

**Curse and Blessing: A Postcolonial Study of Ngugi wa Thiong'o's
*The River Between***

Hemn Salahalddin Esamalddin¹, Kawan Othman Arif (PhD)²

1 Sulaimaniyah International Airport, 2 University of Sulaimani

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پوختەى لیکۆلینەوه

خۆشبهختى و نههامةتى:

لیکۆلینەوهیەکی پۆستکۆلۆنیالییە بۆ پۆمانی "پووباریک لە نیوان" ی نگوگی واپیانگۆ

ئەم پۆمانە لە پووانگەى یەکیک لە نووسەر ئەفریقەکانەوه وەرگیراوه که خودی خۆی لە ئەزموونی کۆلۆنیالیزمدا ژیاوه ، نووسەر تیايدا دوو پووی کۆلۆنیالیزم دەخاتە پوو یەکیکیان خۆشبهختییه ئەوهی تریان نههامةتى . ئەو پووهی که باس لە نههامةتى دهکات جەخت دەخاتە سەر ئەوهی که کۆلۆنیالیزم بەدبەختی و نههامةتى هیناوه بۆ گەلی ئەفریقا وەخۆی لە دلەراوکی ، دژواری و خەمۆکیدا دەبینیتەوه . وەلههەمان کاتدا پووهکهی تر باس لە خۆشبهختی دهکات که تیايدا جەخت لەوه دهکاتەوه که کۆلۆنیالیزم پووناکی هیناوه بۆ گەلی ئەفریقا که خۆی لە پەرورده و فیرکرن و خزمەتگوزاری گشتیدا دەبینیتەوه .

Abstract

The title of this paper is “Curse and Blessing: A Postcolonial Study of Ngugi wa Thiong’o’s *The River Between*”. Undeniably, colonialism is a political phase in history, known in the world as a dark stage particularly in the colonized countries. Nonetheless, colonialism can also have some bright aspects in addition to the calamities that it brought the colonized people. This paper studies how both dark and bright sides of colonialism are reflected in *The River Between*. The novel is written from the perspective of one of the colonized novelists which demonstrates and presents the two sides of colonialism. On the one hand, we see curses which have been inflicted by colonialism on the African people, which can be seen in the lives of characters such as ambivalence attitudes and feelings and identity crisis. On the other, there are blessings of colonialism such as education, public services and modern methods of administration that provide a more civilized frame to the colonized people.

Key words: curse, blessing, colonialism, culture, hybridity, identity crisis, ambivalence, mimicry.

I. Introduction

The title of this paper is “Curse and Blessing: A Postcolonial Study of Ngugi wa Thiong’o’s *The River Between*”. This paper studies how both dark and bright sides of colonialism are reflected in the novel. Undeniably, colonialism is a political phase in history, known in the world as a dark stage particularly in the colonized countries. Nonetheless, colonialism can also have some bright aspects in addition to the calamities that it brought to the colonized people.

The researcher applies the postcolonial approach as the theoretical frame of the study of colonialism, concentrating on some of the key concepts of postcolonialism including cultural hybridity, ambivalence, and mimicry.

In addition to this introduction, this paper covers three other sections. A critical overview of the novel is presented first, and then this is followed by the menace of naivety which focuses on the dark side and curses of colonialism, and the other section is the adoption of a new life that concentrates on the bright side and blessing of colonialism.

In conclusion, one may say that in spite of all the negative sides that have been brought by colonialism to the colonized countries, there are also some bright aspects which are reflected positively in the life of the colonized people.

II. A Critical Overview

The River Between is the first novel of the Kenyan novelist Ngugi wa Thiong’o which was published in 1965. It covers the period from the 1920s to the 1930s. The novel was originally titled *The Black Messiah*. It tells the story of the separation of two neighboring villages, Makuyu and Kameno, as a result of white British colonialism. It further portrays the struggle between the two different faiths; the Christian Makuyu and the traditionalist Kameno, with the focus on the contradictions and ambiguities in the characters' behavior. From a postcolonial perspective, the novel illustrates the colonizer's impacts upon the entire communities of the Gikuyu country, such as identity crisis, and the psychological damage of the individuals, colonizing their minds and eliminating some of their rituals, such as female circumcision, with the help of the missionaries.

