CHAPTER - III

TO PROTECT...

"The modern African writer is a carrier of the tradition established by his predecessor; the oral performer, the village crier, the town Orator, the community spokes man, the clan seer, the place reconteur and historian".


Man is the product of the society which he himself forms. The social anxiety, tension and stress - everything influences his life to a very great extent and he cannot isolate himself from the society. If the society reflects his mind, his thought pattern, then his life goes on smoothly. If not, if he is dissatisfied with what he expects from the society, his life is doomed - doomed forever. The novels analysed in this chapter throw light on how the disappointment of the individuals with the society leads to the destruction of the ‘self’. Armah’s *Fragments* and Ngugi’s *The River Between* portray that the destiny of the individuals is decided by the society.

Armah’s *Fragments* presents how the social vices lead to social fragmentation which inturn leads to individual’s
The novel reflects some of his autobiographical elements and Charles R. Larson says,

the events in *Fragments* record those which precipitated Ayi Kwei Armah’s own mental relapse when he returned to Ghana after studying Abroad (EAF, 276).

The protagonist Baako returns from America only to be disappointed in his country, Ghana, where people are more materialistic than anything else. He is received by his mother, relatives and friends with lots of expectations. He fails to satisfy them as he does not return as any other ‘been to’. His aim is to contribute his own share towards the betterment of Ghana through his creative writing and direction by joining Ghana Television. But, he understands that ideals would not be welcome in a materialistic society. He becomes depressed, loses his self and ends up in an asylum. Armah has created his protagonist as an individual who cares for the society, a man who is astonished at the indifference shown by the society to human life and human values; a young mind breaks down when it’s attempt to cherish ideals fails. Ode Ogede says,
True, the novel contains a good measure of the inner drama of the anguish of the idealistic young man who wants to be a producer in a society that has no room for such ideals (Kuna, Vol XIV, 131)

Ngugi's *The River Between* initially titled, *The Black Messiah*, enumerates how a tradition-bound tribal, Gikuyu village is fragmented by the alien religion Christianity. The village has two ridges Makuyu and Kameno united/separated by the river, Honia. Waiyaki, the Black Messiah, tries to reconcile the ridges and his effort, ultimately consumes his life. Like John in Ngugi's short story, *A Meeting in the Dark*, Waiyaki is torn between the tribal religion and culture and the religion of the westerners. Donald Hannah says,

... it is Christianity that is the force splintering the closely knit tribal community and its heritage of belief into fragments (CWS, 208)
The setting of the novel is tribal; the characters essentially share the tribal notions of life; the theme of course, predominantly tribal. Altogether, as G.D. Killam says,

*The River Between* represents the first phase of Ngugi's artistic recreation of the cultural history of his people (IWN, 20).

The conflict in the lives of Baako and Waiyaki arises due to the colonial impact on the natives; the western education with which the protagonists equip themselves poses a problem to them. The social commitment they evidently cherish even at the risk of their lives is the root cause of their conflict. The antagonising elements increase the stress and the anxiety of the protagonists. Of course, there are certain characters whom they lean on at the time of crisis. The nature of the problem makes them alienate themselves psychologically. In the course of the confrontation, they are impelled to resolve the conflict in certain ways which inevitably make them suffer the consequences. In both the cases, the reaction of the other characters to the predicament of the protagonists is significant. As both the novels portray the cultural practices of the land, the writers make use of myth, images and
symbols which quite relevantly focus the conflict of the protagonists. The narrative technique adopted by the novelists, makes the impact of the conflict effective.

In *Fragments*, Armah exposes the life led by the Ghanaians in the post - independence period. The characters are greatly influenced by the western culture and the life style of the whites is imitated by Ghanaians in all walks of life. In order to follow the alien culture which treated them only as slaves, they forego or forget their own culture. The Ghanaians are torn between the ancient and the urbanised concept of life. The urban sophistication involves a lot of money which makes them materialistic. A human being is evaluated according to the material comforts he possesses rather than his intellectual or spiritual merits. Like 'the man' in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, Baako fights alone against the bourgeoisie and against 'the various aspects of corruption and nepotism which are so much a part of life in West Africa' as stated by Kirsten Holst Petersen (Kuna, Vol. 1, 59). His individuality is not duly acknowledged even by his mother. He returns to Ghana planning to serve the country. To put across his ideas easily to the people, he chooses Ghana Television. But no one is interested in what he has learnt abroad but only in what he had earned and
what he has brought with him. The 'gleam' which Armah talks about in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* is replaced by the 'cargo mentality'. The society dissuades him and the conflict in his life begins when he realises the expectations of others. As the merit of western education causes the conflict in Baako's life, education in his own land, of course, imparted by the westerners, causes the conflict in Waiyaki's life.

