors as of the mother and father.

In *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe uses passages from its local culture. His inclusion of folklore and popular discourses from his culture's everyday idioms makes him appear in a

mediate position of sharing the orality of his people. Achebe in fact appears to be to some extent hybrid since he attempts to translate this oral heritage to be known by non-Africans too. Therefore, he achieves to turn the orality of his traditions into a formal literary device where translation makes the fact of hybridization possible for Achebe himself.

Hence, he uses lot of Igbo words which reflect the Igbo culture as whole. Some of these words are without translation such as *iba*, *obi* and *osu*. Non-Igbo readers may only understand words with the help of the glossary (at the end of the novel) or guess the general meaning from the context. In this way, the balance of power seems to reverse within Achebe's novel, in which the non-Igbo are appealed to seek for further explanations in order to understand the local language of those people. The English professor, Korttnar explains that such Igbo words cannot be translated because there is no way to translate these words into English. For instance, Ezinma has suffered from *iba* and the glossary tells us that the word means fever. However, Korttnar argues in his book that fever cannot presumably be similar to *iba*. Because fever in English is a disease that can be treated by medicine. Whereas, in the African context *iba* is a spiritual disorder and cannot be easily treated (Korttnar, 1995).

Therefore, Achebe through including Igbo words is making his readers -non-Igbo readers- appear hybrid because he is urging them seek for understanding without translation. In this way, he manages to create a hybrid space where Igbo and non-Igbo people may meet without affording translation. In fact, Achebe's inclusion of his local culture transmits a global transition because he manages to mingle both Igbo culture and the English language. For instance, we notice that the glossary of the novel only provides explanations of some words that are related to the religious world of Igbo people such as the names of spiritual gods and oracles.

Like in *Things Fall Apart*, *The River Between* also shares such an important notion that portrays the way most noticeable characters shift from the stability of their traditional culture to the new one that the colonizer establishes. The hybridity of such characters in both

works could not be possible unless there is an external factor, which shapes a wave of changes. The aspect of colonialism relates both Achebe and Ngugi's novels to be respectively examined from the same literary angle of our perspective.

The sense of confusion is mostly captured in Ngugi's novel too. In most instances, the central character Waiyaki seems to dwell in both the ancestral world of tradition and the new world that comes to life because of colonialism. Even though he ultimately remains faithful to his own tribal community and background, he still draws upon the knowledge of the white community. He was along with his friends Kamau and Kinuthia destined to learn under the Reverend Livingstone of Siriana Mission (Ngugi: 21), as for Waiyaki whose father told him to get the white men's wisdom without entirely following his tracks (21). Colonialism is shown to create a huge confusion in identity, as characters such as Waiyaki struggle to incorporate elements of both of the worlds to which they belong, and risk rejection by both communities as a result.

Furthermore, Waiyaki, the protagonist is given a description of Christ-like picture. As he descends from a line of seers, among whom was Mugo wa Kibiro. This fact endows Waiyaki with popularity among his people and makes him similar to Christ. In addition, the prophecy that his father told him is about his being a savior for his people, is another attribute that makes him closer to Christ as Chege has told him that "Salvation shall come from the hills. From the blood that flows in me, I say from the same tree, a son shall rise. And his duty shall be to lead and save the people" (Ngugi: 20). These poetic lines and Biblical language in which Chege delivers to his son the secret of his being a savior gives that prophecy holiness and makes it more authentic. Besides, the inclusion of such a biblical reference advocates a further understanding of how Ngugi himself implies his duality of both his culture and Christianity, which may subsequently reflect his hybridity of language, culture and religion.

As the development of Waiyaki's character underscores his similarity to Christ in the novel, Waiyaki becomes known as “Teacher” (Ngugi: 107) and “Shepherd of his people” (Ngugi: 96). Therefore, people to show respect and praise for whom they wait to lead them, they shift to call him Teacher and/or Shepherd, where the capitalization of these adjectives appears needed the way Christ is always capitalized.

