CHAPTER - II

TO PRESERVE...

“Our way is reciprocity. The way is wholeness
Our way knows no oppression. The way
destroys oppression. Our way is hospitable to
guests. The way repels destroyers. Our way
produces before it consumes. The way
produces far more than it consumes. Our way
creates. The way destroys only destruction”

(Ayi Kwei Armah's, *Two Thousand
Seasons*)

History, the record of the past may be used by writers merely
to eulogize the past; to bring out a contrast to the present; to reform
the present and to construct a future which is better than the
present. The nature of writing depends on the nature of the history
they select to write on. A writer who writes on colonial history
inevitably brings out the contrast between the period chosen and
the impact of colonial experience on the country at present; he is
impelled to write about the past to enlighten the people. Writers
hailing from the countries, which have colonial foot prints, do recall
the historical events to reform the present. African writers use the
history of their country, intending to reconstruct the existing society.
Armah and Ngugi recall the past of Ghana and Kenya respectively
to express their social perspectives. Eustace Palmer says,
this attempt to rediscover a glorious African past unadulterated by all those forces associated with the imperialists, is now to be detected, not just in Armah, but to a certain extent in Ngugi and in some of Soyinka's pronouncements. (GAN, 222)

The novels analysed in this chapter are Armah's, Two Thousand Seasons and The Healers and Ngugi's Weep Not, Child and A Grain of Wheat. Though all these four novels have been written in the post independence period of Africa, the writers trace the history of the pre-colonial days and the early colonial occupation. The traumatic experience of the characters who actually lived through that period is manipulated by the novelists to create their fictionalized characters and

... by concentrating on real events and weaving fiction into the fabric of fact, it helps young Africans to reshape their perspective on the past and come to a better understanding of the world in which they currently live. (Emmanuel Obiechina, APL, 12)
The striking uniformity in both the writers is that their aim is to vindicate the native betrayers and not merely to present the colonial supremacy over the natives. Instead of simply wallowing over the colonial suppression and sufferings they aim at a cure for the present.

Armah brings forth the history of Ghana between the sixteenth and nineteenth century in his later novels, *Two Thousand Seasons* and *The Healers*. *Two Thousand Seasons* depicts the usurpation of the land by the Muslim and the European destroyers. It portrays the early period of confiscation of the land by the usurpers and the resistance movement of the natives to retrieve the land. *The Healers* which illustrates the fall of the Asante Kingdom, attempts to heal the ailing society.

Armah's *Two Thousand Seasons* begins with the destroyer's occupation of the land and the betrayal of the natives; ends with the revolutionary appeal from the people who are engaged in finding `the way'. By `the way' he indicates a homogeneous society. The novel deals with one thousand seasons of suppression and another one thousand seasons of
finding a way for liberation. The journey administered is torturous, psychological and spiritual which makes them realise that it begins from coherent understanding. It is a way that aims at preserving knowledge of who we are, knowledge of the best way we have found to relate each to each, each to all, ourselves to other peoples, all to our surrounding. (TT, 39)

The novel, Two Thousand seasons begins with the history of the entry of the Arab predators. They came into the land as beggers, but established their rule over the innocent natives. Slowly the natives resented against these predators and came away from the desert and settled near the sea and they initially had only leaders and not rulers. These leaders, tempted by wealth and power, let the white destroyers into the land and once again the natives had to struggle for their lives. Armah is more angry with the native traitors than with the alien forces. He calls the traitors, Zombies and askaris. The narration gradually moves towards the rule of Koranche, an ostentatious cripple, whose greed
to acquire power and wealth gives the whites an easy access into the land. Isanusi, one of the courtiers, refuses to yield to Koranche’s promises of gifts and antagonises him. A group of youngsters which includes Abena is sold to the Europeans as slaves by Koranche. They revolt and liberate themselves. They join Isanusi, who is expelled by Koranche, to liberate the other slaves and to destroy the enemies of Africa. In the venture, they succeed, but Isanusi dies. He is avenged by the group and Koranche is killed. But the exploitation once again begins through Bentum, Koranche’s son. The struggle to find 'the way' still goes on. The movement of rebellion, liberation has begun and Armah seems to convey that it will continue until 'the way' is found. The aggressive tone of Armah in this novel is less conspicuous in *The Healers* and the intense hatred which he evidently shows in *Two Thousand Seasons* is not felt much by the readers in *The Healers*.

*The Healers* depicts the psychological and spiritual healing of the society. Densu, the protagonist is brought up by Ababio, the courtier. Appia, the son of Araba Jesiwa, the Queen, refuses to let the whites into the kingdom as suggested by Ababio. Hence,
through Buntui, the muscleman, Ababio kills Appia, the heir apparent and disables Araba Jesiwa. He offers the throne to Densu which he declines to accept and leaves Esuano, the city, to the forest to join the healer, Damfo. Damfo sends Densu, along with Asamoa Nkwenta to Kumase to save the country from the invasion of the whites. They fail to accomplish it due to the betrayal of the royals of Kumase and Densu returns to the forest to join Damfo. The healers are, according to Chidi Amuta, ‘portrayed as engaged in the crucial and creative task of trying to restore health to a society diseased with destructive influences’ (WLWE, Vol 21, 469). The Akan society and the fall of Asante kingdom form the historical background of The Healers, whereas Ngugi writes on the impact of Mau Mau rebellion in his Weep Not, Child and A Grain of Wheat.

The period of Mau Mau Emergency was between 1952 - 62 and it was a period of, ‘mass murder and mass torture of Kenyans’ (De,38) To make the presentation authentic, Ngugi refers to certain active participants of Mau Mau. For example, Jomo Kenyetta who was imprisoned for several years and who later became the president of the liberated Kenya, is referred to in Weep Not Child.
It is said, Njoroge in *Weep Not, Child,*  was a little annoyed when he heard about Jomo’s arrest’ (WN, 64). Harry Thuku who is mentioned in *A Grain of Wheat* was an active Mau Mau who was buried alive. ‘...in Harry Thuku, people saw a man with God’s message’ (GW. 16) and he ‘was to be known to the world over as the Burning Spear’ (17) Ngugi says, ‘This Harry Thuku has already moved into patriotic, heroic legends and I have treated him as such in the early chapters of my novel, *A Grain of Wheat*’ (De, 82). Ngugi himself had been personally affected by Mau Mau. His elder brother Wallace Mwangi hid himself in the forest to escape from being caught by the police as Kamau, a character in *Weep Not Child.* His cousin Gichini Wa Ngugi was caught with live bullets and narrowly escaped the rope. Questioned about the relevance of Mau Mau in the present context, Ngugi has replied, ‘I think there is a thing which we might call a collective memory. This collective memory is in a sense what we might call history, and I would say that Mau Mau is still part of the collective memory’ (Kuna, Vol. III, 138).

