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**The Fragmented Soul and Social Conventions**  
**in Ngugi's Petals of Blood**  
**and Fitzgerald's Tender is the Night**

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## **DECLARATION**

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## DEDICATION

*To my cherished husband Foued.*

*To our lovely jewels Taki-Eddine, Amani and Zine-Eddine.*

*To my beloved parents, brother and sisters.*

*To the memory of my sister Soulef.*

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## **ABSTRACT**

Personality is generally considered as one compact and structured whole ; however, studies in psychology show that it is composed of features that are, in many instances, contradictory. This is due to the human psyche that is multi-layered, with different aspects of the personality being revealed in various situations. That is why many writers in different genres have dealt with different complex types of personalities that give their works many dimensions and contribute to the dramatization of the situations portrayed.

The complexity of man's personality and his different potent insights constitute, then, one of the most powerful concerns of Modern literature. It can be examined from different standpoints such as: the alienation from the self or from society, the borderline personality marked by instability of self-image and impulsivity, or the misfit and disintegrated self in conflict with external forces because of the rejection of some social order into which he or she could no longer fit or conform to.

This dissertation is concerned with a specific type inherent in the complexity of the individual, which is the fragmented or split personality. This issue has been treated in modern literature both in the Western world and by African postmodern writers as Modern Times gave the individual a sense of displacement engendered by extraneous factors, namely the violence of colonization and the legacy of war.

One of the modern African works of fiction dealing with this shadowy aspect of human identity is Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Petals of Blood*. In this novel, Ngugi presents an interesting, though problematic, aspect of the characters. Indeed, the narrative is characterized by a bipolar universe in which two antonymic forces are foregrounded, the individual with his own aspirations, and society regulated by its conventions and political set-ups. It is through this perspective that we can understand how the protagonist- Munira, the village teacher- trapped in his voluntary isolation, retreats from society. We can actually claim that in a society dominated by community forces, the intellectual is easily classified as a misfit since he is rejected both by his family and his society. This rejection would forcibly induce a feeling of estrangement which eventually leads to a split personality.

Likewise, and though emanating from different reasons and backgrounds, the modernist American novel *Tender is the Night* by F.S.Fitzgerald deals with a protagonist's psychic

disintegration due to the clash between Dick Diver's-the psychiatrist- aspirations and the aims established by his society. Because he does not conform to a social order dictated by an extremely materialistic society devoid of any moral values and dreams, a gap is created between Dick and his society resulting in his disconnection and eventually his retreat.

In the first chapter, I explore the social, cultural and political contexts in which the characters under study develop and show the psychological impacts the war has left on people's psyche. The second chapter deals with the fragmented mind in Ngugi's *Petals of Blood*. The novel describes the disillusionment of the people in post-independent Kenya. Often considered as a political novelist, Ngugi deepens his treatment of issues related to education, religion, Christian customs and alienation from the land, all intermingled with the individual's insight. Chapter three tackles Fitzgerald's *Tender is the Night*, which is of concern to this dissertation since it has been written in 1929-the post-war period-and because it is one of the novels that illustrate modernist concerns with selfhood as well as man's psychic state in the American literary scene of the first quarter of the century. The novel represents a clash between the nineteenth century Transcendentalism, which offers an idea of unity and coherence, and the idea of fragmentation in the modernist era.

Thus, the dissertation at hand demonstrates that the writers' interest in the individual is universal, regardless to space and time. It also shows how different contexts, backgrounds, and motives can lead to the same end results. This is mainly true when the issue is related to the human insight since the individual psyche remains the same when his humanity is of concern.

# **INTRODUCTION**

As a powerful reflector of human nature, literature takes its concern and expression from the social, political and economic dynamics of a nation. It is then important to note the mutual relationship between literature and those dynamics that imbue all creative fiction. In the African context, modern fiction flourished against the consequences of colonialism and imperialism, and the different ways by which they affected the African society and, on a deeper level, the African individual. As famous psychologists and philosophers made their discoveries and analyses about the human psyche, writers focused their interest on those discoveries and used them in their depiction of characters. They dealt mainly with their innermost part, that is the personality.

Formerly considered as one compact and coherent whole, personality is, in modern times, revealed as a series of disparate elements. The reason for such a change in perception is the human psyche which is multi-layered, presenting various aspects of the personality in various situations. The complexity of man and his potential capabilities have been of great interest to literatures in all times. In fact the complexity of the individual's personality constitutes one of the most interesting cultural preoccupations of modern literature. The spectrum of various personalities varies from the individual alienated from the self or society to the paranoid one suspicious of others, to the borderline personality marked by an impulsive and unstable self-image, and to the narcissistic personality that is characterized by a pervasive need for admiration and prestige. It also includes the misfit and disintegrated individual in conflict with external forces that lead to a rejection of some social order to which he fails to conform. This last mentioned type of personality is the concern of my work in which I would be interested in a specific type inherent in the complexity of the individual: the fragmented or split personality of the characters of two novels, *Tender is the Night* by the American novelist F.S.Fitzgerald and *Petals of Blood* by the Kenyan writer Ngugi WaThiong'o. Actually such a choice arises from a personal interest in the individual as the pivotal element in any societal project. It also comes out of a deep conviction that any progress of society is ultimately linked to the vitality and agency of exemplary individual while the absence of such values would reveal a profound malaise in society.

