

# The Impact of Freuds' Structural Mind Model on Understanding Waiyaki's Personality, The Main Character of Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's Story, The River Between

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Abstract: This study examines how relevant psychoanalytic theory is in the interpretation of The River Between by Ngugi wa Thiong'o. It questions whether the lead character, Waiyaki, in this fictional society is influenced by his psychic states and, if so, whether Ngugi Wa Thiong'o uses Sigmund Freud's theory framework of the cognizance to craft his social vision. The study took a descriptive qualitative approach and was textual in nature. Primary texts were used to collect data, and secondary texts used to help interpret the text. The findings indicated that id psyche reveals Waiyaki's personality which relate to intense emotions, strong desires, and unfiltered reactions. His ego serves as a rational and practical component of his psyche, balancing his iddriven desires and instincts with the societal values. Additionally, the character's super ego reveals his moral dilemma exemplified by various conflicts between his personal desires and the societal norms deeply ingrained in his community's values. The study fills a knowledge gap regarding the role of the mind model in comprehending the protagonist's personality. It concludes that the lead character's behaviour and personality are influenced by the fictional society's mental model.

*Keywords*: Structural, Mind, Model, Waiyaki, Personality, Tripartite, Psyche.

#### 1. Introduction

The idea that people's actions are controlled by their previously stored perception of recurrent actions is the focus of psychoanalysis. Psychoanalytic theorists hold the view that human behaviour is fixed (Greenberg, 1983). It is ruled by instinctual and biological drives as well as irrational forces and the unconscious. Psychoanalysis emphasized motives, particularly hidden or disguised motives, which contributes to two levels of literature clarification: the degree of thinking of itself and degree of charisma activity within the text. It emphasizes on this topic and tries to elaborate how connotation alongside identity are connected to psychic and social forces.

In literary works, characters are like mirrors reflecting how diverse and complicated people can be. They show us different personalities shaped by life events, the world around them, and their own inner battles. Through their actions and words, these characters give us a peek into the many sides of human nature (Simon, 1985). They help us understand how experiences, surroundings, and personal struggles shape who we are and how we behave. Essentially, these fictional characters offer a window into the complex ways people think and feel, making us think about our own lives and emotions in new ways. Understanding characters in a story is an active process that involves how readers connect their own knowledge with the information in the text. When readers engage, they bring their own thoughts and feelings into play, combining them with the details given in the story (Burke, 2010).

Psychoanalytic theory can be used to better understand a text's hidden meaning or the author's intentions when analysing literary texts (Baudry, 1984). Psychoanalytic theorists hold that instinctual and biological drives, as well as irrational forces and the unconscious, influence human behaviour. "All of Freud's ideologies relies upon the idea of insentient, which is portion of the mind beyond consciousness," Barry (2002). Basically, our actions are influenced by unconscious desire or motivation.

The aspect of a person's personality known as the Id is motivated by fundamental internal drives and needs. These are typical instincts, like the need for power, sex or libido, hunger, and thirst. The Id pursues pleasure and avoids pain in accordance with the pleasure principle. Duane and Sidney Theories of Behaviour also emphasize that the instinctive nature of the Id makes it impulsive and frequently acts without considering the consequences (Schultz, 2016). The Id knows just moment satisfactions, it drives us to need what we need when we need it, without respect for what any other person needs. The Id is self-centred, a structure that seeks pleasure, primitive, immoral, insistent, and hasty. It is unaware of the world around it.

The part of the psyche that is responsible for perceiving, thinking, feeling, and remembering is called the Ego. It is the centre of unconsciousness. Duane P. Schultz and Sidney Ellen Schultz Hypotheses of Character, places that the self-image is driven by the truth standard. Both the id and the superego are balanced by the ego (Cherry, 2016). It works to achieve the id's drive in the most realistic manners in order to balance these. It

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aims to justify the instincts of the id and satisfy the drives that will benefit the individual over time. It helps separate what is genuine and practical of our drives as well as being reasonable about the norms that the superego sets for the person.

According to both classical theories and contemporary research, the superego is motivated by moral principles. It behaves in accordance with higher morality in thought and deed. Rather than naturally behaving like the id, the superego attempts to act in socially OK ways. It utilizes ethical quality, making a decision about our feeling of off-base and right and utilizing culpability to support socially OK way of behaving.