Ngotho in *Weep Not, Child* is an aged person, who has to work for a settler, Howlands. He hopes to get back his land through
educating his son, Njoroge. The whole family, Njoroge’s father Ngotho, his mothers Njeri and Nyokabi, his three brothers Boro, Kori and Kamau work hard to educate Njoroge. Ngotho revolts against the betrayal of Jacobo, a black land owner and the latter vows to see the destruction of Ngotho’s family and succeeds in it. Ngotho dies; Njoroge’s ordeal makes him attempt suicide.

A Grain of Wheat which was initially called Wrestling with God is woven skilfully around Mugo, Karanja, Gikonyo, Mumbi at a greater level and involves General R, Koinandu, Warui, Wambui, Dr. Lynd, Thompson, Mrs. Thompson, Dr. Van Dyke at a minor level. Almost all these characters are guilt conscious and particularly is Mugo the protagonist. He betrays Kihika a Mau Mau activist. Later he repents, and expiates his sin by confessing it to the people.

The above mentioned history and some of the historical events that happened cause the conflict confronted by the protagonists in the four novels analysed here. Basically, the conflict in the novels arises due to colonial history. Ironically, the conflict is caused not by the settlers but by the native betrayers. The protagonists either as individuals or along with a group as in
Two Thousand Seasons face the conflict and fight against the antagonisers. They do seek moral as well as psychological strength from the women characters who are portrayed as stoics by the novelists. The protagonists continue to fight against the devastating forces, and eventually alienate themselves. Yet, they continue to show keen interest in the society. The narrative technique the novelists adopt to express their thoughts, does reinforce the effect of the conflict. The protagonists, ultimately, resolve the conflict according to the principles they adhere to follow and suffer the consequence. The resolution does reflect the novelists' ideologies too.

Conflict in the lives of the protagonists, Isanusi in Two Thousand Seasons, Densu in The Healers, Njoroge in Weep Not Child, and Mugo in A Grain of Wheat is caused by the external forces around them and the sufferings of the protagonists is obviously observed by the other characters in the novels. Though Mugo's conflict is occasioned by the external forces, the confrontation is internalized and the other characters in A Grain of Wheat are not even aware of his trauma in the least. Hence his experience differs from that of the other three protagonists, Isanusi, Densu and Njoroge. Yet in all other aspects he does resemble the other three protagonists.
In Armah’s *Two Thousand Seasons*, Isanusi rebels against Koranche, the king who betrays the people to the white destroyers. Koranche always seeks Isanusi’s help to convey his message to the people of Anoa since they trust Isanusi ‘of whom it was said truth was his food’ (TT, 81). He never hesitates to fight for righteousness. His integrity is always highly regarded by the people. Koranche plans to let the whites into the land, being tempted by the promises of money and position. When the white destroyers kill more than three hundred natives overnight, the people want to rise against the European masters. Since Koranche had planned this with the destroyers, he pleads Isanusi to convince the people. ‘Isanusi considered the heinousness of all that had already happened, considered the terror of his own position, how he was being forced to fit into the strategies of destruction’ (102). He conceives a plan to deceive Koranche. If he refuses, Koranche may succeed by making ‘otumfur the flatterer’ (102) to convince the people. So he undertakes to address the people and presents the reality and informs what awaits them in future by exposing the intention of the whites’ interest in their land. For instance, he tells the people that the whites’ entry would result in the deprivation of their land, the country’s riches; there is a danger
of the natives being taken to the other countries to be used as slaves. He speaks the truth to the people and the king declares him a madman and expels him from the society. Now begins Isanusi’s, conflict and he goes to the forest whereas Densu in *The Healers* chooses to live in the forest, renouncing the luxurious life offered to him.

Densu, like Njoroge in *Weep Not Child* is after learning - learning the ways of the healers who not only heal the sick people but also the society which requires healing. Densu had lost both the parents and he is brought up by Ababio, a crafty courtier. Densu, even in his early life, attempts to find role models to follow and whenever he finds adults around asks, ‘Shall I be like this one when I grow up to be a man?’ (He, 66) and interrogates the adults to find out his way of life. The answers he receives from Damfo, the healer inspires him and he decides to be a healer. His conversations with Damfo completely changes him. ‘He thought of a complete break with the old life, and an immediate initiation into a new life, the life of healing’ (86). But Ababio, who plans to let the whites into the town, Esuano, persuades Densu to accept the kingdom hoping to achieve what he desires. If Densu became
the king, instead of Appia, the actual heir apparent to the throne of Esuano, Ababio believes, he could easily collaborate with the whites and could gain power and fame. He tempts Densu saying, ‘Once we agree to work for the whites, we put ourselves, on the road to power. It is a road without end’ (30) Densu does not yield himself to the threats posed by Ababio and he declines Ababio’s offer and this becomes the cause of his conflict. He becomes Ababio’s target of elimination. If Densu wants to learn the art of healing, Njoroge in *Weep Not, Child* educates himself in order to serve his people.

Njoroge feels like Mumbi who says, ‘there is nothing like education’ (GW, 166) and it is believed, ‘Gikuyu people always saw their deliverance as embodied in education’. (WN, 105) To Njoroge, the conflict is caused by his father Ngotho, who antagonises Jacobo, a black land owner. Ngotho is a man of wisdom and the tribes always respect him and any common decision in the village is taken according to his advice. He is a talented farmer and even his landlord Mr. Howlands, a white, appreciates his tireless effort and movement to cultivate the land. He feels ‘Ngotho was too much of a part of the form to be separated
from it: (30) But, when people call on strike against the masters to get fair wages, Jacobo takes sides with Howlands and to Ngotho, "for one single moment Jacobo crystallized into a concrete betrayal of the people" (58) and he attacks Jacobo for which he has to pay heavily. From that moment onwards destruction of Ngotho's family becomes the aim of Jacobo and Howlands and the conflict in Njoroge's life begins. The problem in the novel is that, "there are some people, be they black or white who don't want others to rise above them". (21) Njoroge has to suffer throughout the novel for the impulsive anger of his father whereas Mugo in *A Grain of Wheat* has to suffer the agony of his own sin committed in the early part of his life.

The characters who antagonise Ngotho make Njoroge's life miserable. But in Mugo's life, the conflict arises and gains momentum as more and more people appreciate him, revere him and trust him to the extent of unravelling their secrets. There is not a single character who even suspects Mugo. In Kenyan history, Mugo, the legendary hero had been taken for an impostor which he was not and his worth was realised only after his death. On the contrary, in *A Grain of Wheat*, Mugo, a traitor, who had betrayed
Kihika, the Mau Mau hero, is taken for a selfless leader. The evolution in Mugo’s character delineation turns a traitor into a sage. The novel begins with Mugo’s introspective emotional struggle in the early morning of a day. He is afraid, afraid of everyone, everything – his own shadow, the sound of his footsteps even the sound of a drop of water. This indicates that Mugo is not a clean slate. He, having had an unforgettable, humiliating life in his younger days, decides to keep away from the society. He had an ignoble life with his aunt Waitherero, which had made him detest the entire society around him. Loneliness is thrust on him and he learns to cherish it. The colonial suppression, the Mau Mau rebellion or Emergency – nothing could modify his code of life until Kihika interferes in his life. Kihika, a Mau Mau activist seeks shelter in Mugo’s hut and from then on begins Mugo’s conflict.