Waiyaki chooses another way to reconcile both tribes. He strongly believes on the power of education to bring change to the bad circumstance of culture conflict. Therefore, he builds a school in Kamen; Marioshoni to be the first school since the break with Siriana when “[they] have refused to admit in their school those who were the children of darkness, whose parents had not renounced the whole concept of circumcision” (67). His self-help education reinforces his will to serve his country, as he is believed to be the savior of his people. Hence, with conducting a process of establishing education Waiyaki thinks that there is a middle ground to attempt salvation. Although Waiyaki used to receive education in Siriana at the beginning, he could never renounce the traditions of his tribe. As a result, he does not like to be identified with either side, [he] is now committed to reconciliation (Ngugi: 110). Waiyaki is alienated and perceived as another to his people, and instead of trying to belong to any of the tribes, he prefers to create his own world, a world of “reconciliation” with tradition and bearing of the new identity.

In addition, when Waiyaki is found in a desperate need or in “ the great hour of need” as it is expressed in the last chapter (149), he is denied by his friend Kinuthia who “sought to hide himself in the crowd as if he did not want to be identified with the teacher” (Ngugi 149). This situation is similar to the story of Jesus in which his friend Peter denies him, as Christians believe. Waiyaki himself feels that similarity as he compares himself in the novel to Christ. Among the moments where he witnesses this similarity is when he sees Nyambura by the river and imagines as “if she and he were together standing on an altar ready for a sacrifice” (Ngugi:

104) that is similar to Christ's sacrifice. Also, the fact that "the suffering of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane and His agony on the tree had always moved him" (Ngugi: 100) which shows his identification with Christ as he intrinsically dares to confess, "[a]fter all he himself, loved some Christian teaching" (100). Finally, Waiyaki's fate at the end of the novel is the same of that of Christ; both are judged by their followers as Waiyaki is put under the Kiama's judgment. Therefore, Ngugi describes Waiyaki to be a Christ-like, as this he goes on using a language that is hybrid with biblical references such as foretelling the story of Christ within the life of Waiyaki.

Likewise, other principal characters also share the sense of confusion of identity in *The River Between*. For instance, Muthoni, Joshua's little girl, faces a massive challenge as she feels part of both her tribe and Christianity, which her father finds to be completely incongruous. Her desire to be circumcised affirms that her conscience remains always tied to the rituals of the opposing tribe. Muthoni whose father is a Christian preacher insists on the need of circumcision though she is mostly warned by her father's rigor as in Ngugi's words:

But father will not allow it. He will be very cross with you. And how can you think of it... you are a Christian. You and I are now wise in the ways of the white people. Father has been teaching us what he learnt at Siriana. And you know, the missionaries do not like the circumcision of girls... Jesus told us it was wrong and sinful (Ngugi: 25).

Joshua views the death of Muthoni to be a warning for those who rebel against the Christian faith. This suggests a further resemblance to the biblical story of Peter's fate when betraying the Christ. The story of the *Last Supper* is told in the books *Matthew*, *Mark* and *Luke* as the verses show:

When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve. While they were reclining at the table eating, he said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me." They were saddened, and one by one they said to him, "Surely you don't mean me?" "It is one of the Twelve," he replied, "one who dips bread into the bowl with me. The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not

been born". While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body." Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it. "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them" (*Matthew*, 26: 17-30).

Muthoni betrays her father's faith the way Peter betrayed Jesus and the laws of God. So far, when Muthoni chooses the path of circumcision, it means that her father would certainly disavow her and curse will follow her since she becomes an outcast in Makuyu. Whereas, Chege views Muthoni's death to be "a punishment to Joshua" (54) and a warning for him to stick to the ways of the ridges. As it is a punishment "to the hills...To all to stick to the ancient wisdom of the land, to its ritual and song" (54).