Psychoanalytic criticism has been successfully used by some African scholars to examine African literature. For instance, Evelyn Nwachukwu and Uruma set out to use psychoanalytic theory to investigate the competing personalities. Shadi S. Neimneh and Amneh K. Abussamen were interested in studying Chinua Achebe and the Ego ideal: from an analysis of psychoanalysis. To clarify Anase's lawless, antisocial, and immoral nature, Kwawisi conducts a psychoanalytical reading of Anase, the Charlatan character in Akan oral tales. This and many other works that use psychoanalysis to interpret African literature are the focus of this study.

The River Between" is a renowned novel written by Kenyan author Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. The novel was written during the British colonialism and the cultural conflict in Kenya in the early 20th century. The story explores themes of tradition, modernity, love, and identity. Waiyaki, a young man from the village of Kameno, becomes a key figure in the struggle to bridge the gap between tradition and progress. Waiyaki is torn between his people's deep-rooted beliefs and the new ideologies introduced by the colonialists and missionaries. His internal conflict and his efforts to unite the villages form the emotional core of the story. Through Waiyaki's personality, Ngũgĩ masterfully digs into the intricate dynamics of identity, love, and cultural preservation, making "The River Between" a great work in postcolonial African literature that continues to echo the readers experiences worldwide. This study's foundation is the curiosity to learn more about Ngugi's character and how the unconscious influences the conscious. Despite the extensive body of literature on literary analysis and psychoanalytic theory, there exists a gap in our understanding of how Freud's structural framework of the mind can enhance our insight into Waiyaki's complex personality, motivations, and behavior within the context of the novel. It interrogates whether the psychic state of Waiyaki influences his behaviour and the decisions he makes. Specifically, the study examined whether the decision made by the protagonist as well as his behaviour and responses will be clarified through examination the three mechanisms of the human mind; id, ego and super-ego.

#### 2. Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by the psychoanalytic theory by Sigmund Freud in the 19th and 20th century. It focuses on the role of the unconscious mind in shaping human behavior and experiences. Freud structural model of the mind consists of three main components: id, ego and superego. The id operates without any consideration of consequences, anxiety, logic, precaution, or morality because it is completely unconscious and constantly tries to satisfy its anger for pleasure. The Id includes two sorts of natural senses: the Eros, which aids in survival and "directs life-sustaining activities such as respiration, eating, and sex," and the Thanatos, or death instincts, which are considered "a set of destructive forces" that are present in all humans. Characters who act purely on instinct, without contemplating the repercussions, highlight the influence of the id (Mohale, 2021). They often engage in behaviors driven solely by their innate desires, showcasing a lack of inhibition and a direct manifestation of their primal urges. The ego is the closest of the three parts of the psyche to what we consider to be consciousness because it mediates between the inner self and the outer self, even though most of it is unconscious. It emerges as a person interacts with the external world, learning to negotiate between their innate, impulsive desires (represented by the id) and the constraints imposed by the outside reality. This aspect of the mind allows individuals to make decisions grounded in practicality, taking into account the consequences of their actions and understanding the need to adhere to societal norms and expectations. Characters facing dilemmas related to societal expectations, personal desires, or ethical considerations reflect the intricacies of the human psyche. The superego provides a sense of guilt for behaviour that violates the rules set by parents and other authorities, which helps to balance the id (Milrod, 2002). Within an individual's psyche, the superego serves as an internalized set of rules, values, and ethical guidelines derived from society and parental influences. Characters influenced by the superego experience great moral and ethical dilemmas, shaping their decisions and actions. This internal moral compass significantly contributes to the twists and turns of characters in literature. This element of psyche formed a fundamental basis of realizing Waiyaki's personality, portrayed through the super ego.

#### 3. Materials and Methods

#### A. Research Design

The study used qualitative research design to explain Freud's structural mind model and its connection to Waiyaki's personality. Williams & Moser (2019) argues that a research strategy is a collection of procedures for collecting and analysing data in a logical manner in order to combine procedure efficiency with relevance to the research objective.