The conflict in the lives of Armah’s Isanusi and Densu and Ngugi’s Njoroge and Mugo arises due to the colonial pressure. Densu and Njoroge are young men who have been consciously carved by the novelist as the pillars of the society. Through them the novelists convey the responsibilities of the youth of the day. Isanusi and Mugo are comparatively elderly to Densu and Njoroge
and the novelists reveal their matured perception of life through them. Though the conflict is created because of the western influence, in the lives of the protagonists, they struggle against their own black brethren Ababio, Koranche, Jacobo and the village of Thabai, who, in fact, cause the conflict. The conflict or the struggle symbolises the sufferings of the exploited class caused by the black masters though, of course, there are vivid descriptions of the ruthless activities of the whites. Hence, the focus is on social discrimination and not on racial differences. The struggle faced by the protagonists also represents the collective consciousness of the people—Isanusi and a group of twenty young people are always on the run to save their lives; Densu is the hunted victim of the power mongers; Njoroge's well-knit happy family gets disintegrated; Mugo, unwittingly becomes a Mau Mau detainee and suffers the consequence. Thus the conflict is complex and complicated and it is not resolved by the protagonists easily.

The antagonising forces are so strong that the protagonists should fight against them with all their might and wisdom. Ababio is wickedness incarnated. Koranche is a ruthless person who would do anything to acquire what he desires. Jacobo, though not,
as cruel as Ababio or Koranche, schemes skilfully to destroy Ngotho’s family. In *A Grain of Wheat*, the village Thabai wants to take revenge on the one who betrayed Kihika and that happens to be Mugo himself. The opposing forces are vested with power which enables them to execute their plans which makes the lives of the protagonists miserable.

Koranche in *Two Thousand Seasons* is always haunted by the image of Isanusi who was expelled from the country by him. He, right from his childhood, cannot bear to see others being more successful than him. Even as a child, when the other children display their talent by carving wooden masks, Koranche, not skilful to do it, burns the hut where all the masks are kept. To acquire what he wishes he may go to any extreme, even to betray his country. Njoku a critic says, ‘Koranche is a traitor who collaborates with the imperialists to bring about the subjugation of his country and the destruction of his people’ (51). Obviously, Isanusi, a righteous person becomes Koranche’s rival. Koranche who willingly betrays the land just for the sake of gifts and silver showered by the whites, considers Isanusi his prime enemy and his nightmarish experiences are described thus:
Koranche the king became afraid. Already wild dreams had punctured his rest too many moons going, too many coming. In these dreams a figure such as the mad Isanusi followed him inexorably and even without opening his grim mouth threatened the fleeing king with dissolution. Now such was the strength of Koranche's obsession with Isanusi his spirit prompted him to find out from the surprising Dovi only one thing: Where was Isanusi?" (TT, 184)

and, "he was certain he the king was bound to die unless Isanusi could be found", (185). A militant group of twenty newly initiated youth is tricked into slavery by Koranche and they learn about the other slaves who had been sold by Koranche himself. This group, which includes Abena, who had refused to marry Bentum, Koranche's son, joins Isanusi to accomplish the task of liberation of the slaves and the destruction of the betrayers. This, further complicates Isanusi's secluded life. Unlike Isanusi, Densu willingly flees to the forests and as Isanusi is chased by Koranche, Densu
is also chased by Ababio whose villainy cannot be estimated as inferior to that of Koranche's.

Densu's refusal to accept the kingdom provokes Ababio and he murders Appia, the heir apparent and very skilfully puts the blame on Densu. Ababio says, 'I showed you my secrets. I invited you to be my friend. You refused. (He 113) and declares, '... That's all over. You rejected me. I've accepted that rejection' (113). He openly admits to Densu that he has become his enemy, saying, 'a man who shares your secrets is your friend. There is no other thing he can possibly be-except your enemy. He works with you. Or he works against you' (47). Ababio makes the people believe that Densu had murdered Appia and arranges a trial which is called the poison - bark trial i.e., the victim will be made to drink the poison brewed and the belief was that only the guilty would die. Who would survive that deadly poison! Anan, Densu's friend diligently plans the escape and they proceed towards the eastern forests where Damfo, the healer lives. Yet Ababio makes all possible efforts to capture both Densu and Anan without knowing that the latter had died in the escapade. A man who comes in search of Densu and Anan says to Damfo that Ababio had 'gone and got
thirty guns from Cape Coast. Thirty men are to go hunting for those two murderers, just as soon as they know where to look for them' (141). It is evident that Ababio would try all possible ways to kill Densu and so would Jacobo to destroy Ngotho's family in *Weep Not, Child.*

Jacobo, who supports the white capitalists is not forgiven by Ngotho. To Ngotho, `Jacobo was a Traitor' (WN, 58) They fight- 'Jacobo on the side of the white people and he on the side of the black people' (58-59) Ngotho does attack Jacobo yet he himself is severely beaten. But Jacobo takes Ngotho's attack on him as a public humiliation and exploits his power that he entertains as the richest black landowner of the place. Jacobo, being a richman, `does not want others to get rich because he wants to be the only man with wealth' (21). He joins Mr. Howlands, the white landlord and schemes to see Ngotho's family ruined. The family is driven from where they live since the place belongs to Jacobo. Ngotho is dismissed from his job by Howlands. The family suffers from acute poverty and inspite of all these calamities, initially, Njoroge is optimistic about the future. `Njoroge had always been a dreamer, a visionary who consoled himself faced by the difficulties of the
moment by a look at a better day to come’ (120). He hopefully says that he is going to serve his country after completing his studies. Unfortunately, he is forced to discontinue his studies at Sirianna because of Jacobo. Njoroge does not directly do anything to fall a victim to the conflict that he is entangled with, whereas Mugo is the sole reason for his sufferings.

In *A Grain of Wheat*, Mugo’s conflict is caused by his own betrayal and sense of guilt and interestingly no other character in the novel knows about it. The village Thabai looks forward to find out the betrayer and discusses the possibilities for it with Mugo himself. He is considered as the role model by the whole village and the primary characters unburden their secrets to him. Gikonyo reveals the betrayal of his wife, Mumbi. Mumbi in turn unburdens how the circumstances forced her yield to Karanja’s desire to possess her and how that has ruined her life with Gikonyo. Everyone takes him to his/her confidence and respects him and decides to honour him by asking him to preside over the Uhuru celebrations. Even his refusal to accept the honour is taken as an act of goodness. ‘The man who had suffered so much had further revealed his greatness in modesty. By refusing to lead, Mugo had
become a legendary hero' (GW, 200) Gikonyo compares him with Kihika, the man who sacrificed his life for the sake of the Kenyans. He says to Mugo, `Your name and that of Kihika will ever be linked together' (28). But Mugo alone knows that he is the one who betrayed Kihika and hence whenever people praise him he suspects that they are laying a trap to capture and punish him. He blurts out;

Imagine all your life cannot sleep - so many fingers touching your flesh - eyes - watching you - in dark places - in corners - in the streets - in the fields - sleeping, waking no rest - ah! Those eyes - cannot you for a minute, one minute, leave a man alone - I mean - let a man eat, drink, work ... (210-211).