## **2- Ambivalence in *Things Fall Apart* and *The River Between*:**

According to Bhabha, this hybrid third space is an ambivalent site where cultural meaning and representation have no 'primordial unity or fixity' (Bhabha: 1994). The notion of ambivalence refers to a state of mental, social, cultural, or behavioral condition of people that includes positive and negative aspects. Again, the hybridization of people under colonialism creates an ambivalent condition; a condition in which people feel their culture and habits belonging to no one's land.

In *Things Fall Apart*, the Umuofian village is under colonial rule and each member of the village has different ways of reacting to the societal change and control; whereas some embrace it, others do not. For instance, Okonkwo is a man who can never embrace a new culture, for that he cannot go against the village's traditions and rules. After his return from seven years of exile, he finds everything different because there are many others who embrace the new faith.

For that, Okonkwo finds himself alienated since he is made in an ambivalent state towards those with whom he used to live and trust. Achebe's fictional protagonist commits suicide

though it is “an abomination for a man to take his own life. It is an offence against the Earth, and a man who commits suicide it will not be buried by his clansmen. His body is evil, and only strangers may touch it” (Achebe: 151). As this, Okonkwo is ambivalent since he shifts to the unfixedness of his own traditions and culture where suicide is strongly rejected. He respects the village laws yet he violates them in the strongest possible way by ending with suicide, an action through which he aims at refusing the principles of Christianity without knowing in fact that he becomes among those who betray their own faith.

In order to expand the foreign culture, the white orator since he uses an interpreter to communicate with the tribesmen. This interpreter belongs to the Igbo society and he seems to be also ambivalent since he understands the language of the white men and interprets it for the Igbos. Likewise, the orator who appeals to use an interpreter from the Ibo society is also ambivalent since he is helped by “that interpreter who was an Ibo man” (Achebe: 106). Therefore, the element of translation in introducing their faith makes some Umuofians and Europeans appear to be ambivalent in their actions where translation is needed to transmit one’s culture and language since they belong to different societies. Yet, both sides are ambivalent the way they go on cross-culture to meet in one common point where both cultures would endure an access of agitating both cultures’ stabilities.

In *The River Between*, the concept of circumcision- an indigenous Kenyan rite practiced upon both boys and girls that ensures their successful passage into adulthood appears as an ambivalent notion. In Kameno, such a ritual practice is always a necessity for the transition from childhood to adulthood. It is the enclave where circumcision ties to the “second birth”, such a rite forming that initiates to the final transition to adulthood which every male aspires to undergo.

Waiyaki in the opening’s scenes looks forward to his circumcision with both excitement and trepidation “Waiyaki was excited... It would be a great day. This would mark his final

initiation into manhood. Then he would prove his courage, his manly spirit" (Ngugi: 11). Ngugi's portrayal of Waiyaki's circumcision would enact a fundamental location to the mountain of Kameno "the knife produced a thin sharp pain as it cut the through the flesh...blood trickled freely on to the ground, sinking into the soil. Henceforth a religious bond linked Waiyaki to the earth, as if his blood was an offering" (45).

When he is young, Waiyaki longs for the day in which he will be circumcised and enters into the world of manhood. However, his education at Siriana results in some changes in his attitude. The narrator describes the idea of circumcision for Waiyaki when he says that "Not that Waiyaki disliked the idea of circumcision ... In fact, he considered Livingstone, for all his learning and holiness, a little dense in attacking a custom whose real significance in the tribe he did not understand and probably never would understand" (Ngugi: 39-40). In other words, Waiyaki is very aware of the significance of circumcision for his society and he rejects the colonizer's oppressive way of eliminating it. For him, the value of circumcision does not lie in the operation itself but in its spiritual reflections on those who undergo it. That is why he concludes that circumcision "could not be stopped overnight. Patience and, above all, education, were needed. If the white man's religion made you abandon a custom and then did not give you something else of equal value, you became lost" (Ngugi: 142). Hence, Waiyaki ambivalently proclaims that such an indigenous practice belongs to the Gikuyu culture and the identity of its people, and though the Siriana school denigrates its value, it is for the tribe to decide whether to practice it or not.