Waiyaki's father, Chege, a seer, makes Waiyaki join Sirianna Mission school and persuades him to learn all the wisdom of the whiteman to conquer him. Chege sensibly says that their primitive weapons will not fetch them victory if they fight with men who possess bamboos that emit fire (guns) and kill people. So he pleads Waiyaki to educate himself and then educate his tribes. Chege says, 'you could not spear them until you learnt and knew their ways and movement. Then you could trap, you could fight back' (RB, 20) Education at Sirianna does change him, yet he does not renounce his commitment towards his people. It makes him analyse the situation properly and he decides to achieve the unity amidst the ridges through reconciliation. This far-sighted device is not understood by the people whose minds have been fossilized by the tribal customs and practices and hence Waiyaki faces the conflict.
Both Baako and Waiyaki unfortunately get a chance to educate themselves and this creates the conflict in their lives and they fight with the society which is affected by the colonial imprints.

The source of conflict happens to be the whole society to Baako. Even while on the plane, before landing on Ghana he confronts a bitter slice of life through a fellow traveller, Brempong. Brempong humiliates Baako in so many words since Baako returns empty handed. 'Its no use', Brempong said, 'going back with nothing' (FM,53). The inspector on the customs line asks Baako quizzically, 'Paper, paper, is that all? (56) The fat sister of Brempong asks her brother', 'you mean he is also a been to?' (58) unable to believe that Baako is returning from abroad. This kind of welcome disturbs him much and he wishes to postpone his arrival. He does move towards his house but stays in a hotel and 'he felt an ambiguous comfort, savoring this sense of being so alone back home, connected for the moment to no one, with no one save himself knowing where he was?' (64) As expected by him very soon after seeing him, his mother, Efua asks him, 'when is yours coming, Baako? .... yours, your car, so that my old bones can also rest' (70-71) To his or her dismay, Baako comes back only with his scripts, a typewriter and a guitar. Only later he
realises, 'You can't go back anywhere with nothing in your hands. It's a mistake—not a mistake, an insult' (190). Even Naana, who represents the old way of life believes', there should be dreams before returns, as before goings, before everything. That is only just' (2). When Efua asks Juana why the people who go abroad do not incline to come back, why Baako also stays abroad, Juana asks, 'Things here he is afraid to come back to?' (35).

The corruption that rules the country and the materialistic attitude of the people shock Baako. He says that he has got certificates to get a job in Ghana vision and Brempong says, 'You have to know people' .... 'You'd have things easy, even without real qualifications' (47) and as foreseen by Brempong, his papers are not signed by the authorities. Baako complains to Ocran, 'I keep going to the civil service commission place, and they keep telling me to go and come tomorrow' (81). The indifference to human life and the discrimination meted out to the patients in hospitals shatter him. His sister Araba suffers from labour and bleeds profusely and without any concern towards the life of the patient, the nurse asks Baako to take Araba to the old ward since either Baako or Araba's husband do not belong to the officer category and rightly the taxi driver refers to the old ward where
Araba is taken as, 'This place for broke people' (76). The tragic death of a lorry driver, Skido upsets him much and he is taken aback by the insolence of the Inspector, in-charge about the loss of a human life.

'River entry block again. Lorry Sah''

"Good," said the engineer, "We'll have it cleared tomorrow"

"Man die, Sah"

"Oh?"

"Man die, Sah"

"Alright idrissu. Dismiss" (138)

This scene haunts him and later, when he loses his mental balance, he tells Juana, 'Skido was bringing all the cargo and he shouldn't have died, not like that' (189). The materialistic aspiration of the people especially of his own family horrifies him. His mother Efua and sister Araba plan the outdooring ceremony of Araba's child. This ceremony has to take place at least after seven days of the birth of the child. But Araba and Efua plan it even on the fifth day, because 'An outdooring ceremony held more than a few days after pay day is useless' (88) says, Efua which
unfortunately results in the death of the child as foreseen by Baako’s
grand mother, Naana. Now that Ghana has become a seat of gleam
and corruption, Baako has to fight against them. In *Fragments*,
obody contrives against Baako and he does not have to confront
any individual in particular as in the case of Waiyaki in *The River
Between*.