His guilt eats his `self' and he avoids everyone, and tries to hide his agony.

The confrontation makes the protagonists seek solace and assistance from the female characters in the novels. They either
directly or indirectly motivate the deeds accomplished by the protagonists. Idawa and Abena in *Two Thousand Seasons*, Araba Jesiwa in *The Healers*, Mwihaki in *Weep Not, Child* and Mumbi in *A Grain of Wheat* provide the source of strength to the protagonists. There are instances when these female characters show spectacular mental strength. Idawa, for example boldly refuses to marry the king Koranche and when Isanusi is expelled from Anoa, she readily offers him a place to live in and admits him into her life. She visits Anoa and acts as an informer to Isanusi and the other members of the team. When Koranche sends killers to the fifth grove, Idawa always precedes them and cautions Isanusi to confront the killers. Bofo ‘undertook to be a killer-for things’ (TT, 186) and the narrator says, ‘Idawa preceded the killer, told us of his coming, and helped us prepare for him’. (186) Abena the head of the group who plans to avenge Koranche, feels that Isanusi could bear the victimization because of Idawa. She says,

> We saw Idawa and Isanusi in the water, and there was no longer any mystery remaining in any of our minds, no wondering to find the secret of Isanusi’s survival in the face of
banishment, of his endurance above exile's sour despair (153-154).

Isanusi, as an individual needs others' assistance to find 'the way' and only through Idawa and Abena, he is able to do it. Abena and her friends had been beguiled by Koranche who sold them to the whites. They manage to escape and decide to liberate the other slaves and to destroy the black traitors and white destroyers. To execute their plan they proceed to the fifth grove seeking Isanusi's guidance because Isanusi is the one,

...whose greatest desire, whose vocation it was to keep the knowledge of our way, the way, from destruction; ... he whose highest hope it was to live the way as purpose, the way as the purpose of our people (89)

and Abena too, according to Palmer, is, 'consistent in her search for 'the way'. (GAN, 235) Isanusi's mission of life synchronises with that of Abena and his goal is achieved through Idawa and Abena. If Idawa and Abena assist Isanusi in reaching his goal, Araba Jesiwa in The Healers inspires Densu to become a healer.
Araba Jesiwa, the queen mother of Appia, considers Densu as her equal and narrates her life to him. She talks to him of 'anxiety', 'of waste', 'of despair', 'of hope', 'of change', 'of conception', 'of fear', 'of joy', 'of fullness', 'of gratitude', (He, 67, 68) This initiates Densu's urge to know his 'self'. 'Of his conversations with Araba Jesiwa, Densu kept sweet memories. They were memories of the search for the true self, the natural self; ...' (78). Through Araba Jesiwa, Densu gets Damfo's acquaintance which strengthens his vision to become a healer. Though he loves Ajoa, Damfo's daughter, his sole aim is to become a healer and to serve the society. This would be possible to Densu only if he joins Damfo and he does become Damfo's disciple and owes it only to Araba Jesiwa. She is the mother figure to Densu whereas Mwihiaki in Weep Not, Child is the source of strength to Njoroge.

Mwihiaki, the daughter of Jacobo loves Njoroge and Njoroge is surprised at her benign attitude towards him. Jacobo is the root cause of Njoroge's sufferings, yet Mwihiaki continues to shower love and affection on Njoroge. So he even questions, 'How could she be Jacobo's daughter? (WN, 86). Njoroge always clings on
to the hope that 'he might find an anchor in Mwihaki' (135). Her presence alone makes him forget his distress. Endless physical as well as psychological torture depresses Njoroge and even then he considers only Mwihaki as his last hope left. He says,

'Mwihaki, you are the one dear thing left to me. I feel bound to you and I know that I can fully depend on you. I have no hope left but for you, for now I know that my tomorrow was an illusion' (132)

Mwihaki gives him the most appreciable suggestion and reminds him of his responsibility. She advises, '... we have a duty. Our duty to other people is our biggest responsibility as grown men and women' (134). Mwihaki reminds Njoroge of his responsibility whereas Mumbi serves as a catalyst to Mugo in *A Grain of Wheat*.

Mugo is unable to share his emotional conflict with any of the other characters in the novel. Neither does any character provide mental solace to Mugo. Yet Mumbi comforts him psychologically. He, unable to bear his guilt anymore, chooses only Mumbi to unburden himself inspite of the fact that she is the
sister of Kihika, who, Mugo had betrayed. He tells her that he had always envied Kihika, because, he ‘... had people who would mourn his end, who would name their children after him, that Kihi¬ka’s name would never die from men’s lips. Kihika had everything; Mugo had nothing (GW 221), and to add more, Kihika by taking shelter in Mugo’s hut, makes the latter a Mau Mau detainee which ruins Mugo’s plans for a happy family life. He tells Mumbi that he is the one who betrayed Kihika and is responsible for Kihika’s death and also reveals her his agonising experience. He confesses,

I wanted to live my life. I never wanted to be involved in anything. Then he came into my life, here, a night like this, and pulled me into the stream. So I killed him’ (210).

Mumbi decides not to expose him to the villagers. When she realises that the man who had actually betrayed Kihika is the village hero, she asks herself, ‘Could she bear to bring more misery to Mugo, whose eyes and face seemed so distorted with pain?’ (236) Her kindness reinforces Mugo’s already made decision i.e., confessing his sin to the people of Thabai on the day of Uhuru.
The women characters do provide comfort and solace to the protagonists. They are the inspirers especially to Mugo and Densu; they are the life force to Isanusi and Njoroge. But the experiences of the protagonists vary. Though Idawa is believed to be the strength of Isanusi, his vision is not limited to Idawa alone. Inspite of Araba Jesiwa’s inability to inspire Densu because of her almost dead condition, he takes her very condition as an inspiration to find out the person who is responsible for her pathetic plight. Njoroge attempts suicide despite Mwihaki’s promise of a better tomorrow. Mugo confesses his sin of betrayal even after knowing that Mumbi, Kihika’s sister has forgiven him.

Despite the comfort and consolation provided by some of the female characters, the protagonists are surrounded only by the characters who make their lives miserable. Isanusi’s life is at stake as Koranche is haunted by his image; wherever Densu goes, he is cornered by Ababio’s attendants; Njoroge because of Jacobo, loses his father and brothers and becomes the man of the house; Mugo’s conflict gains strength as the people of Thabai insist on his leadership. As the problem grows intense, the protagonists resort to one decision i.e. self-exile. Isolation is considered the only possible way to forget reality. Isanusi, inspite of Idawa’s invitation to be with her, recedes to the forest, the fifth grove.
Isanusi loved Idawa as she loved him. But his spirit found no rest in that single love. From one new moon to the next for two seasons Isanusi wandered alone without hope.