#### B. Target Population

The research focused on African novels as its subject matter. The author and academic Ngugi wa Thiong'o, originally from Kenya, was known for his literary contributions. He initially wrote in English but later shifted to writing in Gikuyu. His works garnered numerous accolades, including grants (Gikandi & Wachanga, 2019). His literary repertoire encompassed novels, plays, short stories, and published essays. Among his most renowned works was 'The River Between,' written in 1965, which explored religious tensions between two Kenyan villages in the early 20th century. Other notable works included 'A Grain of Wheat,' 'Sob Not Kid,' 'Petals of Blood,' 'Matigari mama Njiruungi,' 'Meeting In Obscurity,' 'Secret Lives and Other Stories,' 'The Preliminary of Dedan Kimathi,' 'In the Place of the Mediator: A Memoir,' 'Decolonizing the Mind,' and many others, earning him numerous awards.

#### C. Data Collection Procedure

In the data collection phase, 'The River Between' was meticulously read and analyzed to acquire primary data. A close and comprehensive reading of the primary text was conducted to collect a sufficient volume of information thorough examination and interpretation, aligning with the study's objectives. Additionally, a detailed case study approach was employed to explore how the theory could be applied to dissect the text and identify which theoretical concepts best fit the interpretation of the characters. Furthermore, secondary data sources such as other texts and scholarly works on the subject were consulted.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

This section presents an exploration of the influence of Sigmund Freud's structural mind model on the understanding of Waiyaki's character, the central protagonist in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's narrative, 'The River Between.' The primary objective of the study was to assess the pertinence of Freud's structural framework of the mind in understanding Waiyaki's personality. Through a careful examination, this exploration offered a valuable perspective on the narrative's themes and the character's development, enriching our comprehension of the literary work as a whole.

#### A. The Expression of the Threefold Psyche in Conflict

The study examined how Freud's theory, with its three parts - the primal 'id,' the thinking 'ego,' and the moral 'superego' helps us dive deep into Waiyaki's world. Sometimes, Waiyaki acts on raw desires (that's the 'id' at work), and at other times, he's more thoughtful, trying to balance what he wants with what others expect (that's his 'ego' talking). In other times, he's often wrestling with what's right and wrong, guided by his inner moral compass ('superego').

#### 1) The Id Driven behaviour

The researcher encountered significant moments where Waiyaki's actions are driven by his deepest, raw emotions and strong desires. These instances provide a window into his unfiltered reactions, giving us a better understanding of the powerful instincts that underlie his character within 'The River Between.

Waiyaki's id-driven desire for Nyambura's physical beauty is evident when the narrator describes Nyambura's captivating beauty through Waiyaki's perspective, emphasizing her allure.

"..He stole a glance at her and saw how she turned her head away. And immediately he knew that she had come to meet him. And he at once wanted to tell her that he loved her. He could not do it. But he yearned for her and, as he went away, he felt a desire to hold her close to him and whisper many things to her.."

Waiyaki's attraction to Nyambura represents a vivid

manifestation of his 'Id' at work. This attraction transcends the boundaries of rationality and societal norms, revealing a visceral and instinctual response to Nyambura's physical allure. It's as if his deepest desires surge to the forefront of his consciousness, overpowering any rational considerations or cultural expectations. The id-driven behaviour highlights the tension between personal emotions and communal expectations within the context of the story's cultural setting. Overall, Waiyaki's id-driven actions in this passage play a pivotal role in characterizing his emotional journey and the narrative's development.

Throughout the narrative, Waiyaki's reckless pursuit of love manifests in a notable lack of caution. His id-driven actions are characterized by a single-minded focus on his desire for Nyambura, often at the expense of societal norms and expectations. In his quest to be with her, he risks discovery, which could have severe consequences not only for himself but also for Nyambura and her family. This lack of caution underlines the all-consuming nature of his love and his willingness to defy conventions in the pursuit of emotional fulfillment. The confession by Nyambura publicly confesses her love for him towards the end of 'The River Between.' This confession and their subsequent escape highlight the dramatic consequences of their id-driven desires on both their lives and the community, as shown below;

"...Joshua declared, pointing at Nyambura with the forefinger of his right hand. "You are not my daughter. Yet let me warn you," he continued, his voice changing from one of fiery anger to one of calm sorrow, "you will come to an untimely end. Go!.."