Because "struggle is central to nature, to human art and to [my] history"<sup>1</sup> as Ngugi says, the depiction of struggling characters in an imperfect environment has become more and more dominant in African Literature. The uncomfortable individual has been developing as a

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<sup>1</sup>Cantalupo, Charles, ed. *The World of Ngugi* Wa Thiong'o, Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc, 1995.

central concept in African culture and as an “aesthetic or cultural vision” in Ngugi’s works. The characteristic disappointment of post-Independence African Literature is well expressed in such works as *The Beautiful Ones Are not yet Born* by Ayi Kwei Armah where the unnamed “Man” is representing the unheard African voice. “So this was the real thing, the only real thing. This was the thing for which poor men had fought and shouted. This was what it had come to: not that the whole thing might be overturned and ended, but that a few black men might be pushed closer to their masters.”<sup>2</sup> On these grounds we may consider Ngugi as the African writer who had an explicit and deep desire to overturn and even end “the whole thing”. Through his numerous plays, essays and novels Ngugi has consistently positioned himself as an advocate for the ordinary peasants and common men, workers of Kenya and Africa as a whole.

As evidenced by his important novel *Petals of Blood*, Ngugi is searching for a political strategy to successfully end “the whole thing”, the global monopoly of capitalism of which Africa has become an important constituent part. This is because the various slogans and demands that have nourished struggles and revolutions such as the Mau Mau have succeeded only in elevating a new type of ruling elite, merely replacing white oppressors with black ones. Thus, the need for a new struggle was still felt and its implementation became a necessity. Indeed, Ngugi can be regarded as the most persistent literary voice in Africa condemning the depravation of Imperialism as the highest form of Capitalism, to quote Lenin’s words. Nevertheless, Ngugi is also a product of his society and his political outlook is shaped by the cultural and social environment of Kenya and reflects its shortcomings. As Ngugi himself has written,

Literature does not grow or even develop in a vacuum; it is given impetus, shape, direction and even area of concern by social, political and economic forces in a particular society. The relationship between creative literature and these other forces cannot be ignored, especially in Africa, where modern literature has grown against the gory background of European Imperialism and its changing manifestations: slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism.<sup>3</sup>

Consequently, being immersed in the post-colonial milieu, Ngugi can only offer hints in *Petals of Blood* of the international struggle necessary to achieve a democratic, egalitarian society in

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<sup>2</sup>-Ayi Kwei Armah, *The Beautiful Ones are Not Yet Born*, Oxford: Heinemann, 1997, p.126.

<sup>3</sup>- Cook, David and Okenimkpe, Michael, *Ngugi Wa Thiong’o: An Exploration of his Writings*, London: Heinemann, 1983, p.19.

Kenya and in the rest of the world. In fact in Africa, as elsewhere, the genuine Marxist tradition has been marginalized in political discourse. That is why Ngugi's clairvoyance, integrity and passion for his country suggest his great potential to overcome this political malady and decadence which indeed inhibit any African progress and development.

Written in the United States, Kenya and the Soviet Union between 1970 and 1975, *Petals of Blood* is widely regarded as an important transitional work in Ngugi's career. His works evolve from the early anti-colonialist critique to a severe condemnation of the neo-colonialist regimes of the African bourgeoisie. As David Cook and Michael Okenimkpe write, "*Petals of Blood* is the first of Ngugi's novels which is fairly and squarely about independent Africa."<sup>4</sup> Ngugi's novel offers a harsh condemnation of the Kenyan ruling elites who exploit the country's workers and peasants, and it also offers vigorous criticism of neocolonialist institutions - Christianity, Politics, Education, Business, Banks, Landlords ... *Petals of Blood* also demonstrates the importance of collective action to empower ordinary people to resist oppression. Thus Ngugi stages the Ilmorog delegation to Nairobi, the strikes of the Theng'eta brewing Company and the students' struggle at the elite Siriana Academy.

