

**TRACING IDENTITY TO THE LAND: A CASE-STUDY OF NGUGI WA
THIONG'O'S *WEEP NOT, CHILD AND THE RIVER BETWEEN***

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ABSTRACT

Tracing Identity to the Land: A case-Study of Ngugi wa Thiong'o's Weep Not, Child and The River Between is a work which highlights the identity issue based upon the land question. The analysis throws lights on the different social groups involved in the management of the land in the selected novels. It also explores the way that each person or group of people relate themselves to the land, and their subsequent relationships, either as natives or foreigners, insiders or outsiders. The investigations in the selected novels rely on R. Z. De Lue and J. Elkins' landscape theory which explores specifically the formation of social groups and the symbolic landscape. The study shows that land appears as people's social and cultural identity. Indeed, the people are seen either as native owners, native robbers or foreign settlers.

Key-words: foreigners; identity; insiders; natives; outsiders; social groups.

RESUMÉ

Tracing Identity to the Land: A case-Study of Ngugi wa Thiong'o's Weep Not, Child and The River Between est un travail qui met la lumière sur la question de l'identité basée sur le foncier. L'analyse met en exergue les différents groupes sociaux impliqués dans la gestion de la terre dans les romans sélectionnés. Elle exploite également la manière dont chaque personne ou groupe de personnes se rapportent à la terre, et leurs relations qui en découlent, en tant que natifs ou étrangers, initiés ou exclus. Les recherches dans les romans sélectionnés s'appuient sur la théorie du paysage de R. Z. De Lue et J. Elkins, qui explore spécifiquement la formation des groupes sociaux et le paysage symbolique. L'étude montre que la terre apparaît comme l'identité sociale et culturelle de l'homme. En effet, les personnages des œuvres étudiées sont considérés soit comme des propriétaires autochtones, des autochtones voleurs ou des colons étrangers.

Mots-clés: étrangers; identité; initiés; natifs; exclus; groupes sociaux.

INTRODUCTION

This work leans on N. Waita (2013, p. 46) who posits that “the question of Identity and the African personality runs deep into African history. It can be viewed against the backdrop of decade’s slavery, colonialism, neo-colonialism and now globalization.” It also relies on D. Killam and A. L. Kerfoot (2008, p. 23) who argue that African cultural identity has been seriously degraded by a hundred years of slavery and colonialism. It is collaterally observed that from the 20th century different protest movements in favour of the African and black identity flourished including negritude¹, black consciousness² and pan africanism³ involving several writers who range from L. S. Senghor, C. Achebe, W. Soyinka.

In East Africa, Ngugi wa Thiong’o is specifically concerned with the denunciation of the rigid British colonial system which deprived the Gikuyu of their ancestral lands. In doing so, in *Weep Not, Child* (1964) and *The River Between* (1965) selected for this work, the author puts a particular emphasis upon landownership issues which opposes the Gikuyu natives to the white settlers. Then, basing on the premise that “existence is unthinkable apart from some location in space” (Dillistone, 2008, p. 8), I am preoccupied to investigate on the connections that the author establishes between land and identity in these novels. This implies inquiries on the different social groups interacting in the novels, their respective relationship to the land, and the link between landownership struggles and identity crises. Drawing on the assumption that land is identity, this work is shaped to attract the readers’ attention on the socio-cultural bearings of the land disputes. Admitting that both landownership disputes and identity issues involve the way individuals or group of individuals see themselves as rightful owners and the way they see others as robbers, I have resorted to the landscape theory which is defined as “a way of seeing” (DeLue and Elkins, 2008, p. 20) and consists of “social formation” and “symbolic landscape” (*Ibid.*, p. 21).

Founding upon M. Wainana (2012, p. 92) who states that “landscape includes both scenery and environment,” I have successively scrutinized the classification of the characters into social groups, the relationships between the social groups and land, and at last the link

¹ Promotion and defense of the Black and African identity pioneered by A. Césaire, Gontran Damas and L. S. Senghor with the birth of Negritude in the 19s.