(TT, 103)

He wanders around and finally decides to 'live unknown, an outcast in the grove' (104). While Isanusi's alienation is forced on him, Densu is a loner by nature.

Densu detests individual's victory over the others. He regrets that he has to live with manipulators and destroyers. Even when he is in a crowd, he desires to be lonely. Too much of power thrust on the manipulators makes him flee from the place seeking loneliness. 'Every moment spent near the men of power in the royal courtyard was to him time spent in alien territory'. (He, 49) It is not by accident, Densu desires to alienate himself.

Competitions, struggles of individual against individual, faction against faction, the sharpening of knives, the search for allies, the deception of bystanders and enemies, the
readiness of professed friends to betray those
already used in the unending search for more
power - from all this Densu desired only
distance, a great distance (49)

Densu alienates himself out of dissatisfaction with the society
whereas Njoroge isolates himself inorder to get educated.

Njoroge's self exile is planned by him only for a short period.
He wants to learn and serve his family and his people. To achieve
this, he assumes that he should not be affected by whatever that
is happening at home lest it may have an impact on his studies.
So he wants to remain away from home for sometime. He does
not want to go home from school at the end of the year because,

‘If he went misery would gnaw at his peace of
mind. He did not want to go back. He thought
it would be a more home coming if he stayed
here till he had equipped himself with
learning’. (WN, 113).

His isolation, like Mugo’s is more psychological unlike that of
Isanusi’s or Densu’s. He is a silent spectator of events that happen
around him and he makes constant reflections in his mind and as a result decides to perform certain deeds which would benefit his family and community whereas Mugo’s decision to alienate himself, unlike Njoroge’s, is not imposed on him by external circumstances.

Mugo exiles himself psychologically from the society he lives in. His alienation is self-imposed and not necessitated and he is not driven to this decision as in the case of Isanusi, Densu and Njoroge. His self exile can be analysed at two levels, namely, before he is detained and after he is released. Before he is imprisoned, he behaves like a bundle of contradictory emotions i.e. he wants people and at the same time desires to be lonely. He detests his aunt Waitherero’s very presence. To her, Mugo is only a ‘female slime’ (GW. 9) ‘ungrateful wretch’ (9) and ‘the kind that would murder their own mother’ (11). He even plans to murder her, but does not execute it. But, when she dies, he wants, ‘somebody, anybody, who would use the claims of kinship to do him ill or good. Either one or the other as long as he was not left alone, an outsider’ (11) Yet generally speaking, ‘at home, or at school, he rarely joined the company of other boys for fear of being involved in brawls that
might ruin his chances of a better future' (221). After he is released from detention, he comes to Thabai hoping to lead a lonely life of his own since he is conscious of his guilt of betrayal and is afraid to mingle with the people. His silence and loneliness are mistaken for saintliness and Gikonyo says, `You want to be left alone. Remember this, however; it is not easy for any man in a community to be left alone, especially a man in your position' (29). Ironically, moved by the kindness of the people of Thabai, he is unable to isolate himself from them.

Though the protagonists isolate themselves either physically as in the case of Isanusi and Densu or psychologically as Njororge and Mugo, their alienation does not in anyway lead them to escapism. They continue to show keen interest in the social changes. Isanusi lives to destroy the destroyers. He takes the crew to Kamuzu who would help them in liberating the slaves and avenging the betrayers. Densu joins Damfo and learns to heal not only physical illness but also the illness of the society. He joins Asama Nkwenta and fights against the whites's invasion of the Asante kingdom. Isanusi and Densu, says Richard Peck,
exile themselves, then, but put their exile to
good purpose. They are alienated from their
society as it is, but are in tune with their society
as it could be; and they set as their highest
purpose the healing of their society. (RAL, Vol.
20, 40)

Njoroge aspires to complete his education to serve his people and
Mugo, the betrayer is gradually drawn more towards the society
though he intends to extricate himself from the social network.

The novelists effectively bring out the agony that is
experienced by the protagonists through the narrative technique
too. African Literature, generally, is rich in symbols and images
and Armah and Ngugi also use them to enrich the texture of their
novels. Armah concentrates more on history than on culture in
Two Thousand Seasons and The Healers. Two Thousand
Seasons is considered an epic and Armah has made it almost a
prose fiction through the narrative style. Isanusi represents the
resistance ideology and the narration of events convincingly
moves ahead to it. 'The way' which Isanusi tries to find out is
symbolic because Armah believes that it should be the aim of every individual who lives in a society. Isanusi's pursuit begins much later in the novel and the narration that precedes it, though, in no way, is directly connected to Isanusi's life, justifies his search for 'the way'. Journey motif is used by Armah most appropriately since Isanusi has to find 'the way'. The first part of the novel is the journey towards the way of redemption and rejuvenation. 'The way' is almost found and the people form the community and settle at Anoa, the place named after a woman prophetess. Once again the destruction begins and Isanusi becomes the man who is to lead to 'the way' by fighting against the people like Koranche and Kamuzu. He is joined by the newly initiated group, who had been once tricked into slavery by Koranche. Though the narrator is 'We' the collective voice, this can be taken as the voice of Isanusi himself. Armah, Chidi Amuta says,

... in his narrative method the consciousness of the narrative voice is either synonymous or coalesces with that of the central character.

The collective voice of the narrator in Two Thousand Seasons is hardly distinguishable from that of Isanusi'. (WLWE, Vol. 21, 474)
Isanusi’s conflict and how it grows more and more serious is revealed not through him but ironically through Koranche who often gets nightmares about Isanusi.

Seven successive nights the king Koranche woke screaming after dreaming a recurring dream. In form his nightmare changed; its essence was always the same. In it Isanusi sat implacable upon a mountain high above the palace staring downwards at the king, and cold was Isanusi’s anger. From his open eyes something dark flowed as Isanusi continued to stare. The dark substance reached the ground at the foot of the mountain, came down and flowed steadily, inexorably against the palace and against the king within it. When the dark thing reached the palace the king Koranche saw clearly what it was; a living stream of men without end. Each looked exactly like Isanusi (TT, 185).

and they march to attack him. This shows Armah’s penetration into Koranche’s mind to bring out the goodness in Isanusi. The novel can be divided into two parts, the first part being the usurpation of the land by the predators and destroyers and also the arduous journey undertaken by the natives to find out the way of redemption and rejuvenation; the second part is more particularised which brings out the betrayal of Koranche and the sacrifice of Isanusi to save the country from such destroyers like Koranche. The narration
in the first part is forceful and reveals the wrath of the narrator against the destroyers. Isanusi’s confrontation and the movement of liberation of the slaves are presented in such a way that the killing of Koranche and Kamuzu is justified. 'Disease' as a metaphor, which Armah elaborately uses in *The Healers* is touched upon in *Two Thousand Seasons*. Before dying, Isanusi says, ‘see the disease, and understand it well. It is important’ (201).

