CONCLUSION

The modern African writers in English like Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, James Ngugi, Cyprian Ekwensi and other eminent writers have endeavoured to emancipate Africa from its literary stereotype and African novel from its anthropological cliches subordinating anthropology to the human condition in Africa. They try to look at their tradition and ongoing reality with a critical eye and ambivalence as to create different order of reality through their universalizing imagination. They are concerned with and about the human predicament in Africa exposed to alien forces. African novel, though primarily directed to the native audience, also tries to enlighten the readership outside Africa about Africa's rich cultural heritage and native religion. Though its form is European, its content is African drawn much from the African mythology and oral literature to give authenticity and African flavour to make African novel in English distinctly different from Western and European novel.

Despite its being situational dealing with complex Africa—its past, present and future—and certain historical facts and colonialism contemporary African novel has emerged as a work of 'applied art', 'novel' in its content and expression.
The publication of *Weep Not, Child,* of James Ngugi in 1964, has made a mark in Kenyan literature, followed by his second published, but written earlier, novel *The River Between* in 1965, which established Kenyan novel writing tradition. *The River Between* depicts the pre-colonial situation and traces the history of Kenya from the arrival of the first Christian missionaries in the 1880s to the Independent School Movement in the 1930s to become chronologically and historically the first Kenyan novel.

Ngugi's novels in general depict the Gikuyu society moving sluggishly and often violently towards independence. The main thrust of Ngugi's novels is on the colonial experience in Kenya, focussing on the conflict between the white colonial masters and the black Kenyans. With a view to communicating more effectively the ongoing reality to his native audience, Ngugi had decided in 1977 to change the medium of his writing from English, which he thinks but self-colonisation, to Gikuyu which he thought adequate and more powerful medium.

Like Chinua Achebe, James Ngugi too believed in true art and literature that is not for aesthetic pleasure but that is at service of man reflecting African cultural heritage.

And the task of most of the committed African writers has been to reeducate and regenerate the native
society as to preserve its cultural identity. They do not sentimentally idealize what is traditional and past—but they are also critical about their rituals which they think are humanly wrong. Ngugi's *A Grain of Wheat*, considered superior to many African novels for its literary sophistications and techniques of narration, has exposed dispassionately the vices and weaknesses of the natives along with the cruelty of the white in Kenya. The focus in *Weep Not, Child* is on the universal passion for education of Kenyans. Though Ngugi has favoured violence in his novels, and written about the activities of the Mau Mau movement in Kenya, he has never been actively involved in the movement as he himself recorded it and that such a crisis did not disrupt the routine life in Gikuyu country. But he has acknowledged and appreciated the significant role of the Mau Mau in the liberation of Gikuyu, Kenya and African states. By liberation Ngugi means political, economic, spiritual and psychological freedom of entire Africa and has advocated for absolute transfer of political power in Kenya.

The failure of Njoroge in *Weep Not, Child* is a failure of Kenya. In fact at the end of the novel he turns out to be escapist. But it is Mwihaki who reminds him of his responsibility. Njoroge, who believes that education would bring about a change in the natives and would inspire them to revolt against the whites, is utterly disillusioned in the end. By this disillusionment, Ngugi seems to suggest in *Weep*
Not, Child, that education alone is not the proper weapon to fight for freedom nor the proper solution to the problems of his household, community and the country. But in *The River Between* the protagonist longs to lead his life against the tide prevailing in the country.

He is successful to some extent in bringing about reconciliation between the two ridges—Makuyu and Kameno. Even though Waiyaki is not as naive as Njoroge, it is his inability to take a right decision at an appropriate time to defend himself from Kamau's allegation, that is responsible for his failure.

The theme of betrayal dominates *A Grain of Wheat.* But it is not betrayal or disillusionment alone, but rebirth and regeneration, the end of brokenness and alienation and the restoration to wholeness and community are the prime concerns of the novel. There is betrayal of Gikonyo by Mumbi, and the betrayal of Kihika by Hugo which end in the suffering of the betrayers. His early novels have demonstrated his theory of history, cultural conflict and the clash over legitimate ownership of the natives and their effective control over the Gikuyu land.

The primary aim of African novelists like Ngugi and Achebe is to transform the African novel from a mere record of past events and anthropological details to a work of art. Ngugi as a committed writer is primarily concerned
with the well-being of Kenyans especially peasants and working class of his society. He presents in his novels his ideology for absolute freedom which inspires his characters to face many challenges and hardship in life in pursuit of their goals—personal and communal. Sometimes they become victims of their situations like Joshua and Kabonyi in The River Between and even Waiyaki is not successful with his inadequacies.