² In American and South African contexts, the yearning of being or being recognized as one-self in the 1960s (D. Killam and A. L. Kerfoot, 2008, p. 10; 64).

³ It aimed at promoting unity and solidarity of the Africans. Created in the 20th century, it aimed at fighting “to assert the identity of both the Negro and the Africans” (*Idem*, 27)

between landownership struggles and identity crises. The next section will thus deal with the formation of the different social groups.

1. SOCIAL GROUPS INTERACTING IN THE SELECTED NOVELS

This section focuses on the analysis of the different social groups in the novels under study. In doing so, I will resort to “social formation” which implies race, class, and gender as tools for examining differentiation and the formulation of identity (DeLue and Elkins, 2008, p. 193). Drawing on that insight, three social groups have been formed: the traditional Gikuyu, the minority white settlers and the modern Gikuyu people. The following subsection thus deals with the characteristics of the traditional Gikuyu.

1.1. Traditional Gikuyu People

The traditional Gikuyu people are seen as members of the same social group because they share the same relationship with the land on top their linguistic, social and geographical belonging. A close observation of the link between characters and place in the novels under study shows that the Gikuyu originate from the rich Kenyan highlands subject to disputes. This idea is corroborated by the use of names such as Kenya, Nairobi, Mukuruwe wa Gathanga, Jomo Kenyatta, which are related to the real Gikuyu tribe. Moreover, the appraisal of their social, professional and cultural specificities will help determine specific characteristics of the group.

On the one hand, let us focus on the social traits specific to the traditional Gikuyu. What is forcefully seen is that they generally live in villages, huts, with traditional institution such as the Kiama (which is the leading committee of village ancients), *Mucii* (families). Their strength resides in unity almost perceptible in both novels through the pathways used as interconnections between Kameno and Makuyu in *The River Between*, and between Mahua and Kipanga in *Weep Not, Child*. Beyond this spirit of unity, the Gikuyu, who believe that “collective activities make heavy tasks easier” (Kenyatta, 1935, p. 117), encourage brotherhood facing threat., Kiarie therefore says to his audience, “we black people are brothers” (Ngugi, 1964, p. 51). Various actions corroborate this social quality including the collective contribution to Njoroge’s education, Mugo wa Kibiro’s sacrificial awareness tour on imminent entry of the settler into the tribe, common circumcision ceremonies, and joint contribution to Waiyaki’s school (building) project. Founding on Njoroge and Mwhiki’s talk, it appears that these people so generous that they welcomed the settlers on their lands.

On the other hand, regarding their cultural beliefs and practices, the traditional Gikuyu believe in the existence of God. They designate him as Murungu or Ngai. He is believed to have given the land that they owned to their ancestors Gikuyu and Mumbi and their descendants. In addition, their health systems basically involves the knowledge of nature, whereas the education basically relied on storytelling, circumcision and initiation in the bush. In addition, they develop other cultural rites such as libation as an invitation to the ancestors, and offering sacrifices to *Murungu* to ask for rains and good harvests. That is the reason why Ngunjiri thinks that the big drought was due to the fact that “the children of Mumbi forgot to burn a sacrifice to Murungu. So he did not shed His blessed tears that make our crops grow” (Ngugi, 1964, p. 25). This statement also reveals that the Gikuyu are farmers. In addition, they have a sound consideration for their ancestral lands that are regarded as their surest home. But, due to colonization, they had to share their space with the British settlers whose lifestyle is quite different from theirs.