Waiyaki’s conflict is caused by Kabonyi, Kamau, Joshua,
Muthoni and Nyambura. Kabonyi, an elderly tribal and his son
Kamau belong to Makuyu and they embrace Christianity and yet
follow the tribal customs. When Livingston, the Christian
missionary prohibits certain tribal rituals like circumcision, Kabonyi
and Kamau give up the alien religion and join the main stream of
the Gikuyuans. Kabonyi is the one who knows that Waiyaki is their
prophesied leader. But he wants his son Kamau to become the
tribal leader after Chege. Hence, he obstructs every move of
Waiyaki. He becomes intolerant of Waiyaki becoming their
‘Teacher’ as lovingly addressed by everyone. Waiyaki ‘had a word
for everyone and a smile for all. He pleased many... Kabonyi did
not like it’ (RB 92) When everyone has a word of praise for Waiyaki,
Kabonyi alone sees ‘Waiyaki as an upstart, a good for nothing
fellow, a boy with rather silly ideas’ (92) Waiyaki fights against the
elders to educate the children of the tribes; he takes much effort to reconcile the two antagonising ridges; both these endeavours are thwarted by Kabonyi. For instance, the first Parents Meeting organised by Waiyaki at his dream school, Marioshini, turns out to be a great success. On witnessing it, Kabonyi tries to dissuade the people by telling them that the immediate need of the land is to drive away the whites by fighting with them and he assures them that he would 'rid the country of the influence of the white man' (95) by his new Kiama, an organisation, supposedly, formed to preserve the purity of the tribe. Inspite of his provocative speech, the people applaud Waiyaki which makes Kabonyi pretend illness, 'but he was full of fury' (97) He is unable to accept a public defeat from Waiyaki. Nobody could guess the extent to which Kabonyi resents the rise of Waiyaki. 'Alone, among the people Kabonyi knew the prophecy. He feared Waiyaki might be the sent one'. And he hated this'. (93) Kabonyi is in the Governing committee of the school and whenever Waiyaki suggests anything, it is objected by Kabonyi. He 'made sure that he opposed Waiyaki's suggestions on every possible occasion' (81). When Waiyaki convinces the people about the need of reconciliation to drive the whites away
from the land, Kabonyi diverts their attention by revealing the love between Waiyaki and Nyambura and makes the people rise against him saying that he has disobeyed the oath and has betrayed the people. His rhetorical question, 'Do not be led by a youth. Did the tail ever lead the head, the child the father or the cubs the lion?' (96) often dissuades the faith the people have on their Teacher. Kabonyi's son, Kamau right from his childhood hates Waiyaki, since Waiyaki possesses an extraordinary power which is beyond his comprehension. Though he works with Waiyaki in his school, he secretly grudges Waiyaki's popularity. His hatred becomes all the more, when he confirms the affair between Waiyaki and Nyambura since 'Kamau loved Nyambura. He had always wanted her and in Makuyu he always hovered around, hoping one day to declare his love to her' (108) and when he finds Waiyaki and Nyambura embrace each other, 'with intense pain he saw all he had half feared confirmed before his eyes. Waiyaki was his rival to death'. (108) Joshua, a follower of Christianity also antagonises Waiyaki. He belongs to the ridge Makuyu and preaches Christianity to the tribes. Waiyaki himself feels that the whiteman's 'religion was not essentially bad'. (141) Whatever is done by Kabonyi and his Kiama is considered by Joshua as
Waiyaki's plans to wipe out Christianity. Palmer says, "In Joshua we see the dangerous consequences of a blind and uncritical acceptance of an alien ideology" (IAN, 14). He dislikes Waiyaki becoming a Teacher to the tribes. He believes that as a threat to the followers of Christianity and fears that they may turn away from this alien faith. Though Waiyaki always respects Joshua as a leader of a religion, appreciates his way of delivering his sermons, to Joshua, "the rise of Waiyaki as a young intelligent leader of the tribe was the menace." (99) Ironically, his daughters, Muthoni and Nyambura entangle their lives with Waiyaki and become the source of his conflict. Muthoni, Joshua's daughter undergoes circumcision against the willingness of her family and while dying, she is taken by Waiyaki to Sirianna Mission hospital where she dies. Later, Kabonyi accuses Waiyaki that he did not cleanse himself of this deed. Nyambura is the primary cause for Waiyaki's conflict and downfall. Kabonyi accuses Waiyaki that he has violated the oath by accepting Nyambura, a Christian, uncircumcised girl.

The conflict strikes Baako and Waiyaki from various angles which they have to painfully confront retaining their social consciousness.