As indicated by Armah in *Two Thousand Seasons*, his next novel, *The Healers*, as the title goes, is an attempt on healing the diseases that exist in the society. Densu along with Damfo, the healer represents the moral vision of Armah. The oral narrative to a wider audience vividly brings forth the contrasting qualities between the manipulators and the inspirers. Densu aims at solving his conflict, by joining the healers. He is, in for trouble and this is conveyed to the readers even in the very first sentence of the novel. ‘In the twentieth year of his life, a young man found himself at the centre of strange, extraordinary events’ (He, 1) and the young man is none but the protagonist, Densu and what is going to happen to him naturally kindles the interest of the readers which makes them listen to the narrator attentively. The river and water imagery is used by Armah to explicate the conflict faced by Densu. The female
river Nsu Ber is smooth and narrower; the male river Nsu Nyin is wider and turbulent; both join the sacred river Pra - Nsu Ber may signify the inspirers and Nsu Nyin may signify the manipulators; but ultimately they are to be united to form a homogeneous society, represented by sacred Pra. Densu's goal in life is to control people like Ababio, Esuman and Buntui who behave like the forceful river Nsu Nyin which of course, is not an easy task. Densu and Anan see the bottom of the river, implying the depth of life. Densu is asked by Damfo to do watergazing ie., gazing at the water in a bowl and that is an exercise of soul searching. He learns through watergazing that 'his need was for relationships with people for whom the existing world was not perfect, ...' (229) and secondly, the two prevalent diseases in the world are, 'the urge to fragment everything' (230) and 'the urge to unite everything' (230) and he does not mind being affected by the latter disease and ruminates, 'If that was a disease, the gazer thought, so let it be' (230) and he would willingly choose it. Though Armah refers to certain mythological events which portend the fall of Asante Kingdom they do not directly contribute towards Densu's conflict. (Unnatural things like the newborn child speaking like an old man soon after its birth, a woman transferring her pregnancy to her husband out of despair). The dominant metaphor that is used by Armah is
disease'. It may be physical as in the case of Araba Jesiwa or psychological as with Asamoa Nkwenta because his disease is 'despair' (96). The healers' purpose of living is to heal, whatever may be the nature of the disease. Densu, though wishes to follow Damfo, is not accepted by Damfo which increases the complexity of his conflict. Since the world of pleasure is open to him i.e., the Kingdom of Esuano is offered to him, Damfo necessarily tests his sustenance by asking him to return after a year which the healers call 'leave - taking time' (104). Densu's emotional turbulence is revealed to the readers on various occasions and especially when he sees images. It is said, 'He closed his eyes. He saw a figure left standing alone in a tree-less, shelter-less wilderness, cold and windy. The figure approached him. When it reached him it became himself' (105) It is evident that the narrator delves deep into the mind of Densu and the narration reflects the turmoil in the mind of the protagonist.

In *Weep Not, Child*, though his first novel, Ngugi proves himself an excellent story teller. The novel, of course, lacks the complexity and intrigued introspection that one finds in his *A Grain of Wheat*, yet Ngugi has successfully unfolded the conflict of the protagonist and also how he confronts it. Njoroge, who begins his
life as an optimist, who believes in 'tomorrow' ends up as a pessimist saying, 'All that was a dream. We can only live today' (WN, 133). This transition is convincingly drawn by Ngugi through the narrative strategies adopted by him. There is too much of suffering in the life of Njoroge which is indicated by 'darkness' in the novel. There is a contrast between light and darkness. The two sections of the novel move from 'Waning Light' to 'Darkness Falls'. (Titles of the two divisions of the novel) Just before the conflict begins, 'Njoroge stood for a moment, made uneasy by this quiet atmosphere that preceded darkness' (69). But Njoroge's optimistic attitude to life is revealed by his faith that, 'surely this darkness and terror will not go on for ever' (106). The stress falls on Njoroge's life heavily and he is consumed by the bigger darkness'. (96). Yet his attempt to kill himself is prevented because, of his mother. 'He saw the light she was carrying and falteringly went towards it' (135) which indicates the novelist's hope in humanity. Njoroge's desire to educate himself and serve the community is the theme of the novel and he compares himself more than once with David in the Bible. He wants to be a saviour and 'remembered David rescuing a whole country from the curse of Goliath' (94).
A Grain of Wheat may be estimated as the masterpiece of Ngugi since the narration is well planned to portray the mental turbulence in the minds of the characters. The complexity of the novel reflects the agony of Mugo. David cook says, Ngugi has developed a technique for conveying continuity comparable to a cine camera following a character from place to place, so that even when the background is constantly shifting, as in the opening chapter, the separate parts are held together by a particular figure (AL, 107).

There is mystery, suspense, shock and what not! why does Mugo walk with guilt conscience? 'Will he confess? The narration sustains the interest of the readers and how the mystery is going to be solved is beyond the reader's guess. The evolution that takes place in Mugo i.e. from a traitor to a saint is convincingly put across to the readers. The narration is not chronological but swings from the present to the past and from the past to the present. The experience of the characters, including that of Mugo, is given in piecemeal and the fragments are woven together skilfully to give
a wholesome picture. Palmer says, 'Indeed in this novel, Ngugi frequently makes use of techniques we have come to associate with stream-of-consciousness or interior monologue' (IAN, 47).

The fragmented thoughts of Mugo, the conflict that he has to bear all alone psychologically, the mental agony he has to exercise when he confronts the people of Thabai - everything perfectly blends with the narrative technique, the images and the language adopted by Ngugi. The narrative diligently unfolds the events that finally justifies his betrayal. The collective voice of the narrator, 'We in Kenya underwent', (GW.149) and phrases like 'those of you who have visited the Thabai' (211) involve the readers in the narration and demand their personal interest in Mugo's conflict and confrontation. Mugo lives through guilt and a heavy heart and soon after his confession Ngugi aptly says, 'A load of many years was lifted from his shoulders'. (267) Whenever Gikonyo refers to the betrayal of Mumbi and Karanja, Mugo is reminded of his own betrayal of Kihika and the intensity of his psychological pain is expressed by Ngugi through physical illness. 'Mugo felt sharp irritation as if acid was eating away at an ulcer in his stomach.' (141). 'Water' and 'blood' imagery is used by Ngugi to explicate the conflict as well as the relief that Mugo acquires after confrontation i.e. after confession. The novel begins with 'A clear
drop of water was delicately suspended above him' (3) which symbolises his guilt, which may even kill him, since he feels that, that `drop of cold water would suddenly pierce his eyes' (3). And after his confession, Mugo visualises, `Then the drop entered his eye, melted inside, and ran down his face like a tear' (269), since there is no fear of betrayal in him any more. Mugo, all alone walks in the street, completely drenched in the rain which signifies, `...may be he has something heavy in his heart' (203). When he decides to confess his sin, he `saw thickblood dripping from the mudwalls, of his hut why had he not seen it earlier, he now wondered, almost calmly, without fear' (199). Now, Mugo is not afraid of blood drops though he is afraid to see even water drops earlier. After the confession, he looks at the wall and says, `There was nothing on the walls; no visions of blood' (269). The blood drops portend an ill-omen, perhaps, Mugo’s end. What awaits Mugo is presaged even before his confession. It is conveyed through by the description of Nature’s fury.