1.2. Minority White Settlers

The White settlers evoked in these novels are generally British demobilized soldiers who were appointed in East African Highlands (Milley and Thoraval, 1980, p. 163). There is a change in the settlers’ status depending on the space and time; for instance the shift from the European space to the Gikuyu area that impules the change from the status of native to that of foreigner. I owe that assertion to DeLue and Elkins (p. 241) who stipulate that the narrative interpretation in landscape study must include the “way we were” and the “moments of ‘becoming’, otherwise the past and the present.” Kamau therefore argues that “black people have their land in the country of Black people. White men have their land in their own country. It is simple. (...) it wa[is] God’s plan” (Ngugi, 1964, p. 43). The whites’ settlement in Kenya is thus inscribed in the logic of their experience of what DeLue and Elkins term as “the New World” (DeLue and Elkins, 2008, p. 26), though we are not in the context America.

Consequently, the author mentions the linguistic and geographical alienship of the settlers quite observable through Kameno people are convinced that the colonizers could access their territory inasmuch as they could not speak the language nor did they know the ways of the ridges. This also means the social and customary unsuitability between the settlers and the host milieu which could prevent the settler from integrating the traditional society.

Moreover, the author shows in these novels that the European is characterized by selfishness and capitalism in *Weep Not, Child* through Howlands’ family which consists of three individuals: Mr Howlands, Suzannah and Stephen. The Howlands’ selfishness is

demonstrated by the mistreatment of their workers and servants almost observed in Suzannah who always beats her servants while her Husband disregards his workers. On top of that, the author points to Mr Howlands' capitalistic strain by saying that "his one pleasure was in contemplating and planning the land to which he has now given all his life. Suzannah was left alone" (Ngugi, 1964, p. 31). For him, the shamba is better than his wife since it provides him with economic power and a upper social standard. Their major institutions include the mission-run school, the church, the colonial administration and the army. It is noticed that the introduction of the European settlers into the Gikuyu tribe has contributed to the birth a third social group whose detailed characteristics are found in the following subsection.

1.3. Modern Gikuyu People

The modern Gikuyu referred to in this subsection are the fringe of the Gikuyu people disturbed by the introduction of the European culture into Kenya. While borrowing Martin Heidegger's insight elaborated by T. Mitchell, R. Z. DeLue and J. Elkins (2008, pp. 24-25) posit that "modern societies characteristically represent the world to themselves as a picture and related this to the West's 'picturing' of other societies and their landscapes." In fact, though being originated from the Gikuyu tribe, these people who have adopted the Western ideology are characterized by the transition to capitalism; painted as materialists, selfish and agents of the European domination.

The modern Gikuyu such as Jacobo and Nganga are concerned with the urging search for wealth, by privileging self-interest and the overexploitation of land and their people. For example, in a fraternal discussion, Kamau tells his brother Njoroge that:

Blackness is not all that makes a man /.../ there are some people, be they black or white, who don't want others to rise above them. They want to be the source of all acknowledgement and share it piecemeal to others less endowed. That is what's wrong with all these carpenters and men who have knowledge. It is the same with those rich people. A rich man does not want others to get rich as he is because he wants to be the only man with wealth (Ngugi, 1964, p. 21).

The modern Gikuyu natives, who are right-hand men of the settlers, are rather used to scorning, overexploiting and dispossessing their brothers in favour of their white partners. The other youngsters who are victims of dispossession rely on the city to look for decent living conditions. If these movements toward the city are apparently seen as motivated by materialism, they eventually are the responses to the capitalistic behaviours of the rich Gikuyu people. The author therefore testifies that "rich Africans could also practice colour-bar on the poorer

Africans” (Ngugi, 1964, p. 64). For these modern Africans, the tribal, territorial, and national ties are regardless; only counts their materialistic interests.

Those renegades live in nuclear families almost like the Europeans. They have rejected their traditional ways to embrace the western behaviours and beliefs based on Christianity materialism. As a matter of fact, Jacobo in *Weep Not, Child* charges the old generation of being not educated since he told his daughter Mwhaki, “if people had had education, the white man would not have taken all the land” (*Idem*, p. 37). This means that he despises the traditional education. As for Joshua, he prevents his girls from circumcision in the ways of the tribe because he was a Christian. Moreover, these modern and capitalistic people --- intellectuals, businessmen, colonial policemen, home guards and churchmen --- are involved in the degradation of their tribe’s identity. They are manipulated by their white masters to denounce, imprison and torture the protesting Gikuyu fellows. That is the reason why the mau mau fighters call them betrayers, cowards or simply “Black white settlers” (*Idem*, p. 72). In fact, they are guilty of having betrayed not only the liberation struggle, but also their community, the oath of unity and loyalty to the land.