In the text, a passionate confrontation unfolds between Waiyaki and Kamau, both fervent suitors vying for Nyambura's affection. This pivotal scene is a direct result of the intense iddriven desires that course through the hearts of these young men, particularly when it comes to their affection for Nyambura. Waiyaki and Kamau are willing to push the boundaries of restraint and decorum to safeguard their respective affections for Nyambura. Their actions are not merely guided by reason or societal norms; instead, they are propelled by the raw, instinctual aspects of their psyches—the id.

The intensity of Waiyaki's emotions is further illustrated after his fathers death, which creates a numbing effect on him. The id-driven response to Chege's death is characterized by an overwhelming sense of unfairness. He questions the timing of Chege's passing, feeling that it should have been delayed, allowing Chege to live longer. This emotional reaction underscores the id's inclination toward immediate, instinctual emotions, without regard for reason or practicality.

"...His father's death had almost numbed him. He could not tell why, but Chege's death. though not unexpected, came as a shock to him. It seemed unfair that Chege should have died at that particular time. He should have lived longer. And Waiyaki had gone on like a man drugged, not knowing what to think or do. He had all of a sudden become a grown man. He was now on his own.."

During the summon by the Kiama, Waiyaki shouts with

anger, reflecting the immediate emotional response that the id often encourages. His emotional outburst is an instinctual reaction, driven by his anger and frustration, which override social norms and considerations of the man's age.

"...stop!' Waiyaki shouted with anger. Then he realized that he ought not to shout at a man much older than himself. 'I don't know what you are talking about.' He tried to regulate his voice with difficulty. He wanted to rise and cry, 'You fool, you fool!' But he felt weary. He writhed within and remained stuck to his seat..."

Waiyaki's fear of being given a leadership role within the Kiama, which was meant to encompass all the ridges, reflects his reluctance to be drawn into community affairs or politics. Instead, he wishes to concentrate on his education. This fear and resistance to community leadership positions are rooted in his immediate emotional response, driven by his id. It showcases his desire to prioritize his personal goals and aspirations over communal responsibilities, reflecting the impulsive nature of his id-driven desires.

"...Waiyaki feared they would give him a place in the leadership of this Kiama, which was meant to embrace all the ridges. He did not feel enthusiastic about it. He wanted to concentrate on education. Perhaps the teaching of Livingstone, that education was of value and his boys should not concern themselves with what the government was doing or politics, bad found a place in Waiyaki's heart.."

The determination to avoid becoming entangled in political or governmental matters is influenced by the teachings of Livingstone, who emphasized the value of education and encouraged his students to focus on learning rather than government activities or politics. This internal struggle between his personal educational development and societal roles and expectations highlights the immediate, instinctual nature of his emotions and desires, as he strives to resist pressures that might divert him from his chosen path.

#### 2) Ego Mediated Conflicts

The ego's primary role is to navigate the conflicts that naturally arise when these two opposing forces i.e., personal desires and societal expectations, collide. Waiyaki's character provides a compelling illustration of this concept. He exists within a cultural and societal space where deeply embedded traditions, such as circumcision rituals, carry great weight. These rituals are not merely symbolic; they are representative of the collective identity and values of his community. Waiyaki's personal desires and id-driven emotions, particularly in his pursuit of love and education, frequently bring him into direct conflict with these cultural norms.

Throughout the narrative, Waiyaki finds himself ensnared in dilemmas that demand a delicate balance between his personal desires and the practical considerations or societal expectations of his community. He finds himself trapped in a dilemma when he must choose between his love for Nyambura and adherence to the circumcision tradition.

"...But you have not yet replied to our worries. This girl -Joshua's daughter - you are marrying her?' Waiyaki rose. He was now really exasperated. What had Nyambura got to do with them? What? Could he not do whatever he wanted with his own life? Or was his life not his own? He would tell them nothing about Nyambura. 'Nyambura has nothing to do with this. If I love her, I love her. If you have nothing else to tell me, I will go.'

'Remember the oath!' 'The oath!' 'you took it.' 'It did not forbid me to love people.'