The protagonist, Waiyaki, tries to create unity and reconciliation between the two villages through education. He attempts to be the Gikuyu's savior, inspired by the ancient prophecy from his father to him. The results of his efforts are complicated and go in vain, moving towards darkness and ambiguities.

The novel has received much critical attention which argues its literary magnificence. In *Postcolonial African Writers: A Bio-Bibliographical Critical Source Book*, John C. Hawley asserts that Ngugi implicitly uses the message of freedom, through the use of some biblical themes which is coupled with colonizing motives against the British colonizers (qtd. in Parekh 319). Both critics approach *The River Between* from the literary standpoint that Ngugi wrote it as an "allegorical opposition" (321) between two different faiths. However, after the imprisonment of his brother due to the latter's affiliation with the Mau Mau uprising, and the pain and torture that were inflicted on his mother, Ngugi's enthusiasm for Christianity and the Bible totally changed. These events profoundly influenced his novels as well as his personal life, including changing his name from James Ngugi to Ngugi without James (318).

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Fredric Jameson asserts that *The River Between* appears to be a positive instance of the third world texts. He categorizes the work as “national allegories” and its type of nationalism is that of an ethnic community instead of a nation-state (qut. in Amoko 36). Critics have observed the difficulty of Ngugi’s early novels *The River Between* and *Weep Not, Child* which obviously embrace “Englishness” and blur with “ambivalence, ambiguity, and slippage”, and they gain inspiration from aesthetic patterns from Joseph Conrad, D. H. Lawrence, and Thomas Hughes. These texts are “colonial mimics that critique even as they seem to imitate” (Amoko 34).

Edward Said argues that in *The River Between* Ngugi prompts life into Conrad’s river in *The Heart of Darkness* and rewrites the colonialist discourse by stimulating life at the beginning of the novel. Ngugi’s river is called Honia, which means cure, or restoration of life. This river is described as one that never dries and that it has a strong will to live and challenge droughts and weather changes (Ogude 127).

Ogude argues that the separatist tendency of the protagonist Waiyaki and his calls for unity are among the efforts “to legitimise anticolonial discourse in Ngugi’s narrative” (Ogude 72, 127). This is the reflection of Waiyaki’s strife for the unity and nationalist discourses which resembles Ngugi’s attitude as a Kenyan elite. Said elaborates that Ngugi strongly transfers the unsolved tension into the centre of the subsequent novels (Ogude 72). *The River Between* tells the story of the creation of the original ancestors of the Gikuyu tribe. Additionally, there is focus on eternal ownership of the land when Murungu tells Gikuyu and Mumbi that “This land I give to you, O man and woman. It is yours to rule and till, you and your posterity” (*TRB* 1-2)¹. Therefore, Ngugi’s novels are more concerned with the fictional examination of the results of people’s estrangement from their land and spiritual lives. *The River Between* is the examination of the alienation of the people (Ogude 89).

The River Between, as Gikandi asserts, causes a very profound anxiety about the “creation” of the Gikuyu tribe (59). The novel covers three time dimensions: the Gikuyu’s idealized past, the present time of colonization and the utopian future. All the three get together in the person of the protagonist Waiyaki particularly in his ambivalent identity, Gikuyu member and a messianic Christian. Furthermore, one may say that Waiyaki is an estranged, complex, ambivalent and hybrid character as he wants to perform “all these roles and identities at the same time” (60). As a result, these conditions lead Waiyaki to appear as a doubtful character living with ambiguity and contradictory states.

Ngugi, in his novel, describes the origin of Gikuyu community through various aspects such as rituals, myths, traditions, socio-religious dimensions, and attempts to raise the main cultural issues which have occupied Gikuyu people for a long time. It presents the life of the Gikuyu people in the middle of the Gikuyu land of Kenya in the 1920s.