In short, the different social groups, which make up the Cosmopolite Kenyan society depicted by the author, have been shaped by the realities of the precolonial African society based upon traditionalism, and the influence of the western culture. Building on the observation that these social groups live in the same Gikuyu territory, it convenes to develop the way each of them is related to the land in the following section.

2. RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PEOPLE AND THE LAND

In this section my point is to appraise the relationship between people and the land basing on the concept of “symbolic landscape” which involves the notions of *landshape*⁴ used for the relative meanings of land (R. Z. DeLue and J. Elkins, 2008, pp. 162-163) and *landship*⁵ for the common behaviour of people toward the land (*Idem*, p. 166). The following paragraphs thus explore the Gikuyu peasants’ view of the land.

⁴ “the *-scape* in landscape derives from the Old English *skipe* and is related to the word *shape*,” used in the context of shaping, as in “the people shaped the land.” “‘Shape’ also has normative and qualitative associations, so that people do not just shape the land physically; they also ‘put the land into good or bad shape.’”

⁵ “*landship*” is a moral and legal obligation for people of a given region to behave accordingly.” *Landship* permits to study the “insider’s apprehension of the land,” that is the way the unalienated people see nature and the sense they give to their space (DeLue & Elkins, 2008, p. 17).

2.1. Traditional Gikuyu's View of the Land: Analysis of the Insider's Perception

The Gikuyu, who are presented by the author as insiders, have a special understanding of the land basing on the concepts of *landshape* and *landship* (see footnotes 4 and 5). E. Hirsch and M. O'Hanlon, DeLue and Elkins (2008, pp. 327-328) therefore stipulate that "the meaning imputed by local people to their cultural and physical surroundings (i.e. how a particular landscape 'looks' to its inhabitants)."

In the first place, I will deal with the concept of *landshape* to scrutinize the way the traditional Gikuyu seen as insiders shape their land as a pantheon: either as a deity or as a temple. I have subsequently noticed that the land is perceived by the traditional natives such as Nguni and Chege (even Kameno people) as the cement of the cultural and religious beliefs and practices. It is seen by these people as God provider, protector and healer. This idea is corroborated in *Weep Not, Child* through this statement, "land [is] everything" (Ngugi, 1964, p. 39). This shows that land is not only a source of survival, but the root of power. In the same stance, *The River Between* demonstrates that certain land features such as Honia River and Kameno forest are seen by the Gikuyu as source of relief and life.

Thus, while the Gikuyu word Honia means "cure or bring-back-to-life," the river is also presented as "the soul of Kameno and Makuyu" (Ngugi, 1965, p. 1). Otherwise, I think that N. W. Thiong'o also wants to give credit to J. Kenyatta (1938, p. 21) who states that land is "the 'mother' of the tribe" because it nourishes people physically during their existence and spiritually their souls after death. On top of that, Kameno forest presented as a place of initiation, Kerinyaga (mountain) on which Murungu stood to address Gikuyu and Mumbi, Mukuruwe wa Githanga and the fig tree, and even the whole ancestral land are perceived by the local peasants as meeting place for man and his creator. These ever sacred features convey the land as a temple. Though seen as God or temple, land shaped as pantheon, deserves particular attitudes of the Gikuyu toward it.