'It forbids you to betray the tribe, to reveal its secrets, or to do anything unclean which might ruin us.'.."

In this scenario, he questions the elders' authority over his personal life and asserts his autonomy, suggesting that he should be free to make choices about his own life. However, as the elders invoke the tribal oath and its restrictions, the ego comes into play as the rational mediator. It recognizes the need to address the societal expectations and norms represented by the oath. Waiyaki's assertion that loving Nyambura does not violate the oath demonstrates the ego's role in seeking a middle ground and a rational justification for his actions. The ego attempts to balance his personal desires with the cultural values encapsulated in the oath, striving to minimize the conflict between his id-driven emotions and societal expectations.

In addition, Waiyaki's plans for Marioshoni, including addressing the school's infrastructure and the educational needs of the children, reflect his sincere dedication to his educational vision. However, this vision places him at odds with the elders and traditions of his community, who likely hold traditional beliefs about gender-segregated education. His desire to provide a quality education for all children in the community, regardless of gender, represents his id-driven ambition. However, he recognizes the need to strategize and communicate effectively with the community elders to find common ground. This is where the ego's role becomes prominent, as it seeks to balance his fervent educational aspirations with the need for community acceptance.

"...He briefly outlined his plans for Marioshoni. The rotting roof needed more tin; the children needed desks, pencils, paper. And then many more schools had to be built. More teachers had to be employed. He sat down, fearing that he had not made his point clear.."

Waiyaki's fear that he has not made his point clear underscores the ego's attempt to bridge the gap between his individual desires and the communal norms.

Aditionally, he plays the mediator role between the two villages during conflicts. His 'ego' enables him to think critically and negotiate, contributing to conflict resolution and community.

"Yet, amidst this isolation, he was proud. He was proud of the small but important role he had played in awakening the hills, the sleeping lions. And inside him he felt vaguely that it would be good to reconcile all these antagonisms.."

His role as a mediator shines through despite the isolation that often accompanies such a position. His pride stems from recognizing the crucial role he plays in resolving conflicts between two villages. This pride is not self-centered but rather a reflection of his confidence in his abilities to bring about positive change in the community. Waiyaki's "ego" empowers him to think critically about the importance of education for both genders while also recognizing the deeply ingrained gender norms within his society. His determination to pursue education represents a departure from traditional gender roles, and his self-assuredness helps him challenge these norms without abandoning his cultural identity. In doing so, Waiyaki seeks a harmonious balance that respects his educational goals and, at the same time, acknowledges the cultural significance of gender roles. He maintains his integrity while respecting cultural heritage through thoughtful consideration and action, at the same time trying to achieve his deeply felt purpose.

"...Waiyaki realized all too suddenly that this was the hour, the great hour of need. The tribe needed him now. Nyambura needed him now. And he needed himself too. Kabonyi was a destructive element. He did not know the way. But Waiyaki was ready, there to move together with the people, to grope in the dark maybe, but together, searching for the light, looking for the way..."

His "ego" empowers him to step into this leadership role, demonstrating his readiness to be a source of guidance and inspiration for his people. His "ego" empowers him to step into this leadership role, demonstrating his readiness to be a source of guidance and inspiration for his people.

### 3) Superego and Moral struggles

As he wrestles with personal beliefs and the societal norms, Waiyaki faces ethical dilemmas and internal conflicts. His interactions with the superego, representing the moral compass shaped by his upbringing and cultural heritage, shed light on the moral struggles that shape his character's development.

Waiyaki faces a profound moral dilemma when he defies the elders and the traditions which required him not to marry an uncircumcised girl.

"...How could they believe that he would betray them? How could they believe this story about his marrying an uncircumcised girl, a daughter of Joshua, the enemy of the people?.."