Muthoni creates with her desire to be circumcised an ambivalent core which calls for both endurance and change in parallel. Moreover, her struggle to remain faithful to her religion is the same with her wish of circumcision in the tribe. For most instances, such ambivalent thoughts appear to be restricted by her fear from her father on one side and her great desire to be circumcised on the other side. Muthoni, knows well that if she stands for the Gikuyu

traditional practice, she would obviously be rejected by her father and her people. Moreover, as a step of being rejected, she manages to create a world for her own to refuge herself after being ironically exiled and alienated from Makuyu and Joshua's mind. Her hybrid character and attitude towards circumcision makes her react in an ambivalent way to improve her existence and realize her wishes. Therefore, being a Christian and introducing to circumcision appears as a result of combining two elements which both belong to colliding cultures.

Subsequently, colonialism also creates a source of conflict even in accepting one's ideologies. While Kameno acknowledges circumcision for girls in order to assert their beauty and womanhood, Makuyu completely refuses this ritual practice from the coming of the missionaries into the lands. It is also portrayed by Muthoni's death that proves for Joshua's followers about the barbarity of the tribe's traditions. Muthoni's ambivalence is formed in her wish to be circumcised though she belongs to the second tribe who opposes this ritual practice.

Regarding Muthoni's father, Joshua is described to be strictly against circumcision because it is an action of the devil and he believes that "all the tribe's customs were bad" (Ngugi: 84), his wife Miriamu is circumcised. Joshua as being the follower of the lord could easily end with marrying an uncircumcised woman to prove that he is purified from the tribe's culture and traditions. For that, he always devotes prayers "asking god to forgive him for marrying a woman who had been circumcised" (31) as follows:

God, you know it was not my fault. God, I could not do otherwise, and she did this while she was in Egypt. Sometimes, when alone with Miriamu, his wife, he would look at her and sadly remark, 'I wish you had not gone through this rite' (32).

Moreover, his house is completely ambivalent since his wife is circumcised and his girl Muthoni chooses the same path of her mother too though she remains Christian. Joshua "declared that [he] and [his] family will serve the Lord" (Ngugi: 136) to correct his image

among the people of his tribe when his Nyambura disobeys him by revealing her love for Waiyaki.

Nyambura is yet another character who finds her sense of identity confused by colonialism, as her love for Waiyaki and her desire to remain faithful to her religion and family show. Hence, she disobeys her father as she confesses her love to Waiyaki who is from Kameno. Although, Nyambura belongs to a tribe, which rejects the practice of circumcision, and though she herself refuses the idea when her sister Muthoni reveals her wish to be circumcised, she dares to exchange love with a circumcised man. In fact, this makes her appear so ambivalent since her own thoughts are hybridized with the traditional culture of Waiyaki's tribe.

Furthermore, both Nyambura and Muthoni are always near to the tribe of Kameno, they regularly go there. Here again, it suggests the existence of a channeled axe that is created by their visits even though there is a failure of join, because all of Waiyaki, Muthoni and Nyambura's aims are to build a bridge of reconciliation between Kameno and Makuyu.

Waiyaki fails in his *messianic* missionary just as both tribes reject him. Kameno rejects him because they used to consider him their own teacher and saviour, and though his friend Kinuthia warns him, Waiyaki's eager to unite both tribes is stronger as follows:

Be careful, Waiyaki. You know people look up to you. You are the symbol of the tribe, born again with all its purity. They adore you. They worship you. You do not know about the new oath. You have been too busy. But they are taking the new oath in your name. In the name of the Teacher and the purity of the tribe... your name will be your ruin, be careful (Ngugi: 112)

In fact, Waiyaki's attempt grows daily in his eyes, since his father informed him that he should bring salvation to the tribes, "salvation shall come from the hills" where "a man should rise and save the people in their hour of need" (146). Waiyaki grasps the wisdom of the white men as his father, Chege told him, and he comes to use it as a means of reconciliation in the two opposing tribes. Nevertheless, he manages to build the first school in Kameno, Mariosioni, his

school where he works as a teacher and from which he grasps strength and hope that one day it will be possible to unite the tribes.