In the second place, I will rely on the concept of *landship* to scrutinize the way the traditional Gikuyu behave vis-à-vis their land regarded as pantheon. One of the observations that rise from the relationship between the Gikuyu and the land is that their loyalty to the ancestral land symbolizes their faithfulness and submission to the supernatural power. The investigations also show that the Gikuyu so consider the land that they designate it through the term "Githaaka"⁶

⁶ "Githaaka" is the term for land regarded in the tribe as the most important of God's provisions (Wainana, 2012, p. 94)

instead of calling its European name (i.e. land). Connected with the past and God land is designated by the Gikuyu word “Githaaka” in respect of their ancestors and as a way of preserving its authentic values.

It has also been noticed that the Gikuyu take an oath which consists in swearing by the earth because they believe that “communion with the ancestral spirits is perpetuated through contact with the soil in which the ancestors of the tribe lie buried” (J. Kenyatta, 1938, p. 21). In the selected novels for instance the Gikuyu fulfill rituals or practices such as libation, circumcision, initiation in the bush and sacrifices under the fig tree as invitation or honour to the ancestors. They subsequently believe that the land is bestowed by nature, by birthright. To cut it short, I must put forth that the Gikuyu natives have a sacred tie with their land, particularly strengthened by its cultural values and its resources. However, the white people who settled in Kenya perceive differently the relationship between man and the land as developed in the next subsection.

2.2. Land seen from the outlook of White people

The white settlers are seen as outsiders because their link to the land has no emotional aspect, it is just motivated by their economic and political ambitions in the detriment of the natives. My first preoccupation here is to show how the settlers seen the Gikuyu land before dealing properly with their relationship to it. DeLue and Elkins (p. 35) quote Kenneth Olwig who shows landscape as a way of seeing and a symbolic construction inherent to a specific social group. It is the way the settler shaped himself a particular image of the land. In *Weep Not, Child* for instance, Mr Howlands, who is a settler, sees “the farm w[as] the woman whom he had wooed and conquered” (Ngugi, 1964, p. 41). Compared thus to the woman (Marx, 1895, p. 23), land thus appears to the settler as a source of pleasure and prosperity. What we observe here is that the foreigner does not adhere to the natives’ view of the land, they follow their landscape perspective of the same land. This discordance between the insiders’ view and the outsiders’ perspective of the same object appears as “the hybridization of place as a technique of empire” (DeLue and Elkins, 2008, p. 182). Otherwise, the womanization of the land is the outburst of the capitalistic idea about land and landownership. This landscape perspective will then determine the settlers’ way of accessing the land.

As a consequence, the settlers approach landownership differently. Indeed, they see the land must be occupied, not by birthright, but conquered and confiscated. This process of landownership, which arises from thus involves social, financial, physical and political efforts

regardless of the customary rules. R. Z. DeLue and J. Elkins (2008, pp. 22-23) therefore posit that “land has been socially appropriated, primarily for use values under feudalism and for exchange values under capitalism.” That is why Ngugi shows that the settlers’ aim is to use the land to influence the Gikuyu’s social organization by transforming their relationship to the land into the production of raw materials. That is why Njeri therefore complains about the system by saying that “the white man makes a law or a rule. Through that rule or law or what you may call it, he takes away the land and many other things, all without people agreeing first as in the old days of the tribe” (Ngugi, 1964, p. 75). In fact, according to the author the settler perceived Africa as “a big trace of wild country to conquer” (*Idem*, p. 30). This quest for selfish interest also consisted of the construction of churches, schools and the creation of industrial plantations that helped the settlers to impose their supremacy to the natives. Furthermore, it appears useful to take a look at the perception of the land by the modern Gikuyu whose lives are deeply influenced by European culture.

2.3. Land from the vantage point of modern Gikuyu

The relation between modern and their ancestral land is fundamentally influenced by capitalism born of colonization. This idea owes its accuracy to DeLue and Elkins (2008, p. 24) who posit that “‘being modern’ altered relations with the land in more complex ways than merely through changing forms of ownership.” From this statement I must infer that the basic standards that garnered landownership in the Gikuyu tribe during the precolonial times have been biased by the introduction of capitalism in the times of colonization. As a matter of fact, the relationship between the modern Gikuyu and the local land is affected at the same time by their belonging to the Gikuyu tribe and their inclination for capitalism. That is the reason why they are perceived as outsiders.