III. The Menace of Naivety

This section focuses on the curses of colonialism, which are brought by the impact of colonial system upon the colonized people in the Gikuyu country. It mainly studies the clash among the natives themselves, as well as the struggle between the colonizers and colonized. It shows how the colonizers try to impose their culture, religion and ideologies on the colonized people through exploitation, oppression, and power, specifically to eliminate the circumcision as one of the ancient

¹ Hence forward, all citations from *The River Between* will be abbreviated as *TRB* and quoted from Ngugi, 1965.

rituals to the Gikuyu tribes. In addition, the chaos and turmoil circumstances cause the ambiguities and psychological damages of the individuals in the Gikuyu country.

In *The River Between*, almost all the characters are directly and indirectly influenced by the impact of colonialism, but particularly Waiyaki and Muthoni, as major characters, each in a specific way. The novel portrays how they suffer under the impact of colonialism, and how the situation obliges them to interact within the new hybridized culture with ambivalent attitudes.

Muthoni is one of the victims of her converted father and Christianity. Since her father converted to Christianity, instead of being kind and more tolerant to his family, he becomes tougher and more hardhearted. This is one of the main reasons that pushed her to rebel against her father and principles of Christianity as well. Most of the time the wife, Miriamu, advises her daughters to obey their father saying: " 'Obey your father.' She did not say it harshly or with bitterness. It was an expression of faith, of belief, of a way of life. 'Your father says this-' and she expected his children to do that, without fuss, without resentment." (TRB 84).

Moreover, Muthoni wants to mimic her friends, who were already circumcised. She tries to mimic her parents also who were already circumcised before they convert native paganism to Christianity. Mimicry as Homi K. Bhabha discusses is both "resemblance and menace" to the colonizer. Accordingly, the one who mimics will be a threat to the colonizers, especially in imitating their culture, because when, in this case, she mimics, she shows them the combination of their paganism and Christianity. Her mimicry also could be as a camouflage to deceive the others (86).

Jacques Lacan argues that: "The effect of mimicry is camouflage It is not a question of harmonizing with the background, but against a mottled background, of becoming mottled - exactly like the technique of camouflage practised in human warfare." (qtd in Bhabha 85)

What Muthoni wants is to deceive them through that process, because if they know she is going to make a reconciliation, they might kill her before performing her task, but justifying herself with the circumcision is to make use of it as a cover to her task. This will produce a sense of uncertainty in the Livingstone and her father. Eventually her death shows them how she became a threat to their culture because she inflamed people especially the elders to blame the colonizers. Furthermore, she inspires most of the people against them. "The death of Muthoni had clearly shown that nothing but evil would come out of any association with the new faith" (TRB 58).

In addition, she finds that the white man, Livingstone, while showing his opposition to circumcision, his own wives are circumcised. Both Joshua, who rejects this process, and his wife are already circumcised. Besides, all the hatred and conflict between Kamen and Makuyu are almost rooted and revolve around that point because it is totally refused in Christianity and even by Jesus. Nyambura tries to explain to her sister Muthoni that this process is considered wrong, even by Jesus, when saying: "And you know, the missionaries do not like the circumcision of girls. Father has been saying so. Besides, Jesus told us it was wrong and sinful" (TRB 25). Furthermore, she feels that this new faith allows the circumcised people to convert, but rejects those who want to leave or convert to another religion like Paganism. For that reason, Muthoni tells her sister that she needs more, because she feels that the white man's religion should guarantee justice and equity

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with all the people without discrimination, “the white man's God does not quite satisfy me” (*TRB* 26).

Muthoni, later, recognizes that real Christianity is far from her father and the white man’s claims. Such conflicting facts and the deception from her father and the white man’s Christianity make her even more skeptical. Furthermore, she observes all the chaos, ambiguities, turmoil, and above them the conflict between the two ridges, Makuyu and Kameno. As a result, she decides to rebel against her family and to be circumcised, as she believes that circumcision is the only tool to reconcile and unify both ridges, and to revive the Gikuyu country again as the omniscient narrative in the opening of the novel portrays the pre-colonial life of the Gikuyu country as one spirit in two bodies, and between them is a river called Honia, which goes through the valley of life.

Each one of the Gikuyu people is depicted as the resemblance of the Honia river which remained constantly as a symbol of stability of the Gikuyu ridges without any change. They were united and they shared all traditional rituals and ways of life. Honia was gathering all together, the people of both ridges, their cattle, wild animals trees, and birds. Their secrets were for themselves and kept internal. This is stated clearly in a descriptive paragraph as “To the stranger, they kept dumb, breathing none of the secrets of which they were the guardians. *Kagutui ka Mucii gatihakagwo Ageni*; the oil skin of the house is not for rubbing into the skin of strangers” (*TRB* 3). That was the life of Gikuyu before colonialism.