Politically, Ngugi came of age in an environment and a continent still burdened with the residues of Stalinism, often seen as a reactionary perversion of Marxism, fusing Nationalism onto proletarian political movements. Stalin's theoretical suggestion of the possibility of "Socialism in one country" - an improbable workers' paradise surrounded by a sea of capitalist sharks - countered the insistent internationalism of the classical Marxist tradition. To Ngugi and his contemporary fellow-intellectuals, ideologies were moving beyond the era when the dominance of Stalinism held a monopoly on progressive intellectual culture. The demise of Stalinism created an opportunity to rebuild a genuine revolutionary left. Such a renewed revolutionary movement necessarily needed internationalism as its foundation. It is commonly held that proletarians have no country; yet, at least at the time of writing *Petals of Blood*, Ngugi seems to have had difficulty moving beyond the Kenyan context toward a global revolutionary strategy since he sought to give prominence to the national struggle of his people for social equity.

The post-colonial generation in Africa and particularly in Kenya carried both memories filled with the horrors of the war and dreams of hope for a better life. The post-war era engendered a struggle among the classes in the Kenyan society. In *Petals of Blood*, Ngugi

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid, p.90.

seems to give an evaluation of classes in Kenya. When depicting the national bourgeoisie as mere puppets of Western Capitalism, Ngugi is insisting that there is a continuity between resistance during the colonial state and resistance in the post-colonial one. If in the first resistance the enemy was known, the post-colonial resistance faces internal contradictions, although the collusion between imperialism and the comprador bourgeoisie is evident. Consequently, the struggle proves to be even more coercive, and those who opposed colonialism or whose parents were involved in the struggle for independence continued to suffer. The characters in *Petals of Blood* go through a stage of disillusionment with independence and ultimately come to the awareness that the struggle has to continue. For a character like Munira -one of the protagonists being held on suspicion of murder- the informal form of resistance makes of him a marginalized man in society. For lack of any political will or activity, he only expresses his resistance through a covert, subtle but subversive form. In *Petals of Blood* Munira -disillusioned, dehumanized and restless- slowly comes to the realization that his society is out of joint because it has lost its values whereas he has not, and so he seeks its redemption. In the midst of a surrounding population which has “sold its soul to the devil”, Munira -like many others in his society- is psychologically torn, apart and striving to stand firm on a moving ground. Fighting his inner contradictions and his dilemmas, Munira still ends up a misfit with a fragmented soul.

In the American context, F.S. Fitzgerald, perhaps more profoundly, has dealt with characters in literature that present traits of alienation from society and its norms. Many biographical critics have misleadingly stressed aspects of Fitzgerald's life as his marriage and crack up; they have treated his fiction as reflecting the confusion of life. However, the influences that really matter are cultural, historical and social - notably his youth in St Paul, which marked Fitzgerald with conflicting middle-class and aristocratic values. The moral dynamism of the 1920's both attracted and alarmed him. Set in a completely different temporal and spatial setting, Fitzgerald depicts in his *Tender is the Night* the wounded psyche of the post WWI individual. Brought up with the principle of self-reliance and the assertion of the individual's talent as the secret of success in the 'promised land' of the so-called American dream, a whole generation - to which Fitzgerald belonged - was bitterly disappointed with that dream. In the 'land of opportunity', Fitzgerald has created a protagonist who seems most American in his inhibiting self-conscious egoism, and his naïve but necessary participation in the optimistic attempt that veils the wasteland of modern civilization. In effect, as in *The Great Gatsby*, we find in *Tender is the Night* a notable oscillation

indicating two versions of the individual, two facets of identity in one vision of western twentieth century modern man.

Appearing as a chronicle of the Jazz Age, *Tender is the Night* evokes an era of which Fitzgerald can stand as one of the most striking examples. Indeed, the alienation of the disillusioned America became a central problem spreading widely through society. Fitzgerald creates a figure -like him- in whom acute idealism was at once admirable. In fact, Fitzgerald presents what could be a classic American type of character, firmly rooted in the conventional conception of what is typically American, embodying the American dream. Yet, seen from a different angle, Fitzgerald's protagonist sheds light on Fitzgerald's diagnosis and comment upon the process by which the same culture that nurtures 'the hero' in the promised land, disappoints him profoundly. Fitzgerald found an important target for whatever social wrath he may have harbored vis-a-vis America's burgeoning popular industry, the dream machine that throughout the 1920's nurtured him and his lost generation. As he increasingly came to feel, the dream machine destroyed the serious artist in him.

Fitzgerald saw popular culture not as a vehicle for identifying with everybody, but rather as an institution through which he might realize his dream of being one of the chosen few. Like him, the character he has portrayed, Dick Diver, is marked out for a successful career. But like most writers of his generation, Fitzgerald came to feel a crippling disillusion and realized the great disappointment after being seduced by images of an easier and happier life so claimed by the popular culture and the advertising industry symbiotically bound to it. The same society that permits enjoyment and success activates the individual's oppressive agencies. Moreover, it punishes 'social failure' in a cruel and severe way through an unbearable and self-destructive anxiety. Those who cannot take pleasure in what the consumer society offers, who do not conform to the molds of society to be humane, do not deserve happiness or love. So goes the unspoken cultural logic or motto afflicting the lost generation of his time.