If in the Gikuyu tribe, according to the narrator, land is a wealth so that he argues that “any man who had land was considered rich” (Ngugi, 1964, p. 19), the modern Gikuyu seem to have reduced this richness to material growth. They therefore see the ancestral lands as merchandise which must be handed over to any person with financial capacities such as Jacobo and Nganga. In this context of modernity, the person who has land is regarded as a rich man because he can trade it for an amount of money. Otherwise, people buy land only for the creation of industrial plantations which contribute to their financial potency. For example, in *Weep Not, Child*, the author shows that Jacobo who bought Chahira’s land, has turned so wealthy because he has “for many years been the only African allowed to grow pyrethrum” (Ngugi, 1964, p. 40).

Conversely, the rich Gikuyu like Jacobo could afford pieces of land with the poor peasants like Kiahira who died lonely a landless person. According to Jan Kenneth Birkste's (p. 193) landscape and garden history and theory, "the challenge is therefore to define the beholder's changeable location and variable perceptual structures." I have thus observed that the meaning of the land changes depending on the Gikuyu's standpoint in this transitive era between tradition and modernity. In this transitive period, the traditional meaning and ownership of the land are traded for the capitalistic interests. On the one hand, Gikuyu landowners sell their properties; on the other hand, the wealthy Gikuyu have to purchase the land.

To sum this section up, I must recall that the perception of the land depends exclusively on the geographical and ideological position of individuals. So, I noticed that as the characters take the position of internal or external member or even of stranger, the meaning of the earth varies as well as the processes of accession. It seems that these different perceptions of the land, in other terms the way the different social group access the land have typical links with identity.

3. LANDOWNERSHIP AND IDENTITY CRISES

This section undertakes to demonstrate the way identity crises may occur between distinctive social groups through landownership conflicts. The landownership efforts depicted by Ngugi in the novels under study can be seen therefore as means of shaping identity.

3.1. Appropriation of Land as Means of Constructing Identity

Basing on the above details on the different perceptions of the land by the respective social groups, owning a land is a means of shaping identity. Wainana (2012, p. 94) therefore posits that "it is the soil that feeds the child through a lifetime; and again after death it is the soil that nurses the spirits of the dead for eternity. Thus the earth is the most sacred thing above all that dwell in or on it." It appears that land plays essential roles in people's lives, and more, it extremely participates to people's existence, and shapes their identities.

Identity can be seen in a general view as custom which is "an expression of what people do as individuals or group" (DeLue and Elkins, 2008, 165). This custom termed as landship refers to the "regional identity" which is related to a specific area or as an individual's habits when it conveys people's physical, moral or professional identities. For example, depending on the Gikuyu's belonging to the land and their specific relations with it, they can be seen as landowners or squatters, devout farmers or lazy tramps, loyal natives or betrayers, and even insider or outsiders. As far as the whites are concerned, they settled on the land "to control a

people's values and ultimately their outlook, their image and definition of self" (Adeoti, 2016, p. 6) so as to shape a new identity. Even though they have sensitively made home in Kenya, they are actually seen as settlers, foreigners and robbers.

Besides, the dispossession of the natives, as it is observed in these novels, represents a threat against their cultural identity. In *Weep Not, Child*, for instance, Ngotho thinks that "it was a spiritual loss. When a man was severed from the land of his ancestors where would he sacrifice to the Creator? How could he come in contact with the founders of the tribe, Gikuyu and Mumbi?" (Ngugi, 1964, p. 74). This exemplifies DeLue's precept when they posit that "how human communities have drawn imaginatively upon dominant features of their living environment to shape distinct identities" (DeLue and Elkins, 2008, p. 35). In fact, the ancestral land, as I have said in the second section (2.1.), remains the most tangible link between the Gikuyu and their ancestors. From this stance, I may infer that Ngotho's permanent work for Mr Howlands aims at preserving his professional, his local and cultural identity respectively as farmer and member of the Gikuyu tribe. Howbeit, the quest for the landownership which unveils people's quest for identity has often brought about conflicts that are seen as identity crises.