The thirst that burned the throats of so many children who looked up to him for the quenching water. And he wanted to feel all would get this water. He even wanted Joshua and his followers to come and join hands with him. Education was life (Ngugi: 98).

His failure breaks all the achievements that he once realized. Everyone in the tribe sees him as a brilliant teacher, as it is well known that their teacher is making the right things. However, Waiyaki's love to Nyambura gives birth to a great failure; the failure that would never be reconstructed as in Ngugi's words:

How could their teacher betray them? How could he work for the togetherness and purity of the tribe and then marry a girl who was not circumcised? How could he do it to them? (151).

Then, Muthoni's failure to establish reconciliation in the two villages is also formed as her father forgets having a girl whose name is Muthoni, and "from that day Muthoni ceased to exist for [Joshua]" (36). For this reason, Muthoni becomes a symbol of father's curse since "she had brought an everlasting disgrace to him and his house" (36). Muthoni with being introduced to circumcision thinks that her faith will not change as she thinks it possible to gather both Christianity and ritual traditions in one side. Though belonging to a Christian family whose father would never accept such a practice, she manages to realize her wish as a step of creating reconciliation between the two tribes, and though she fails to persuade her father she succeeds in fact to make her sister aside her.

At last, Nyambura also makes her best to create a world of reconciliation since she supported Waiyaki for all the works and the efforts he is making to unite both tribes. In some instances, Nyambura though being also a Christian who normally would not think of supporting the tribesmen, she appears to be among the major characters who helps Waiyaki and makes him successfully improve himself in either Kameno or Makuyu. Nyambura's failure of conciliating

the two opposing tribes is that her love for Waiyaki is strongly rejected by Joshua, Kabonyi and Kamau who worked overall to dismiss this relation. The three antagonists find Nyambura's love for Waiyaki a great deal to hit the teacher since he betrays the tribe's traditions, so that Nyambura in addition to her failure, she randomly helps in making Waiyaki collapse too. Hence, Nyambura fails to make her people unify with Kameno and fails to remain the Christian daughter who must obey her father. Her love makes things worse for both of them, as she could save neither herself nor Waiyaki from the Kiama's decision about their fate.

Consequently, all of Waiyaki, Muthoni and Nyambura reflect the process they used to reconcile Kameno and Makuyu. The three symbolize the youth who work to heal the problems which exist in the tribes. In this case, all the three characters use reconciliation since they prefer neither being identified with Kameno nor Makuyu. They create a world for their own in order to succeed to unify both tribes as a result of their ambivalence. Hence, each character intends to use his strategy for the sake of bringing unity to the tribes.

Hence, Waiyaki in his *messianic* missionary uses education to make people's dreams be realized. Education is established first by the missionaries in the tribes, so that due to them people send their children to the Siriana School in order to learn and get wisdom exactly as Waiyaki does. The Reverend Livingstone in Siriana who starts to see him a future Christian leader for the church teaches him along with Kamau, Kinuthia and "many other boys from the hills and beyond from Kiambu and Muranga, came there for a portion of the white man's magic" (21).