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The protagonists are either inspired or influenced by certain women characters in the novels. Juana, a Puerto Rican, a psychiatrist acts as an eye opener to Baako. A.N.Mensah says,

`... the relationship between Baako and Juana ought to be seen as a desperate search by two powerless visionaries for a corner of sanity in a society that is fragmented into meaningless moments' (Kuna, Vol XII, 121).

Juana, being pragmatic, does not entertain any illusion about life. Her marital life is a failure. Though she does not enjoy altogether a happy situation of life, she realises, `Adjustment-something necessary and true though she had gotten into the habit of laughing at the bald word itself (FR. 31) She leads a stable life and does not allow the individuals or the society to disturb her selfcontented life. She being, a psychiatrist, is an added advantage and she turns out to be the soul mate of Baako. She advises Baako, `You're against a general current'... It takes a lot of strength (103). Juana is the only one to whom Baako confesses his thoughts and she is the one who frankly advises him. When Baako reaches the height of depression, Juana had gone to Puerto Rico and Baako feels,
there were not so much loneliness around, that Juana had not had another country to go to when she needed rest' (165) If Juana had been at Accra, Baako would not have been forced into the asylum. As Juana is the source of consolation to Baako, Muthoni is the source of inspiration to Waiyaki.

Muthoni's courage of conviction always impresses Waiyaki. He does not totally approve of her rebellious nature, at the same time her character fascinates him. Muthoni rebels against her father and comes away from Makuyu to Kameno to her aunt's house to be circumcised. She is very sure that only circumcision will make her a woman and wishes to undergo this tribal ritual. She knows well that her father Joshua will never let her into his house if she undergoes circumcision. Waiyaki feels, 'The idea that she had actually run away, actually rebelled against authority, somehow shocked him. He himself would not have dared to disobey Chege. At least he could not seek himself doing so.' (41) Waiyaki, infact, influenced by the Christian education, does not want to undergo the circumcision ceremony. His father chege himself feels that Waiyaki may refuse to undergo this. Yet Waiyaki compromises his desires for the sake of his father and the tribes. He says that he does not have the courage to disobey his father even though he is
convinced of the brutality behind the ceremony. This is why, `There was something in Muthoni that somehow called forth all his sympathy and admiration' (49) The graceful acceptance of death by Muthoni without an iota of regret very much impresses Waiyaki. `She was bearing it well. Waiyaki admired her courage, a courage that never deserted her' (48). It is only a sad thing that Waiyaki stops with admiration and never attempts to be influenced by her. `Muthoni's words seemed to be opening a new world to Waiyaki' (44). If only he had acted as courageously, as quickly as Muthoni, he would have confronted Kabonyi, Kamau and Joshua successfully. Both Baako and Waiyaki are provided with role models to be followed to confront the society successfully, but they fail to assimilate their perceptions and eventually the confrontation ends disastrously.

The depressed souls of Baako and Waiyaki are comforted by the genuine love and kindness extended by Kofi Ocran in *Fragments* and Kinuthia in *The River Between*. Ocran is Baako's teacher as well as guide. Even in the beginning, before Baako starts working on his mission, Ocran says, `If you come back thinking you can make things work in any smooth, efficient way, you'll just get a complete waste of your time. It's not worth
bothering about' (FR. 83) He also warns him that he wouldn't get any help from others, 'because nobody is interested in being serious' (81). At the same time he does not dissuade Baako. Baako is depressed over his failure and accuses himself for not having been practical enough. Ocran consoles him and encourages him saying, 'you have a good mind; don't be afraid to use it. Stop thinking you've done people wrong. Nobody cares anyway' (192) Like the Teacher in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, Ocran detaches himself from the society. He understands Baako's visions and comforts him.

Kinuthia in *The River Between* is Waiyaki's friend and classmate. He considers Waiyaki as a man of extraordinary power and admires him much. Kinuthia also educates Waiyaki like Ocran teaches the philosophy of life to Baako. He reveals the reality to Waiyaki, to which he is blind. He tells Waiyaki,

'And remember Kabonyi hates hates you. He would kill you if he could... The Klama has power. Power And your name is in it, giving it even greater power. Your name will be your ruin. Be careful...' (RB, 112).
Kinuthia warns Waiyaki about the trial which Kabonyi and the elders of the tribe plan to punish Waiyaki. He enlightens Waiyaki about the Kiama's intention and assures saying him `I will never leave you! ... `Whatever the others do, I will be with you all the way' (139). Kinuthia tries to prevent Waiyaki from the calamities that may fall on him. Waiyaki cherishes Kinuthia's friendship and declares, `I value your concern so much. You are the only one I can now trust’ (131). Kofi Ocran and Kinuthia are sources of consolation to the protagonists. Both Baako and Waiyaki dwell in the world of their own illusion and they are enlightened by Ocran and Kinuthia.