Then suddenly the sun seemed to die prematurely; the country and the sky turned dull and grey. A cold wind started to blow carrying with it bits of white paper, pieces of
cloth and grass and feathers whirling in the air. Clouds were fast collecting in the sky. A few flashes of lightning were followed by a faint rumbling thunder. And abruptly the rain fell. Mugo had another frightening sensation of re-enacting dead scenes come to life (203).

Words like 'die', 'dull', and 'cold wind', 'grey' 'white paper' 'clouds', 'lightning', 'dead scenes come to life' significantly prepare the readers for Mugo's end. Gitogo's mother symbolises Mugo's conscience because it is said, 'It was her eyes that most disturbed Mugo. He always felt naked, seen' (8). After the confession, he wants to go away from the village and before accomplishing it, he desires to see the old woman, goes to her house where he sees her dying which acts like a revelation to him. He drops the idea of leaving Thabai and prepares himself to face any sort of punishment that awaits him.

The narrative technique exploited by the novelists enhance the understanding of the problem. Armah concentrates on the collective consciousness of the victimized group and their attempt
to rebel against injustice. Ngugi’s novels are the documents on individuals’ sufferings and the impact of Mau Mau is conveyed through individual’s experience. The narration matches the themes the novelists are dealing with. Armah’s diction and treatment are illustrative and forceful since he talks about the traitors who do not hesitate to sell the people, to give away the land. Ngugi’s delineation of themes in these two novels, demands a subdued, simple style which should reflect the minds of the two Mau Mau victims and he successfully brings out the intended effect through the flash back technique in A Grain of Wheat and lucid, and linear narration in Weep Not, Child.

The confrontation of the problem makes the protagonists suffer to the extreme level possible. They decide to do certain things against the antagonisers. Isanusi, along with Abena and the rest of the group decides to destroy the white destroyers and their black parasites. ‘vision is the aim of this vocation; the clearing of destruction’s pale, thick-lying pus from eyes too long blinded to every possibility of the way’. (TT,158) Isanusi thinks that he cannot achieve his goal all alone and hence joins the youngsters when they ask him to guide them to accomplish the removal of the
parasites. Kirsten Holst Petersen says, Isanusi and the group, `form the nucleus of the resistance and have all the will, virtue, courage, intellectual ability, human understanding, and integrity one could wish for' (WLWE, 333 - 334). He seeks Kamuzu's assistance to liberate the captive slaves. When Kamuzu behaves like `a copy of the chief of the white destroyers' (169), they do not hesitate to bring an end to him. Though Koranche is killed only after the death of Isanusi, the movement of resistance towards destructive power is initiated by Isanusi. The extremity of the sufferings that the innocent people undergo in the hands of the white destroyers and the unbelievable behaviour of the black traitors justify the killing of those antagonisers and the narrator says `There are those whose physical death is a necessary preparation for a profounder life, life of our people, life of our way, the way' (TT,199). But Densu's way of confrontation is different from that of Isanusi in certain ways.

Densu plans skilfully to prove Ababio's villainy. From Buntui, who murdered Appia, Densu collects all the information and meets Ababio, the lion, in its den. Ababio sarcastically says that nobody would take, Buntui's version of truth since he is a dead witness and says, `Now we'll have to arrange another trial... You'll get a chance to talk in defence of yourself. Then you'll hang, Densu'
(He, 301) to which Densu boldly replies, `you need fear nothing. I've no desire to escape' Not any more' (301)

The confrontation of the conflict by Njoroge in *Weep Not, Child* changes his attitude towards life. The high regard he cherishes for the whites in the early part of his life totally changes when he is arrested for Jacobo's murder. Howlands, 'held Njoroge's private parts with a pair of pincers and started to press tentatively (WN.118) and says, 'you'll be castrated like your father' (118). Njoroge is punished with an assumption that he must have taken the oath against the Europeans. Ngotho, Njoroge's father is brutally beaten by Howlands and while he is dying, 'for the first time Njoroge was face to face with a problem to which `tomorrow' was no answer' (122). His brothers Boro and Kamau are sentenced to death for being the members of Mau Mau rebellion which was begun by the natives to get what is due to them - a normal, justified organisation. Even a casual visit to Jacobo's house, which is compelled by Jacobo's daughter Mwihaki makes him a culprit who is associated with the murder of Jacobo and later Mwihaki herself refuses to see him. He understands the world now; his concept of life changes; he learns through his unpleasant and humiliating
experiences. To this learning, Njoroge has to pay very heavily ie., his father’s death and the discontinuation of his education about which he had been cherishing certain ideals right from his childhood. "... all these experiences now came to Njoroge as shocks that showed him a different world from that he had believed himself living in" (120).

Mugo, in fact, does not have any intention of admitting his sin of betrayal to the people of Thabai. He, in the beginning, thinks he can ‘bury his past in their gratitude’ (GW.146). When everyone in the novel confides in him, he slowly changes his mind. Juneja says, ‘It is the collective consciousness of the village Thabai which shakes Mugo’s conscience and forces him to confess his betrayal at the cost of being condemned (PC, 41). He gets ready to accept the honour of presiding over the Uhuru celebrations. But the confession made by Mumbi to Mugo disturbs him much. ‘Mumbi’s voice was a knife which had butchered and laid naked his heart to himself’ (199) which ultimately motivates him to declare his sin openly.

The physical and mental sufferings make the protagonists resolve the problem and put an end to the conflict. Isanusi destroys
the destroyers; Densu awaits a trial; Njoroge is forced to discontinue his education and he works in a shop; Mugo confesses his betrayal of Kihika.

The outcome of the resolution is noteworthy. Isanusi, who lives for the cause of the liberation of the slaves and for the destruction of the betrayers, even while dying evidently shows his earnest love for the society and proves himself an ideal leader. When he is shot by Fosu, the betrayer, Isanusi `got down after Fosu to make sure the traitor could not escape to bring final misfortune against all our group. Isanusi in the instant of his landing turned his gun against Fosu and shot him dead' (TT, 194). As faithful followers, the group avenges his death by killing Koranche. Densu faces the trial unmindful of the outcome, and the trial suddenly changes its course against Ababio by the appearance of Araba Jesiwa. Densu is declared innocent and the elders of Esuano request him to be their king. When the Kingdom is offered to him by Ababio in the beginning he refuses it, wishing to become a healer. Now, in the end, after having had the experience of a healer, which, of course, is not very pleasant, once again he declines the offer. This shows the consistency in the character of Densu. Densu, along with Damfo, Ajoa and Araba Jesiwa marches
towards the eastern forest in pursuit of his mission of life. The
resoluteness of Isanusi and Densu is convincing. Chidi Amuta
says,

Their success as artist protagonsts arises from the fact that they have the incredible
capacity to play hero while seeking to rationalize their actions within the context of
their basically artistic consciousness. In other words they are able to play the part and also
provide a social context within which their actions are meaningful' (WLWE, Vol. 21, 474).