Inspired by Kenyatta's Facing Mount Kenya, Ngugi too has drawn much from contemporary life, Gikuyu legends and popular myths for his novels, like the Gikuyu, Mumbi legend, the story of great seer Mugo Wa Kibiro, and about arrival of the whites that have direct bearing on the plot and the main theme of the novel The River Between. In The River Between Ngugi presents a community maintaining its traditional solidarity of family, clan and tribe, which would favour the hero and make him derive strength from being close to his people. The striking image of The River Between is the river Honia dividing and uniting the peoples of the two ridges—Kameno, Makuyu—'lion' repeatedly used as symbol suggest ferocity of the people. It is not only the imagery of the ridges and the river that creates a sense of pattern and unity in The River Between but also sacred grove and the journey that Chege and Waiyaki make together, that is constantly remembered and alluded to throughout the novel.
The life of Njoroge in *Weep Not, Child* is symbolic of every Kenyan youth, during the political struggle for freedom. Ngugi seems to say that a rigidly conservative approach to schooling is not the solution to the problems of Kenya and that revolution against prevailing conditions alone helps in rebuilding the society. The same idea is reflected in *Devil on the Cross* also. In *A Grain of Wheat* he uses Christian concepts to express the dreams and aspirations of various characters. The central message of the novel— the duty of each man and each society to work out its own salvation—is profoundly Christian. The concept of regeneration is applicable to the individual and society as well. From the point of his Christian vision and Christian myths used, the novel tends to gain spiritual dimension. Ngugi is more concerned with moral and spiritual freedom without which he thinks political freedom has little meaning. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, socially conscious of the situation in Kenya, under the impact of the West, and the political turmoil, as a committed writer endeavours in his works for the emancipation and upliftment of the peasant and working communities in Kenya. He also rejects the possibility of reconstructing Africa on old colonial foundations and advocates for a new order of reality as to make a fresh beginning to create new systems to govern the 'new' egalitarian society.
Ngugi, though doesn't show any dogmatic conformity to any specific political doctrine, tries to reform his society through his own philosophy of life. During the early period of his literary career he has evinced and essentially moralist-humanist outlook on human affair hoping for a better future and believing in the good intentions of people in bringing about that future. In his intermediary phase he has become concerned with such ideas and events as Mau Mau, capitalism, socialism and nationalism. His later phase of life is marked by a corrosive disillusionment with the character of social forces in independent Africa, particularly Kenya and by a bitter revulsion against the emerging African elite and middle class. In his early period Ngugi responded to most issues of topical public interest. He advocates in his works total liberation of Kenya- free from foreign political authority, with economic independence aiming at improving the financial condition of even the uneducated and underprivileged masses and finally psychological independence. Ngugi has colonialism in his works with utmost virulence and persistence, as a challenge of independence which could only be achieved by African nationalism as a 'liberating force'.

Ngugi's radical instinct is evident in his exhortation to Africans to rescue and regenerate their indigenous culture which was severely damaged by the colonial onslaughts. He has further charged that while 'in Kenya the European settler robbed the people of their land,
the missionaries robbed them of their soul', because of their negative tendencies.

Ngugi, having settled his score with the colonialist and the missionary, turned his attention in an even more radical and partisan vein to his fellow Africans, concerned about welfare of the masses. Economic upliftment of the poor has become a matter of primary importance, which could be accomplished through the modernization of agriculture by the 'new' education. His concern about the role of violence and revolt in the struggle is for liberty and social justice and economic progress of peasants and workers. The multitudinous implications of the peasant revolt—for the individual, the home, the village, the tribe, and the nation—form the theme of Weep Not, Child, and several of his short stories, while issues concerning cultural heritage are central in The River Between.

Ngugi, even in his novels has chosen simple African English idiom for African expression and to give African flavour. His diction is at once spontaneous and exact and the language used is less ambiguous, more refined and subtle as in A Grain of Wheat. Petal of Blood is complex from the point of view of language and its varied style of expression. In Devil on the Cross more pithy and powerful sentences are used, whereas The River Between has long sentences.
Ngugi's novels have attracted the readers outside Kenya despite their being autobiographical, historical and ritualistic and not totally Western. Though there are certain uncertainties and imperfections in the use of the novel form, there is a good deal of merit in their own right, making Ngugi a powerful and pioneer African-Kenyan novelist to reckon with.