Baako and Waiyaki suffer the course of the conflict because they are introverts. They do not freely talk to anyone, even to the women they love. They prefer to converse with their souls rather than with people around. Efua while referring to the sound that she hears from Baako’s room, says, `It makes me think of termites hidden in wood, talking' (FR. 156). As wood is eaten by the termites, the protagonists' minds are eaten by the problem. In both of them, it is not extrication from the society but looking inward which naturally makes them less practical. Only when a crisis arises, Baako realises,
He knew no friends, no one. The people he had worked with at Ghana vision he had not known so well that he could think of them as friends at a time like this, Juana, of course. But she was away, or perhaps was just arriving from a tiring voyage. But in the area around, no one. (171)

Baako’s creative consciousness makes him put forth his emotional disturbance in writing. His desire, his ambition, everything is poured on papers and papers and Efua asks him what Baako is writing all the time, and he replies,

"Something that occurred to me, a thought, that's all" he said.

"For whom?"

"Myself" (158)

Waiyaki is not gifted with this opportunity. He never discusses his aim, his intention of reconciliation to anybody and when he decides to do it, it becomes too late `... and inside him he felt vaguely that it would be good to reconcile all these antagonisms' (RB, 69) but
never once talks in detail about the necessity of reconciliation to his people. He plans to do it whenever he addresses the people but never does it and later regrets that he ought to have done it. "Another time, next time Waiyaki always told himself when these moments of self-blame came" (101). Both Baako and Waiyaki suffer the pressure of the conflict because they never unburden it to anyone and it is too much for them to bear alone.

Baako and Waiyaki resolve to bring an end to the conflict they face, having had enough exposure to reality. They realise that their ideals will not take either them or their people anywhere. "When a Ghanaian has had a chance to go abroad and is returning home, it's clear from any distance he's a been to coming back" (FR, 47) and Baako realises that he does not fit into this framework. Fifi says, "You're so strange (69) and Baako feels that he is not able to share his concept of life with others. His commitment is criticised by Asante smith, his superior at Ghana vision, who says, "you're too abstract in your approach to our work" (147) which only means he is not practical enough. The confession made by his mother, Efua is a hit on the nail to Baako. Efua says, "I was wanting you to do some things. Now my wishes have disappeared, and I'm finding happiness" (177). He realises that there is nothing
wrong in her expectations and the world means others too and he
has to respect the sentiments of others too. 'Arrogance. It's all
arrogance without the others, isn't it?' (190) he asks. His
experience with his family members, friends and life around makes
him say, 'I know what I'm expected to be' ... It's not what I want to
be' (163). He burns all his scripts and says, 'It's finished' (154).

'In starting self-help in education, Waiyaki had seen it as a
kind of mission' (RB. 67). With great difficulty he constructs
Marioshini, his school. 'He travelled from ridge to ridge' (67). He
finds people who willingly come forward to build the school,
children come flocking, hungry for learning. Parents also co-
operate. Unfortunately, the Kiama which is started by Kabonyi
plans to see the end of Marioshini. The animosity between the
ridges grows wildly because of their religious factions and
'Everyday he was becoming convinced of the need for unity
between Kameno and Makuyu. The ancient rivalry would cripple
his efforts in education' (91). To achieve his aim of imparting
education, he decides to do anything.

'And Waiyaki saw a tribe great with many
educated sons and daughters, all living
together, tilling the land of their ancestors in perpetual serenity, pursuing their rituals and beautiful customs and all of them acknowledging their debt to him. (87)

To see this dream come true he vows to forego even his love for Nyambura. Initially Waiyaki fails to understand that his mission will take many number of years and by the time the tribes get educated, their land will be gone, taken away by the whites. Kinuthia himself wonders `if Waiyaki knew that people wanted action now, that the new enthusiasm and awareness embraced more than the mere desire for learning. People wanted to move forward' (118). Waiyaki realises the need for reconciliation at a later stage. He accepts the importance of political movement also. He rhetorically asks, `we are all children of Mumbi and we must fight together in one political movement, or else we perish and the whiteman will always be on our back. Can a house divided against itself stand' (149) He now believes that priority should be given to reconciliation than to education.