Though young, Densu’s stoicism is remarkable whereas Njoroge’s timidity is born out of his experience with life. He cannot be blamed for it and anybody who is placed in Njoroge’s place would choose only the rope.

‘He recalled Ngotho, dead. Boro would soon be executed while Kamau would be in prison for life. Njoroge did not know what would happen to Kori in detention... For Njoroge had
now lost faith in all the things he had earlier believed in, like wealth, power, education

(WN,134)

He ends up in a shop to earn his living and to feed his two mothers. But even here he is not able to put his heart and soul into his work and is dismissed. His final resort is Mwihaki who always understand him but she too refuses to go along with him and reminds him of his duty to others. He sees her as 'a lone tree defying the darkness, trying to instil new life into him. But he did not want to live. Not this kind of life. He felt betrayed' (133) and attempts to hang himself. Fortunately, his mother saves him and the moment he is saved, he feels guilty, 'the guilt of a man who had avoided his responsibility for which he had prepared himself since childhood' (136). Though C.L.Robson says,

'His feeling of guilt, however, could be either positive or destructive and the novel leaves us aware of the uncertainty of his moral position'.(34)

Ngotho's sense of guilt will certainly enlighten him.
Mugo is transformed into a new man by the kindness showered on him by the people of Thabai. The village embraces him with all love. It considers him a saint; a saviour; a sacrificer; and a patriot. He is revered, admired and appreciated and according to them, he is the most deserving person to preside over the Uhuru day. Gikonyo says, 'You have a great heart. It is people like you who ought to have been the first to taste the fruits of independence' (80) Mugo collects himself courageously and cries, 'You asked for Judas' he started. 'You asked for the man who led Kihika to this tree here. That man stands before you, now'. (252). He knows well he will not be spared for what he had done. Yet the moment he confesses, he feels relieved. The agony that he had been experiencing all those years vanishes in a minute. He feels very light - 'free, sure, confident' (267). His confession only shocks the people and does not infuriate them. Soon after his confession, no one in the crowd makes an attempt to assault him. 'People without any apparent movement created a path for him. They bent down their heads and avoided his eyes' (252) as though they had wronged him. The scene reminds one of what happens to Waiyaki in *The River Between*. Gikonyo says, 'He was a brave man, inside .... He stood before much honour, praises were heaped on him. He would have become a chief. Tell me another person who would
have exposed his soul for all the eyes to peck at '(265) As appreciated thus by Gikonyo, a public confession requires much strength and Mugo has it. But after the confession, Mugo slips down from the mountain of greatness when he plans to leave the village. This feeling is only momentary, since he changes his mind after confronting Gitogo's mother, the old woman, who represents his conscience. As he is watching her, she dies and 'he knew; the only person who had ever claimed him was dead' (269) and gives up his earlier plans. When General R and Koinandu come to take him for the trial, knowing well that only death awaits him, he quietly follows them. 'Mugo had the courage to face his guilt and lose everything' (278) including his life.

To destroy the destruction, Isanusi sacrifices his life.

He is a pillar of wisdom, a repository of history, a man of undoubted integrity and inevitably the rallying point for the opposition to Koranche's tyranny' (Palmer, GAN, 235)

Densu has the mental strength to denounce the power and glory that he could enjoy by becoming a king. Damfo says, the healer
...avoids going to any place where men go to seek power over other men' (He, 94) and Densu faithfully follows the order of the healers. Bernth Lindfors says,

\[
\text{Densu is intelligent sensitive, honest, courageous, hardy, persevering, self-sacrificing, totally dedicated, yet becomingly modest about his many prodigious achievements... (PLA, 9-10)}
\]

Njoroge’s decision to die reveals the immaturity of the character. Though his brothers, Kamau, Boro, Kori represent revolutionary thoughts, Njoroge is not carved to that impact. C.B. Robsen sums up the character of Njoroje thus;

\[
\text{He feels guilty because he has failed in his role as a saviour - a role he has prepared for since childhood’ (NWT, 34)}
\]

Mugo’s resolution makes him the hero of Thabai. The transition is not sudden and there are various instances in the novel to indicate Mugo’s love for humanity. while he is digging in the detention
camp, a woman is beaten by the white officer severely and, `Mugo felt the whip eat into his flesh and her pained whimper was like a cry from his own heart (GW, 196). He snatches away the whip and suffers the consequence. His confession only draws sympathy and compassion from the village as well as from the readers. Yet, `-No one will even escape from his own actions’ (270).

Isanusi and Densu, though, fictitious, create the impression of actually lived historical characters. They turn to be the champions of social cause to redeem the slaves and the victims. Isanusi triumphs in death; Densu joins Damfo and walks into the forest to heal the physical illness as well as to restore the health of the society. His mission is to eradicate the evil forces that breed illness in the society; to build, a healthy society of tomorrow. Njoroge and mugo, against their will, become the Mau Mau victims. Njoroge, in an emotional state decides to die but later realises his commitment which indicates the restoration of his `lost self’. Mugo’s resolution makes him a hero. Koranche is killed by the resistance movement led by Abena in Two Thousands Seasons; Ababio is punished by law in The Healers; The betrayer Jacobo is killed in Weep Not, Child; Mugo though betrays, expiates his sin and dies and wins the appreciation from not only the other
characters but from the readers as well in *A Grain of Wheat*. This transition in the character's attitude is quite appealing.

The colonial history of Ghana makes Isanusi and Densu suffer. Mau Mau emergency causes the conflict in Njoroge and Mugo though both of them do not directly contribute to this Kenyan event. History has been recast with a futuristic vision. Both Armah and Ngugi have created socially conscious protagonists. Isanusi and Mugo die to live in the hearts of the other characters. Densu and Njoroge live to accomplish what has been begun by Isanusi, i.e. finding 'the way'. Though the conflict is the result of the historical events, the struggles the protagonists confront transcend any specific period of time.

Armah, perhaps, dissatisfied with the present Ghana which he has presented in his earlier novels *The Beautiful ones Are Not Yet Born* and *Fragments*, has switched over to the past with a vision to shape the future in *Two Thousand Seasons* and *The Healers*. The filth and fragmentation have resulted in the 'disease' of the society which Armah attempts to heal by recapitulating the past. In Armah's novels, Damodar Rao says,
The perfect fusion of individual and communal welfare, national realities and Pan African ideal, contemporary situation and historical vision is presented in medicative processes and therapeutic terms (NA, 8).

Ngugi’s *Weep Not, Child* and *A Grain of Wheat* being his early novels do not show any kind of dogmatic ideologies which he expresses in his later writings.

The grain of social consciousness is sown by the novelists so that it may grow into a tree of love and compassion which may heal the present ailing society. The delineation of the conflict and the confrontation of the protagonists shows one, the way to heal the society. Isanusi’s death urges further the need to find the way; Densu’s retreat to the forest serves as an inspiration to preserve human values. Njoroge’s attempt to hang himself and later his regret may enlighten the younger generation of the day; Mugo’s end, though disturbing, conveys that such betrayers will not be spared.