Muthoni’s task ends with her death. She leaves a message and talks to Waiyaki “tell Nyambura I see Jesus. And I am a woman, beautiful in the tribe” (*TRB* 53). Through this message, she reveals her request to the Gikuyu people, which is to reintegrate and combine the two ridges again. She wants to find her savior in the new mixed culture as Bhabha defines it, “The production of meaning requires that these two places be mobilized in the passage through a Third Space” (36). By 'The Third Space' Bhabha means the hybrid cultural space. This hybridity comes from ambivalent attitudes because she needs two opposite things. Her death is a turning point in the novel; she becomes a heroic symbol of bravery, unity, dignity, and independence of the Gikuyu country. She is occupied with two concerns, her circumcision and reconciliation.

Accordingly, colonialism brings chaos, turmoil, instability, and leads people to live with contradictions and ambiguities, and imposes new religion, culture, and language in the Gikuyu country. Muthoni is one of the tragic examples who is obliged to leave her world physically and embrace another world in Kameno, then to combine both different tendencies of paganism and Christianity through circumcision. Her aim is to end to the conflict among the people and save them from their disillusionment, in order to resist and fight colonialism

After Muthoni’s death many remarkable changes are seen. First, Siriana deprives those children who were already circumcised of school. Waiyaki is one of the victims in this issue, this is considered as a curse of colonialism when they prevent school from people justifying that they are circumcised, with the aim of urging other pagan children to renounce the circumcision. Moreover, “Livingstone would alienate even those who had taken to the new ways. Some would not entirely abandon their customs as now advocated by Joshua” (*TRB* 59). This issue encourages Kaboni to separate from Siriana as the result of colonialism, this 'divide and rule' policy, which is practiced by colonialism, causes more chaos and intolerance, and implants the seeds of hatred among the people of Gikuyu.

Waiyaki is the alter picture of Muthoni. The most important common ground between them is that both of them have the same aim, which is the unity between the two ridges. Waiyaki is one of the protagonists who is directly influenced by colonialism like Muthoni. Similar to Muthoni, he wants to create the culture of hybridization to mix his tribal world with Christianity so as to find a new mixed one in the third space as Muthoni did. Waiyaki's father, Chege, also opposed the missionaries but the naivety and foolishness of the people of Kameno obliges him to send his son to Siriana, a missionary school, to learn all the secrets and keep away from the blemishes. This is considered as an ambivalent attitude from his father. Waiyaki also begins to live with ambiguity and contradiction, because of this ambivalent and hybrid attitude.

Waiyaki's psychological condition is damaged to an extent that sometimes he wants to be alone aimlessly, he wants to express his internal conflict yet could not find a channel and he suffers from a suffocating darkness: "Guilt weighed on him. The darkness terrified him. He wanted to scream in horror of himself. He had failed to tell people to unite." (*TRB* 121). Sometimes he feels that his dead little sister is with him, he wants to find an outlet; a space to pour all his internal struggle and pain. He likes some Christian gathering and he has a strong impression about the place where Jesus suffered:

Waiyaki could not tell his own feelings concerning the open challenge. Maybe he was indifferent. After all, he himself loved some Christian teaching. The element of love and sacrifice agreed with his own temperament. The suffering of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane and His agony on the tree had always moved him. But he did not want to betray the tribe (*TRB* 100).

In this respect, Bulhan explains Fanon's point of view about the psychological damages of the individual at the presence of a colonial power and violence. He considers "neurosis and all psychopathology as expressions of a given culture. Every neurosis, every abnormal manifestation, every affective erethism ... is the product of the cultural situation" (73). He believes that culture is the crucial medium that will affect an individual, especially when it is contaminated with the violence and oppression of colonialism. He also asserts that the consequences will inflict the individual with psychopathology, as happens to Waiyaki. This ambivalence creates in him a kind of duality in attitude. Muthoni is also contaminated with that culture but she escaped, as it was difficult for her to bear it. This is also another curse of colonialism toward Gikuyu people.