When the protagonists are prepared for reconciliation or rather renunciation of their ideals, surprisingly they are not encouraged
by others in the novels. To Baako, "one repeated thought took his mind and sped through his head like frames carrying an unchanging accusation: 'right, right, they're right, right, right'; (FR. 175). He harps on it and Efua his mother realises what is happening to him, takes him to her unfinished dream house. She shows him the house and says that she started the building hoping that Baako would come back and finish it. And now she says that that thinking itself was a curse on Baako and that is why he suffers. She says, "forgive me. Now that we have both come and seen this, I won't accuse you anymore. Again I'm a mother, confessing what strange feelings you've sent through me'. (179) Each word spoken by Efua makes Baako guilty. Already he has decided that there is nothing wrong in her expectations and her confession almost breaks him down.

As Baako, Waiyaki also comes away from his ideal world of education and he wants himself to be the instrument to the union of the two ridges. He says,

New thoughts are coming into my mind.
Things I might have done and said. Oh, there
are so many things I did not know. I had not seen that the new awareness wanted expression at a political level. Education for an oppressed people is not all (RB. 139)

When he walks defiantly towards this mission, Nyambura crosses his way. She decides to rebel against her father Joshua, like her sister Muthoni and walks out of her house right infront of her father. She entrusts her life in Waiyaki's hands and he believes that he should not betray or desert her. "Something passed between them as two human beings, untainted with religion, social conventions or any tradition" (76). Waiyaki knows well his acceptance of Nyambura will not be forgiven by the Kiama and to Nyambura he says, "Death awaits you there", (137) overlooking Kameno.

Baako assumes that he can resolve the conflict by falling in line with others. Initially, he resigns his job thinking that that would end his mental turbulence but later regrets that "It was a mirage after all - the peace he’d thought would follow after his resignation" (131). Waiyaki believes that he has to talk about the need for reconciliation to the people and also expose Kabonyi and Kamau. Unfortunately both Baako and Waiyaki are unable to accomplish
their plans. Baako miserably fails in his attempt to reconcile his vision of Ghana with the existing materialistic atmosphere. As it is, the attempt itself makes him slightly mentally sick. But the people around him treat him as a mad person. He is chased by many on the road and his sister, Araba herself says, ‘Tie him up’ (172) Men are afraid to come near his nails and head fearing attack from him. He is tied with rope and the way he is taken to the hospital makes even the nurse say, ‘the way he came in, he will have to go to the Acute Ward’ (174). A sane person, the person who earnestly wants to make social reformation through his ideals is driven to madness. Waiyaki is being accused by the elders of the tribes and the Kiama that he has betrayed the tribes. He is charged with four crimes - he took Muthoni to the hospital and after touching the dead woman of evil spirits he did not clean himself according to the tribal custom; he visits often Joshua's church; he visits Sirianna to sell the tribes to the Christians; he is going to marry Nyambura, an uncircumcised girl. Waiyaki convinces the people of all the charges excepting the last one. He accepts that he took Muthoni to the hospital and convinces them that there is nothing wrong in trying to save a dying person. He visited Joshua's church just to listen to his eloquent sermons. He frequented Sirianna only to get teachers for the school. To the
last charge, he simply says that the Oath he has taken in the name of the purity of the tribe does not forbid him from loving anyone. Kabonyi challenges him to deny Nyambura and Waiyaki is not able to do it because, `she looked like a lamb on the altar of sacrifice' (RB. 151) and Kabonyi declares that his betrayal will not be forgiven as he is the leader of the tribe.