Waiyaki's moral dilemma stems from the clash between his personal desires and beliefs, represented by his love for Nyambura, and the deeply ingrained values and traditions of his community. The elders and the community expect him to adhere to the circumcision rituals, which include marrying a circumcised girl. These expectations are deeply rooted in the cultural fabric of his society, and defying them carries a significant moral weight. Waiyaki's superego influences his moral choices and the internal strife he experiences as he navigates this ethical crossroads;

## "...He renounced his past and cut himself away from those life-giving traditions of the tribe.."

This detachment from tribal traditions signify the extent to which he is willing to challenge the deeply ingrained values of his community. It showcases his inner conflict between his personal desires and the cultural norms represented by the superego. His moral struggle is rooted in the recognition that by pursuing a relationship with Nyambura, he is not only defying his tribe's expectations but also distancing himself from the traditions that have defined his identity and sense of belonging. Kabonyi's words serve as a rallying cry to turn the people against Waiyaki's educational initiatives, framing them as a challenge to the tribe's own education and wisdom. By asking if their education is inferior to that of the white man, he appeals to the people's pride and sense of cultural identity, implying that accepting Waiyaki's ideas would be a betrayal of their heritage. Kabonyi's reference to the hierarchical order of leadership, with phrases like "the tail ever lead the head" and "the child the father," plays on the community's traditional power structures. He uses these comparisons to suggest that Waiyaki, as a youth, should not be leading or challenging the established order.

"..'do you think the education of our tribe, the education and wisdom which you all received, is in any way below that of the white man?' He challenged the people present. appealing to their pride, to the manhood in them and to their loyalty to the soil. 'Do not be led by a youth. Did the tail ever lead the head, the child the father or the cubs the lion?'.."

Waiyaki's decision to speak calmly and clearly to the audience underscores his commitment to his educational vision and his determination to persuade the community to support his initiative. His measured and articulate speech reflects his rationality and strategic thinking, qualities often associated with the ego and superego components of Freud's structural model of the mind.

Waiyaki's deep respect for Kikuyu culture and traditions is evident throughout the story. His internalized value system shapes his character as he strives to balance progress with cultural preservation, especially the desire to undergo the rite of passage, particularly male circumcision.

"...All his life Waiyaki had waited for this day. for this very opportunity to reveal his courage like a man. This had been the secret ambition of his youth...Around him women were shouting and praising him. The son of Chege had proved himself. Such praises were lavished only on the brave..."

Waiyaki's lifelong aspiration to participate in the circumcision ritual is driven by his internalized cultural values. This demonstrates how his superego influences his personal ambitions and desires. His internalized values, influenced by the superego, drive his respect for Kikuyu cultural traditions and his desire to maintain a harmonious balance between progress and the preservation of these values, particularly in the context of male circumcision

Waiyaki experiences deep guilt and self-reflection when Nyambura is publicly disowned by her father following their love confession. His 'superego' weighs heavily on his conscience as he questions the consequences of their actions on Nyambura's life.

"...For me and my house we will serve the Lord,' Joshua declared, pointing at Nyambura with the forefinger of his right hand. 'You are not my daughter. Yet let me warn you,' he continued, his voice changing from one of fiery anger to one of calm sorrow, 'you will come to an untimely end. Go!'..."

This internal moral conflict arises from his deep respect for cultural traditions and his desire to adhere to them while also following his heart and pursuing his love for Nyambura. Driven by the societal expectations represented by the superego, his guilt and self-reflection in response to Nyambura's disownment indicates the great impact of cultural and moral values on his character, adding depth and complexity to his role in the story. His guilt intensifies upon leaving with Nyambura.

#### 5. Conclusion

Through this psychoanalytic approach, the researcher looked into the working of Waiyaki's psyche, uncovering the profound impact of his id-driven desires, his rational ego-driven actions, and the moral guidance provided by his superego. The study hence reveals id moments when the character acts on raw desires and instincts. These instances provide insight into the intensity of his emotions, strong desires, and unfiltered reactions. The findings further reveals that Waiyaki confidently uses his ego to plan, execute, and adapt his strategies in the face of challenges to navigate complex situations, achieve his educational goals, and address conflicts within his community. Additionally, his super-ego helps shape his character as it acts as his guiding moral compass, influencing his decisions, and leads to profound moral dilemmas and self-reflection. The characters journey of self-discovery, love, and cultural preservation serves as a compelling narrative, made even more profound by the application of Freudian psychology. Freud's model provided a valuable tool for dissecting the psychological complexities of literary characters, offering a deeper

appreciation for the depth and richness of human nature as portrayed in literature.

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