3.2. Landownership Conflicts and Identity Crisis

In the novels submitted to this study, I have observed that landownership struggles ineluctably lead to identity crises. Therefore, basing on J. D. Goldfarb (2012, p. 15) who terms "landscape as conflict" by analyzing "all sorts of conflict, be it racial, gendered, socio-economic or cultural, are in-place." The landownership conflict occurs as identity crisis between Gikuyu natives and European foreigners. It is also seen as a racial crisis between black people and whites. At last, it appears as a consciousness crisis between in-group natives and out-group ones. G. Adeoti (2016, p. 5) deplores the landownership injustices in Kenya as identity crises. For J. Milley and Y. Thoraval (1980, p. 166), they resort to Carel Blixen who says that "*c'est plus que la terre qu'on enlevait à ces gens, c'était leur passé, leurs racines, leur identité.*"⁷ The crises appear as mere disagreements or bloody encounters between the natives and the settlers.

In *Weep Not, Child* it appears that beyond the apparent harmony between Ngotho and his master Howlands, these two men are actually potential antagonists since each of them wants to keep the shamba for his descendants. Indeed, while Ngotho is concerned with preserving his

⁷ "It is more than land that was taken from these people, it was their past, their root, their identity" (translation mine).

lands, the settlers use “torture, imprisonment, and isolation [that] are all attempts at breaking the connection with memory” (Ngugi, 2009, p. 112). I think that distance with one’s identity is nothing but a rude way of destroying a people’s past and identity. Ngugi then establishes links between the landownership conflicts and the identity issues by using such terms as “Europeans” versus “Africans” that refer to nationality and “black people” versus “white people” to designate race. In *Weep Not, Child*, the victimization of the Gikuyu youth by colour-bar, which is a discriminative system based on the racial difference, is an indication of the racial conflict.

Landownership disputes, which have put the Gikuyu community apart due to the influence of capitalism on traditionalism, are seen as conflicts between in-group and out-group members.⁸ This clash occurs as “conflict between some farmers and ecologists” (p. 114). From the first point of view, the traditionalist and conservative Gikuyu see themselves as in-group members because they are loyal to the ancestral lands and ways. From the second point of view, the capitalist and modern Gikuyu who are involved in the dispossession of their brothers are considered as out-group members who must undergo the same doom as their masters. In *The River Between*, these betrayers such as Joshua and Kabogni are painted as proponents of Christianity who allowed the entry of the white man on the tribal land and the expropriation of the natives. Besides, in *Weep Not, Child* there is dissention that ends in bloody encounters between the loyal Gikuyu and the others viewed as betrayers or “Black white settlers” (Ngugi, 1964, p. 72). An example is Jacobo who is presented by Kiarie as “an enemy of the black people” (Ngugi, 1964, p. 59). Given that many other figures including Jacobo, Joshua, Kabonyi and Nganga are also alienated, the author advocates the unity of the Gikuyu as means of consolidation of their identity.

3.3. Natives’ Unity and Identity Consolidation

In this subsection, my concern is to show that natives’ unity is a means of identity consolidation. To accurately achieve a reliable result, I will lean on the premise that landscape works as intercession between specific lived experiences and identity formation (Delue and Elkins, 2008, p. 193). My investigations in this scope shows that the Gikuyu have experienced with the introduction of the colonists into their country, several ordeals including the jeopardy

⁸ Members of primary and some secondary groups feel loyal to those groups and take pride in belonging to them. We call such groups in-groups. Fraternities, sororities, sports teams, and juvenile gangs are examples of in-groups. Members of an in-group often end up competing with members of another group for various kinds of rewards. This other group is called an out-group. (Sociology: Comprehensive Edition (online), <http://2012books.lardbucket.org/>, consulted on 16/02/2020, p. 187).

of the social relations and lost of the ancestral lands. These plights are seen as serious threats against the Gikuyu identity at the social, economic and cultural levels. Hence, Njoroge and Waiyaki's calls for unity and actions are perceived as a sign of "black consciousness"⁹ and redemption of identity.