The narrative technique adopted by the novelists does contribute towards the understanding of the problem and the confrontation by the protagonists. Armah's technique is expository and Naana the grand mother of Baako very often foresees what is going to happen to Baako. Before Baako leaves the country for America, uncle Foli does not satisfactorily pour the spirit to appease the dead and the living spirits and Naana fears that something may happen to him. She recalls, `... I had made in my fear a hurried asking for protection on Baako's head' (FR. 11) and this is to fortell Baako's mental sickness even while he is abroad. The novel begins and ends with Naana's reflections. The height of depression over Baako's madness is expressed by her at the end and she wants to die. Baako's plight is best expressed by Naana. She says, `Sometimes I know my blindness was sent to me to save me from the madness that would surely have come
with seeing so much that was not to be understood' (60) and Baako is not blind and hence becomes mad. The inhuman act of killing a dog by many on the road which is witnessed by Juana, significantly presents the comparison between the dog and Baako. When Efua asks Baako to dress like a Westerner, he says', I'm not an ape' (99) and ironically, later, he is chased by Kwesi, uncle Foli and others as though he were an ape and 'He grew tired and was ready to sit down when one man aiming well threw his rope and caught his ankles, yanked the tight fiber and brought him down' (173). The narration, though simple and lucid, Armah uses cinematographic technique to heighten the effect of Baako's crisis. For example, Baako’s sister Araba’s child is born and Efua and Araba elaborately plan for the child’s ‘outdooring ceremony’ even on the fifth day against the general custom. What happens during the ceremony is not followed though Naana forlotts the anger of the spirits. Baako resigns his job and what happened at Ghana vision is not narrated. When Baako almost loses his mental balance, he recollects the death of Araba’s child, his confrontation with Asante - Smith at Ghana vision. This kind of fragmented narration makes one visualise the psychological fragmentation that takes place in Baako. This does help one visualise how Baako is mentally upset over these things and this also reveals the reason
for his depression. The strain and stress experienced by Baako is expressed by Armah through repetition of words. For example,

... something worse is happening in you now, outside, everywhere, and you can escape, of course you can’t, where would you go? something happened, it wasn’t nothing, not nothing; something awful, something, something. Stop thinking then and rest in peace, in peace, ha! don’t stop thinking, don’t drop into sleep, that would be the beginning of some thing, something, something. (166)

This indicates the turbulence and confusion in Baako’s mind.

_The River Between_ is centred around the two Gikuyan ridges Kameno and Makuyu and there are references to the tribe culture like second birth, circumcision etc., The ridges ‘ceased to be sleeping lions united by their common source of life’ (RB, 1) namely the river, Honia. The condition of the ridges as well as the protagonist’s precarious plight are revealed by the above sentence. The ridges stand united and at the same time antagonise...
each other. The ritual, slaughtering a goat is done to invoke the
dead and living spirits and symbolically, while Nyambura is
praying, Waiyaki feels, `It was very strange and as he watched he
experienced a frightening sensation, as if she and he were together
standing on an altar ready for a sacrifice' (104). Water that is
provided by Honia is the life giver and Waiyaki gives equal
importance to education and rightly education is referred to as
water. `And he wanted to feel all would get this water' (98). The
ridges are referred to as lions and just before facing the trial
Waiyaki `... felt as if something evil lurked a few feet behind him,
following the path of his success, ready to pounce on him and
reduce him to nothing' (119). The evil is compared to an animal
and the words `lurked' `pounce' are used to that effect. There is
too much of darkness in the novel which only portends the end of
the protagonist'. As Waiyaki and Nyambura are nearing the finale,
darkness looms on them. While Waiyaki is going to meet the Kiama,
`it is a dark night' (124) When Nyambura walks away with Waiyaki
out of Joshua's house', Darkness still blanketed the land' (136)
and `they were swallowed by the darkness' (137) just before
Waiyaki appears infront of the crowd, `... the voices that denounced
him as a traitor rang through the darkness' (137). Yet when Waiyaki
appears before them, `his head and broad shoulders indeed
caught against the yellow beams that passed through the trees. And he looked powerful and beautiful' (145). Thus, though Waiyaki crosses only darkness his end is associated with Light. Waiyaki is being compared to Mugo, the seer, Kamirii, the powerful magician, Wachiori, the glorious warrior. These three mythological great figures who wanted to serve the people were turned down by the tribes and it is evident that the same kind of end awaits Waiyaki. Muthoni who stands for reconciliation dies and her death portends Waiyaki’s too, since he too is for reconciliation. The narrative techniques adopted by the novelists suit the mental fragmentation of the protagonists.

