ABSTRACT

This thesis is the analysis of the conflict and the confrontation in select novels of Ayi Kwei Armah (Ghana) and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o (Kenya). Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born, Fragments, Two Thousand Seasons The Healers* and Ngugi's *Weep Not, Child, The River Between, A Grain of Wheat, Petals of Blood* and *Matigari* have been analysed to bring out the cause of the conflict confronted by the protagonists and also the outcome of the confrontation.

Chapter I introduces the writers and their writings and traces out the novelists' social consciousness. They exhibit the post-independence characteristics in their writings. They haul the history of their land to impress upon the Africans in general and Ghanaians and Kenyans in particular. The theme of betrayal, a pre/post-independence trait is obviously present in their writings. They have done away with the colonial themes related to racial discrimination and the focus is on social themes and not racial disadvantages. Both Armah and Ngugi show their interest in the politics of the day. They criticise the politicians in their writings and suffer the consequence i.e. they are in exile. The obsession
with the use of native language, one of the major post-independence characteristics is felt more in Ngugi than in Armah. They include autobiographical elements which make the presentation authentic. They adhere to Marxian and Fanonian ideology aiming at social changes. The word 'conflict' is used in the study to mean the struggle faced by the protagonists against the opposing forces to retain their ideals. The confrontation is not pleasant and the protagonists suffer to the maximum. The analysis brings out the cause of the conflict, how it gains strength through the antagonising forces, how the protagonists suffer and how they resolve the problem to end their sufferings.

Chapter II discusses the conflict faced by the protagonists in Armah's *Two Thousand Seasons, The Healers* and Ngugi's *Weep Not, Child* and *A Grain of Wheat*. The conflict is the result of certain historical events. Yet the struggles the protagonists undergo, transcend any specific period of time Armah's Isanusi dies after initiating the need to rebel against injustice. His Densu proves himself to be a man who lives to protect human values. Ngugi's Njoroge, though attempts to commit suicide, realises his purpose of living i.e. he concludes that he has to live for the sake
of his family and for his community. Mugo, a traitor turned sage, though atones for his sin is not spared. This indicates that a man has to suffer for his actions.

Chapter III analyses Armah’s *Fragments* and Ngugi’s *The River Between*. Armah’s Baako and Ngugi’s Waiyaki, are disillusioned with the society and as a result Baako is driven to madness and Waiyaki is adjudged a traitor by the society. Both of them, though presented as the champions of social values, are not practical enough.

Chapter IV brings out the inevitable effect of political corruption on the social life of the people. The protagonists, Armah’s the unnamed hero referred to as ‘the man’, and Ngugi’s Karega and Matigari resist in their own way. ‘The man’ does not fall a prey to the temptation called corruption. Karega plans for a lasting solution to confront the exploiters i.e. unity amidst the working class. Matigari appears to suggest violence as the tool to eradicate the evils existing in the society. ‘The man’, Karega and Matigari resist, fight for justice and succeed too.
The concluding chapter sums up the salient features discussed in the earlier chapters. Njoroge and Baako are vulnerable and are devoid of the mental stability seen in 'the man', Waiyaki and Densu. Isanusi, Karega and Matigari represent the resistance ideology, of course, only to fight against injustice. The protagonists show a genuine concern for the betterment of the society. Their absolute involvement explains the writers' social commitment. It is evident from the analysis that Armah and Ngugi envisage a unified society, devoid of corruption and exploitation.