Since all the land in the ridges and the hills are owned by the colonizers, the colonial conquest is already in place. Almost the entire country of the Gikuyu becomes under the power of colonizers. Chege told his son that "the arm of the white man was long. The conquest of the hills was well under way. Some people were already working on the alienated lands to get money for paying taxes" (*TRB* 62). They begin to take taxes from people, and some of the people are working on the estranged lands.

Furthermore, in a heated argument, the perspective of the colonized can be clearly noticed particularly in considering the guest as an invader when Kinuthia states "Take Siriana Mission for example, the men of God came peacefully. They were given a place. Now see what has happened. They have invited their brothers to come and take all the land. Our country is invaded. This Government Post behind Makuyu is a plague in our midst" (*TRB* 64).

This is the invasion and curse of colonialism towards the Gikuyu lands. Moreover, Ngugi, in *Decolonizing the Mind*, asserts that the most serious problem about the colonizers is the control of mind (16), as they did for Joshua, it is true that he converted like Kaboni but they brainwashed him, as he always says both at home and in the church “[I feel] a new creature” (TRB 30).

IV. Adoption of a New Culture

This section demonstrates the positive sides and blessings of colonialism. Undeniably, colonialism is a political phase of the imperial countries and a historical stage of marginalizing the colonized countries. This happened in parallelism with the rise of Western and civilized nations for occupying and transferring the good economical roots and foundations of these countries to the western world. However, despite the curses of colonialism, one may assume that it has had some blessings for the colonized countries in the third world like Africa in terms of education, social interaction, culture, healthcare, environment, public service, etc.

Siriana Mission Centre is the nearest centre to Gikuyu country. It consists of a big place with a Church, hospital and a prospering school which provides education and enlightenment to boys and girls throughout the nation. Livingstone, as a ahead of the centre, begins to spread the “good news” through a number of educated mission boys because he actually believes in “gradual methods of eradicating the custom” (TRB 55). He wants to keep away from repeating the fault of the former missionaries who caused a civil struggle and tribal conflict. Instead, he wants to teach them and deepen their relationship by hybridization of the new culture with the native one.

Livingstone wants to awake the Gikuyu people from their sleep and numbness, and tries to save them from the naivety and “blind customs” (TRB 55) such as the belief that when children became ill, they must have been bewitched. He wants them to convert from paganism to Christianity, and to develop their minds. Since they are pagans, “[Their] people worshipped Murungu, Mwenenyaga, Ngai. The unerring white man had called the Gikuyu god the prince of darkness” (TRB 29).

The white man left his family for about twenty five years in order to enlighten the Gikuyu country, and for that purpose he learnt even the Gikuyu language and attends many ceremonies of the country. He wants to implant his Christian culture in the traditional Gikuyu culture. In this respect, Waiyaki shows agreement for eliminating the unnecessary custom. Especially when the white man Livingstone himself confesses that the education and hospital have progressed in the Gikuyu land. Moreover, Amoko also asserts that “Livingstone's civilizing mission is frustrated by the apparent menace of colonial mimicry, a menace embodied in ambiguous fashion in Waiyaki” (42). Accordingly, Bhabha argues that the ambivalence from the colonial power will change from mimicry to menace, saying that “The ambivalence of colonial authority repeatedly turns from mimicry - a difference that is almost nothing but not quite - to menace - a difference that is almost total but not quite” (91).

In *The River Between*, Ngugi shows the effect of the influence of colonialism on the conservative people like Chegein Gikuyu country. In spite of his view on colonialism, he sends his son to be educated at Siriana Missionary Centre. Waiyaki takes his father's discourse and the ancient prophecy when his father says: “Go to the Mission place. Learn all the wisdom and all the secrets of the white man. But do not follow his vices. Be true to your people and the ancient rites” (TRB 20).

This decision of Chege seems to suggest that he partially believes in “cultural hybridity”; for him, it is positive and he will be happy to see his son educated on condition that education should

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not drive him to abandon his customs. Michel Foucault explains that power is “productive” and should not be defined entirely in negative terms (Taylor, 3). Chege believes that the white man has a power and magic, as Joshua asserts from the beginning that “In Siriana he found a sanctuary and the white man's power and magic” (TRB 29). One may assume that Chege assures that the white man has a positive side.