The means that Waiyaki uses is established by the missionaries, so this makes him appear hybrid and ambivalent since only hybrid characters who may attempt for reconciliation in such opposing tribes. Whereas his ambivalence is involved in the way of using the same arm to achieve his attempt, since education is first established by the missionaries who want to seed their wisdom. Waiyaki appears as an ambivalent character because he prefers neither belong to

Kameno nor to Makuyu, rather he goes on creating a new space that would certainly fit him besides his attempts. Such a world, from which salvation and reconciliation shall be brought, appears to be mostly an original space for improving Waiyaki's identity. In fact, he manages to reincarnate two roles of being the saviour of people and the teacher who uses education, that is established by the missionaries, to fight for the purity of his traditions for the sake of bringing reconciliation. Using education to fight for one's existence means that colonialism, which brings negative dimensions also performs in a positive way that may help the tribe. As this, Waiyaki to realize his trials in establishing a reconciled atmosphere uses an element from the opposing tribe where education is greatly established, for the sake of breaking the walls of conflict and reinforce his ambivalence that makes him react this way.

Then, Muthoni forcefully appears as an ambivalent character since she wants also to reconcile the two tribes as she introduces to circumcision. Therefore, Muthoni, who belongs to a Christian tribe, uses another strategy that represents her wishes advocating her enthusiasm for circumcision, which in turn belongs to the traditions of the tribe. Here again, the little girl makes a step of reconciliation since she mingles both her Christianity and circumcision seeking to create her own space, which belongs neither to Kameno as it praises only its traditions nor to Makuyu, which strongly refuses circumcision. Muthoni with ending by such a decision is rejected by both her father who only serves the laws of God, as by Kameno since she is the girl a Christian man. Therefore, being in a middle phase helps creating a third phase which cannot belong to the previous existing worlds. Christianity refuses the traditional practices of Kameno such as circumcision, and the tribal culture of Kameno itself refuses the new faith that is brought to Makuyu. This process establishes an alternative relationship of hatred and refusal that Muthoni aims at breaking with her circumcision. Hence, though she does not succeed to make both tribes unify at last, she manages to improve her existence by remaining ambivalent and non-identified with any tribe.

Finally, Nyambura, Joshua's daughter and Muthoni's sister, also ends with using a strategy which may help her making her endeavor. Nyambura as being a Christian is strongly prevented from helping the people of the other tribe. Hence, with her confession of love for Waiyaki it means that she would certainly be rejected the way Muthoni is also rejected in her tribe. Joshua asks Nyambura to leave the tribe and home since she loves Waiyaki, who is a circumcised boy. Moreover, everyone in Kameno and Makuyu are asking how the two could love each other since they belong to opposing tribes whose cultures are different. As this, she is also creating a space for her own where she may include her love to Waiyaki and her Christian faith. Therefore, such a reaction shows the way Nyambura's awareness is strongly ambivalent and enhances the idea that she also refuses to be identified with Kameno and Makuyu. However, it reflects her eager to unify the two tribes as if she is wondering how such a traditional practice can prevent people from living their own lives. Since her love for Waiyaki is overall rejected by the two tribes; Kameno considers it a way of betraying the oath regarding Waiyaki, and Makuyu also admonishes Nyambura's love as having betrayed the faith of her tribe.

### **Conclusion:**

Eventually, colonialism gives rise to hybrid characters who find it increasingly difficult to remain true to themselves and their own sense of hybrid identity yet be accepted by their families and communities such as Nwoye, Okonkwo and many others in *Things Fall Apart*. As it creates a sense of confusion of belonging which mainly gives birth to either establish reconciliation in order to possibly belong or to remain balanced between the two sides because of their ambivalence such as Waiyaki, Muthoni and Nyambura in *The River Between*. As a result, colonialism in both novels is captured to be the element that brings changes, newness and flux of shifts in the social lives of people. It is mainly considered negative for those who

refuse change and prefer remain faithful to their own culture and way of life, however it is also viewed to bring positive criteria and standards to their social lives, such as education within the establishment of schools in order to facilitate the process of education in the tribes.