The consequence that the protagonists face when they resolve the conflict is severe and serious too. Baako loses his sense and ends up in an asylum. As Efua puts it, ‘we come to walls in life, all the time. If we try to break them down we destroy ourselves’ (FR, 177) Baako’s life ambition is destroyed which destroys his ‘self’. Waiyaki faces the Kiama and boldly accepts Nyambura who ‘looked like a lamb on the altar of sacrifice’ (RB. 151) and they await punishment i.e. death sentence from the Kiama. Yet Baako and Waiyaki are responsible to some extent for their end. Baako never speaks his mind to others. Naana always
wants to share his burden. Even Efua shouts at her, asking, `why do you keep following him?' (FR. 144) Naana with all concern asks Baako, `You're sad, aren't you? I can't understand why you always refuse to tell me what is happening' (154) which he never does. Efua herself asks him, `you should try not to think. Not too much’ (156) Juana advises him 'you won't tie your happiness too closely to what happens, what other people do or say' (129). Yet Baako fails to heed to what others advise him and pathetically blames himself to Juana, `They told you the truth. I forgot the cargo-swallowed it’ (190). Waiyaki too, is advised by Kinuthia very often about Kabonyi, kamau and the Kiama. He advises, `I think Kabonyi does not like you. I would be careful of him if I were you' (RB. 83) which Waiyaki simply ignores. Procrastination is Waiyaki’s weakness. Even after deciding what to do, he keeps postponing the action. He realises the need for reconciliation and the need to prepare the ridges for it and `yet when the appropriate moment came he had failed' (100) and `Waiyaki blamed himself’ (140) for not having done it. When he decides to preach on reconciliation, he contemplates, `Would this not be a risk to his growing popularity? Yet he would try’ (91). Perhaps this fear of losing his popularity prevents him from talking to his people. Palmer says,
The antagonistic forces in Waiyaki's society are blamed for the catastrophe, and his own faults, which are an important contributor to his downfall are ignored. If such a reading were correct then Waiyaki would qualify for the martyr's halo and his story would just be pathetic; but a close examination reveals that Waiyaki, like Ngotho is a tragic and an enormously impressive hero, whose downfall is caused not only by the forces ranged against him, but also by his own weaknesses (IAN, 11).

Waiyaki fails to understand the needs of the day. Of course, as an able leader, he foresees the future and plans ahead. In preparing the people for the future, he forgets the present for which he has to pay heavily. Baako should have been less sensitive and more pragmatic to confront the society. His insanity is the result of too much of involvement in the society.

Though the protagonists seem to fail miserably, the reaction of other characters to the protagonists' end deserves a special mention. The people around them are not ready to bear witness to the protagonists' tragic end. Baako's compromise is not accepted by everyone around him. They see him in a better light now, and
pleads him not to change his ideology. Ocran says, `There'd be no end to these wants once you started destroying your life to satisfy them. They're not interested in your hopes, have you thought of that?' (193) Juana consoles him saying, `you're not a criminal. You were trying to do something. It isn't wrong just because people say it is' (190). Efua appreciates her son for what he is. `You've gone so far up, everyone of us cripples here beneath must look so foolish to you. But don't laugh at us. It's admiration' (178) Waiyaki is accused as a traitor and Kabonyi strongly accuses him that he has betrayed the tribe. Yet when he leaves, the crowd that accuses the teacher,

`moves away quickly glad that he was hidden by the darkness. For they did not want to look at the Teacher and they did not want to read their guilt in one another's faces. Neither did they want to speak to one another, for they knew full well what they had done to Waiyaki and yet they did not want to know (152).

Ironically as Mugo in A Grain of Wheat, Waiyaki walks away upright, when the crowd moves quietly not even dare to see the Teacher's face.
Fragments is Armah's second novel, in which he has poured out his discomfort with the society of Ghana as he has already done in The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born. The non-interference attitude of 'the man' has been changed to total involvement of Baako in Fragments. Too much of social consciousness does not hold him strong and he breaks down as Ngotho in Ngugi's Weep Not, Child. Armah effectively brings out the impact of Cargo mentality on Baako. Baako's education in abroad, is the root cause of his conflict and education is taken by Waiyaki as a tool to reconcile the old and the new faith; to fight against the alien force. By educating the younger generation Waiyaki visualises a society which would confront the whites. Baako aims to educate the people choosing the media to propagate his ideals, because that is the best way to reach people. Yet, both of them gloomily fail in their attempt since they need others' help to achieve their goal which, of course, is not offered to them. Their social commitment is impeccable; they are least self-centred. Yet, Waiyaki's contribution towards the society is more concrete than Baako's since the latter is never given an opportunity. This is why, The River Between ends with a positive note which is evidently absent in Fragments. Both Baako and Waiyaki stand to protect the ethical values of society.
Though both the novelists have changed their outlook in their later writings, the novels discussed in this chapter show the restrained emotions of them. The aggressive, active social concern and political involvement which they have expressed in their later writings, are dealt with in these novels, in a measured way. The resistance ideology which Ngugi expresses in his later writings finds its place in a subdued way in Waiyaki. The protest against injustice begins when Waiyaki rebels against the Kiama. On the contrary, Baako is presented as a man of ideals and does not hold any similarity with the rebellious characters of Armah in his later novels.