The main reason that Chege wants to achieve the white man’s power and knowledge is to educate and civilize people and to rescue them from ignorance. Therefore, Chege confirms that colonialism has a positive side. Moreover, Chege reiterates what has been earlier stated by Mugowa Kabirio as a great seer of Kameno ridge, saying: “you could not cut the butterflies with a panga. You could not spear them until you learnt and knew their ways and movement” (TRB 20). The narrator shows that Chege justifies his task by saying:

In this Chege did not see it as a contradiction that he, the embodiment of the true Gikuyu, should have sent his son to the very missionary centre whose existence he had always opposed. But what did it matter? He had warned the people. They had refused to take up arms. It might even be too late now to take up arms. (TRB 38)

As a cause and effect, as long as Chege is disappointed by his people, he tries to justify his position, and he finds the best choice is Siriana mission. Also, it is obvious that resistance does not mean complete refusal, and Chege believes that the ancient prophecy cannot be affected without being wise in the issues of the white man.

Chege has doubt about his son; he fears the consequences that this act will revert with negative results and his son will come back home corrupted by the new faith. Hence, whenever Waiyaki returns, his father is watching his progress and adherence to his people because Chege can easily “trust a man than a *kihii* an uncircumcised boy” (TRB 39).

After Waiyaki’s sacred journey with his father, he is educated at Siriana missionary centre, in response to his father’s request, to fulfill the ancient prophecy. He believes that by learning the secrets and knowledge of the white man, he can equip the Gikuyu people for fighting and resisting the white colonizers. This culture hybridization from Waiyaki assists him to build a third space to mix the two cultures, the traditional Kameno and Christian Makuyu, for exchanging values, culture, language, religion, etc. Hybridity, as Bhabha explains, grows a stage to stop the old tradition and culture and generate a new one or the third space. Hence, “hybridity is the sign of productivity of colonial powers” (60). He further explains that hybridity always imposes a new ideology. The friction between the colonizers and the native will lead to create a third space “in-between, where the shadow of the other falls upon the self” (60). This can be considered as a blessing of colonialism because it helps Waiyaki to import the Siriana light into Gikuyu country.

Education has a great positive role in changing Waiyaki’s mind toward the colonizers, and changing his personality from the traditional uneducated person to the hybrid educated one. His focuses on the positive elements in their culture persuades him that he can imitate some of the white man’s experience practically. Therefore, this kind of thought leads Waiyaki to mediate between the two rivals Kameno and Makuyu, and by this, he mimics the white man.

As Waiyaki contacts Siriana, he holds all the tribal customs with no doubt, while after his connection to the missionary school, many questions are inspired in his mind about issues such as the prophecy, towards his father, the circumcision, and the sacred grove. Gikandi states that “while education has not softened Waiyaki, it has changed him, that his relation with “tribal” rituals and secrets is marked by distance” (57-58). So his education separates him from his community and creates a space between Waiyaki and his tribal issues: "Waiyaki’s absence from the hills had kept him out of touch with those things that most mattered to the tribe” (*TRB* 9). In addition, the sacred hill, that he trips to with his father, becomes less valuable for him as a result of the impact of the missionaries education on him: “And the sacred grove seemed to be no more than ordinary bush clustering around the fig tree” (*TRB* 140). This indicates that the power of Waiyaki’s education is stronger than his tribal rites.

The idea of school comes into Waiyaki’s mind after breaking away with Siriana. He later on establishes his own school, Mariosioni, which becomes famous in the country. Waiyaki imitates and builds a small example like the colonial’s school in Siriana. Since the colonized has been under the impact of the white colonizers, they have attempted to mimic their approach.

Schools grew up like mushrooms. Often a school was nothing more than a shed hurriedly thatched with grass. And there they stood, symbols of people's thirst for the white man's secret magic and power. Few wanted to live the white man's way, but all wanted this thing, this magic (*TRB* 68).