Regardless to colonialism, which is an imperial process of dominating over foreign lands and territories, it also brings, as many may agree, civilization and newness where it comes possible to establish further understandings of one's culture. Consequently, Nwoye in *Things Fall Apart* who understands how his tribe is living in a dark life with worshipping stony gods and living in an illogical way such as killing twins. However, colonialism remains an oppressive process, which puts people in a state of confusion when being introduced to new ideologies, culture, language, principles and directions.

Hybridity and ambivalence break down all the dualities of *self* and *other*, civilized and primitive, first and third world. Yet the process of breaking such dualities is creating in turn a third space, which belong neither to the first phase nor to the second. A seed does not become a tree overnight, since colonialism brings changes to the tribes where traditions are strongly respected and praised, it gradually spreads its ideology that brings newness and changes to such indigenous tribes such as Umuofia and Mbanta in *Things Fall Apart* and Kameno and Makuyu in *The River Between*.

Subsequently, considering the aim of this chapter in analyzing the third space which breaks the duality that is established by colonialism, we come to understand that Bhabha's endeavor of exploring both concepts under study, hybridity and ambivalence, shows the way the interstices of differences in culture bring both concepts into practice under a postcolonial theory. The concepts ameliorate a further understanding of how both colonizer and colonized's cultures and identities can be put in one critical phase that works to analyze the cross points that make them appear together.

# **General Conclusion**

## General Conclusion:

Our choice of conducting the current research upon analyzing Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's *The River Between* (1965) seeks to portray the Igbo and Gikuyu cultures which both endure the impacts of colonialism in their territories. The two prominent writers discuss the issue of colonialism according to both nations of Igbo and Gikuyu in the two novels, for they focus on exploring the concept of identity in their works. Both Achebe and Ngugi view colonialism as an imperial dominance over countries, as making people live in an oppressive state and conditions. Hence, they reveal the way colonialism effects such African nations that are introduced to different culture and ideologies. The changes that are brought because of colonialism are considered to be a kind of cultural impacts on the previous indigenous culture.

In this work, we showed how colonialism introduces another way of life, culture and social ideologies. As a result, identity shifts from its fixities to a new one that is overall diverse. Indeed, both Achebe and Ngugi afford a real image about the impact of colonialism over their peoples and nations. Moreover, they managed to portray the way the issue of colonialism develops and imposes new ideologies, culture, lifestyle and generally alters the destiny of their people.

Both icons of the African literature, Chinua Achebe and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, experience the extreme impact of colonial enterprise. This pushed them to picture in an artistic way the struggle between the traditional cliché of pre-colonial Africa and its modern life in post-colonial Africa. Hence, the importance of our endeavor lies on the way we link both tradition and modernity under the impact of colonialism to be the subject matter of our research.

In our work, we opt for Homi Bhabha's theory via which he establishes a critical rethinking about the postcolonial nations. In his theory, he explains such terms as hybridity,

ambivalence, in-betweenness, as mimicry and mixedness, in fact, he relates these terms to the cultural state that both colonized and colonizer undergo as the outcome of colonialism. Moreover, our objective in establishing such a theory seeks to critically analyze both Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Ngugi's *The River Between* from the same perspective. In this case, we discuss the cultural opposition between the colonizer (European colonialism) and the colonized (Umuofia and Mbanta, Kamenno and Makuyu); in which colonialism results in social divisions and cultural changes which overall destroy one's identity. Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* (1994) demonstrates the way colonialism creates a third location where cultural aspects appear to be hybrid and ambivalent in the way social frictions are imposed via colonialism.

We start this research by making a critical review of the two novels -*Things Fall Apart* and *The River Between*-, through which we explore the historical and literary worthiness that both novels share. After dealing with such novels, we conclude that Achebe and Ngugi's two major novels are the target of various critics such as Harold Bloom, James Ogude, Abiola Irele, Pushpa Naidu Parekh and Siga Fatima Jagne. However, both novels are not taken under study together, particularly under our standpoint.