Furthermore, the call for unity in this quest for the lost lands implies the fight for their citizenship inasmuch as "at the territorial scale, the link to identity remains strong" (DeLue and Elkins, 2008, p. 192). If citizenship seems connected to a national territory, it exclusively involves the notion of land which determines a person's place of birth and his "right of soil". In doing so, the author seems to promote a sort of struggle for the preservation of Kenyan national identity. Furthermore, I am thankful to some landscape theorists who state that landscape "is an exemplary encounter with subjectivity ... understood as a kind of unity ... which reflects, or articulates, the sense of self" (p. 191). Indeed, the struggle for the lost lands in the scope of localism (a specific narrow place) and regionalism (the Gikuyu tribe), appears as the quest for the self. In other words, it is the struggle for the personal identity and the collective identity as well.

This quest for the *self* thus implies the fight against internal division, class inequalities, landownership injustice and racial segregation (colour-bars in *Weep Not, Child*). Besides, the call for all the forces in the struggle is a symbol of national unity against a common threat. In a certain scope, it is a call for patriotism and pan Africanism which is characterized by negritude. B. S. Brar and S. Singh (2011, p. VI-470) hence see negritude as an "anti-racist-racism."¹⁰ According to More, it is "the development of a non-Eurocentric identity" (More, p. 158). The latter requires the reconciliation and unity of the natives and the preservation of the ancestral lands. That is the gist of my analysis of the struggle for identity consolidation. You are thence proposed in the following section, the concluding part of my work.

CONCLUSION

At the end of this work it is worth understanding that identity is narrowly linked to the land. DeLue and Elkins were right to say that "landscape constitutes a discourse through which

⁹ Black consciousness then becomes the right of black peoples to draw an image of themselves that negates and transcends the image of themselves that was drawn by those who would weaken them in their fight for, and assertion of, their humanity — or, in the Sobukwean formulation, to fight for the right to call our souls our own. (Ngugi, 2009, p. 111)

¹⁰ The concept emerges from the sense of Black Africa's search for the self of looking inwards for values and benefits and of a racial essence that will ultimately triumph" (Shakespeare, 1976, p. 33).

identifiable social groups historically have framed themselves and their relations both with the land and with other human groups” (DeLue and Elkins, 2008, p. 20). I have therefore found three social groups consisting of the traditional Gikuyu, the white settlers and the modern Gikuyu whose links to the land are diversified. This work thus shows that “landscape is itself a physical and multisensory medium (...) in which cultural meanings and values are encoded” (Wainaina, 2012, p. 92). In the context of this study, these cultural meanings and values are intrinsically related to the land and characterize identity.

However, DeLue and Elkins demonstrate that “colonial and postcolonial identities are, in part, spatially formulated through migration and displacement” (DeLue and Elkins, 2008, p. 192). Yet, these displacement and migrations are not just physical, but may also be psychological and ideological. They are also termed as “landscape way of seeing” which lead to the construction and degradation of people’s personal, collective, social and cultural identities. That is the reason why DeLue and Elkins infer that “identity shifts as landscapes change” (pp. 192-193). Founding on the postulate that identity is not static I can say that the shifts in ideologies born of the social interactions on the one hand, and the settlement and dispossession of lands on the other hand, remain great factors of identity crises. Facing the recrudescence of such crises, Ngugi advises unity and struggle as ways of preserving the collective and individual identities. As a final point, it should be noted that any person or people who have no connection with the earth is considered a man without identity.

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