Waiyaki struggles to be an “engine for social change”; he is the colonial mimic man who mediates between the two competing ridges in Gikuyu country. He travels from hill to hill, ridge to ridge to the sleeping lions, he finds an eagerly people for education. The ridges are gradually beginning to awake from their sleep, “he increasingly saw himself as the one who would lead the tribe to the light. Education was the light of the country. That was what the people wanted. Education. Schools. Education” (*TRB* 101). Waiyaki finds himself as a savior who wants to educate and civilize all the people because he feels that education is the only means to help them and give them enough power to defend their lands. The parents are very happy for the positive results of education:

They went round the school admiring the well-mudded building. Here and there on the compound were little Bower gardens whose general immaculate look was the talk of all. The parents saw this as the fruits of their labour, their sweat and patience. Their children could speak a foreign language, could actually read and write. And this had been done in spite of Siriana's stem action in refusing to admit the children of those who would not abandon the ancient rites. (*TRB* 92)

The overall imagery in the above quotation indicates how impressive this process of education is. There is new architectural structure that astonishes the closed community. Children communicate in English. There is certainly greater hope for the future as the children are equipped with more effective tools to challenge the difficulties of life.

The colonizers encourage the colonized to convert into Christianity to worship only one God instead of worshipping multi gods. This is one of the virtues of colonialism to uncivilized backward communities in Africa and this can create an entity and give them the systematic frameworks in their lives by helping them find more recognized individual and cultural identities as well.

The social and economic progress in the country takes on a new form brought by colonialism. New organizational methods are already in practice for the regulation of individual as well as national income. Joshua, referring to paying taxes, says that “people in these regions would begin paying taxes to a government in Nairobi” (*TRB* 31). This comes after the government post is being built.

The colonized people do not know what the tax is. According to Patrick Manning, to know the “costs and benefits” of colonialism to Africans during the colonial periods, they need to go through the analysis of some elements such as European investment, government expenditure, taxes, money, education, law and order. He gives more detail saying that: “it was only worth the cost to Africans if the benefits they received from expenditure of tax revenues exceeded to costs of paying taxes” (Manning 15). Manning explains that the tax will be beneficial to the African people.

In addition, he says that the European investment, such as building the railroads, is considered as the blessing of colonialism to African people. Ngugi indicates in the beginning of the novel “Nairobi was already flourishing, and the railway was moving across the country in the land beyond where not many from the ridges had been” (*TRB* 7). Part of the government expenditure goes to social services like public health as seen in the hospital in Siriana missionary centre.

David Livingston claims that: “Christianity, Commerce and Civilization must go hand in hand” (qtd. in Ashcroft, et al, 115). Livingston's aim according to Ashcroft was to establish a legal frame for trade in order to end slavery and exploitation. Such an objective can be achieved through the building of roads and railways and the establishing of steamship routes (115). This is a good example of imperialism that needs to present a positive image to imperial power, and he does not want to be mixed with other kinds of imperialisms that hide evil intentions under the name of humanitarian aids or missionaries.

Conclusion

In conclusion, *The River Between* is a novel written from the perspective of one of the colonized novelists Ngugi wa Thiong'o, who asserts two sides of colonialism, one of them is curse and the other is blessing. Curses of colonialism such as, ambivalence and identity crises are reflected in the lives of the characters. Waiyaki the protagonist realizes that his identity is being damaged due to his ambivalent attitudes and desires, for he needs both cultures, Christianity and the traditional Gikuyu. He is contaminated by the new faith and culture. Moreover, Muthoni attempts to unify both ridges Makuyu and Kamenno, but she becomes a victim of her ambivalent attitudes.

The blessing of colonialism is reflected in education, methods of administration, and public services. When Waiyaki is sent to the Siriana Missionary School to educate himself, he begins to make a sort of hybridization between traditional culture of Gikuyu and Christianity. A hybrid culture is produced. The new hybrid culture inspired him to think about an educational project in the Gikuyu land. This can be considered as a blessing of colonialism. Moreover, when Siriana Mission School is prevented from Waiyaki and the Gikuyu children because of circumcision as the traditional culture, then he starts to mimic the white men and begins to establish schools in the Gikuyu land. Therefore, it can be assumed that colonialism had a positive role in this respect, and brought light to the Africans.

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