After defining Homi Bhabha's theory that is the skeleton of our analysis, we examine the possibility of applying the perspectives of Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* that we want to relate to our work. Hence, we investigate the importance of *Things Fall Apart* and *The River Between*'s historical sketches where it would be necessary to introduce both novels from the same perspective of our endeavor. Afterwards, we summarize the two writers' biographies, their lifetimes and influences before and after writing the current novels under study, we introduce the synopsis of the novels that we would compare, as we discuss the major themes that both writers depict in their two novels.

Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Ngugi's *The River Between*, apart from being fictional pieces of art, demonstrate a real image about the issue of colonialism in destroying the core of

traditional African nations and the strategies via which they are introduced to another world that is overwhelmed by the political, social and ethnic diversities. Therefore, our choice of discussing the current topic is realized upon considering the literary worthiness of both postcolonial novels which use literature to narrate, explore and portray the social, cultural and political circumstances under colonial oppressions.

After dealing with the theoretical framework in the first chapter of our work, we move to afford a further understanding of the colonial context as an introduction to our practical phase. For this, colonialism is considered the major factor that changes the destiny of nations and makes people live the dilemma of existence and belonging. Hence, we discuss the issue of identity that is affected with the coming of the European missionaries that spread new culture, religion and ideologies. In fact, the changes that are brought by colonialism create a real struggle between the traditional ideology of indigenous tribes such as Umuofia and Kamenon on the one hand, and the modern tribes, which opt for embracing the colonial faith, as a sign of leaving the previous ritual practices on the other hand. The shift from traditional lifestyle to the modern one would not be easily accepted for most tribes whose members believe on the purity of their forebears' culture as it is portrayed in the second chapter of our research. For this reason, we move to explore the results of such cultural struggles and transitions, where we apply Homi Bhabha's interpretation of the two concepts as hybridity and ambivalence, to demonstrate the way the seeds of colonialism impose cultural struggles and social divisions. Thence, we are in need to explain some oral narratives such as myths, proverbs, prophecies and folktales to define the traditions of the indigenous tribes. Therefore, in the third chapter, we refer to the social reactions of many characters towards the new faith to be a result of social frictions via colonialism in making the culture appear hybrid and ambivalent the way it is portrayed in both novels.

In most instances, the analysis of major characters is appealed to demonstrate how colonialism really affects their thinking. Again, we analyze the characters' psyche as Okonkwo, Nwoye and Ezinma in *Things Fall Apart* and Waiyaki, Nyambura, Chege, Joshua and Muthoni in *The River Between* for the sake of establishing a clear image about the way colonial oppressions make African people's identities waver between their original traditions and the new culture that is imposed by white missionaries. Once we discuss the notion of hybridity and ambivalence of such important characters in both postcolonial novels, we conclude that the aim of colonialism is similarly depicted in the two novels. Furthermore, the issue of identity is also observed to be a subject of social dilemma and a cultural loss between either remaining faithful to traditions or transiting to the embracement of the new faith in both novels.

By conducting this research, we come to the conclusion that both *Things Fall Apart* and *The River Between* share similar common points that help us in doing such a comparative research. Indeed, both novels depict the colonial era of African nations taking the basis on Igbo and Gikuyu's cases. Both novelists share the same perspective of serving their countries by depicting the effects of colonialism in bringing changes and destroying the roots of the African identity as whole. From the novels, we could investigate and interpret Bhabha's concepts such as hybridity and ambivalence on postcolonial individuals.

Subsequently, Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's *The River Between* (1965) influenced a whole generation from Africa and abroad, since both novels adopt predominant issues in pre and post-colonial eras. Hence, with analyzing both current novels, we deduce that such colonized nations have in fact a hybrid and an ambivalent identity since colonialism imposes new standards and ideologies of culture. In this case, with colonial oppression people's culture and identity endure a hybrid and ambivalent state which belong neither to the first native culture nor to the second which is of the colonizer, however, they are

pushed to create a third space where both cultures are mixed up together and make them live the in-betweenness of the two cultures.

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