In *Tender is the Night*, Fitzgerald creates a protagonist, Dick Diver, a gifted and imaginative intellectual who is becoming alienated from an individualistic society more and more motivated by crude self-interest and shallow materialism. Dick's vision of what is human for him and for his society is confronted with the crudities of the social order. Such crudities were intrinsic to a corrupt and corrupting society motivated purely by profit. Dick is trapped between a controlling and diminishing power of society which renders hope illusory

and the struggle to preserve hope through a belief in his illusions. Becoming a misfit and leading a silent interior struggle, Dick becomes lost, disoriented and wholly fragmented.

Implicitly, Fitzgerald conveys the feeling that the myth of the successful self-made man, a product of a great civilization, was in fact the greatest of American illusions. Moreover, he implies that the awareness of that fact does not permit modern man to escape the truth on which it was premised: that the individual cannot transcend consciousness from within or even alienate himself from his roots without causing a serious damage to his own moral stability and mental equilibrium. In other words, even if the individual reaches a certain degree of self-knowledge which may lead to some kind of success; it has to be done on acceptance of his self-centered existence and his awareness of unbelief that ultimately lead to his alienation, and thus to his internal disintegration and fragmentation.

Owing to the nature of this work, the approach will basically be drawn from Carl Jung's, Jacques Lacan's, Sigmund Freud's and Frantz Fanon's theories in Psychoanalysis. This will provide the theoretical background deemed necessary for a minute exploration of the character's concealed part that is his personality. This study will proceed to use concepts from those theories in order to examine the features inherent in the disintegration and the splitting of the personalities of different characters created by Ngugi and Fitzgerald in different novels written in reference to completely different societies and contexts.

Freud's psychoanalytical theories have the potential to explain virtually all human behavior. Despite the progress reached by mankind, Freud thinks that our minds are, nonetheless, the play things of our desire, of that animal sense of wanting that represents civilization's antithesis: chaos. Freud thought of personality as an iceberg with only the tip appearing. The part of the personality we are aware of is our conscious mind. Just below the water line, so to speak, is the pre-conscious mind. He considered the mind as consisting of two separate parts, the conscious mind or Ego -the reasoning part of human nature which allows the individual to integrate within society- and the unconscious mind the Id which contains the sexual needs and instinctive parts of human nature. The latter can be viewed as the uncivilized, beastly part of the human being. As Freud believed, the unconscious also contains the repressed memories of childhood and its traumas. It also consists of three functioning parts, increasing the number of the parts the mind is split into. According to Freud's theory, the Id, the Ego and the superego interact to form one's personality. The coordination among these personality agencies results in a healthy personality. Still, when

these agencies are in conflict, the result is a multi-layered personality. In *Petals of Blood*, Munira's psychology can be unraveled and explained by applying Freud's ideas which state that the mind is divided into three agencies-the Id, the Ego and the Superego- each in conflict with the other. Such a conflict makes the personality always attempting to resolve this interior conflict to keep its balance.

Jacques Lacan, the French Psychoanalyst, thought that all human desire is "the desire of the other. "Lacan believed that the major part of our unconscious life is a product of a variety of external social influences. In reality, we are all composed of many diverse fragmentary-and often illusory-images of the "self". These normal fragments of personality are often ego states. In contrast, the Multiple Personality Disorder -MPD- is an abnormal condition in which the personality becomes so fragmented that some of the various parts cannot even communicate with each other. For example, it is possible to recognize each different personality -or "alter"- from just few words in the same way it is possible to recognize instantly the voice of a person calling on the telephone. On the other hand, no one can understand the process by which the human brain can create and hold separate and distinct each different facet of our personality.

Carl Jung, the Swiss psychologist, insists that everything within the mind is doubled or paired. Conflict may be destructive to mental health, but it is also necessary to spiritual development. His belief is that energy results from the tension of opposites. According to Jung, conflicts for the young people are extroverted (conflicts with parents, with society) just as for mature people they are introverted. He later developed his own theory on the conscious to include some new concepts of which the most important is the archetype. Archetypes constitute the structure of the collective unconscious; they are psychic innate dispositions to experience and represent basic human behavior and situations. Thus, mother-child relationship is governed by the mother archetype. Birth, death, power and failure are controlled by archetypes; so are religions and mystic experiences. The most important of all is the self which is the archetype of the center of the psychic person, his totality or wholeness. He also proposed the unconscious as containing a component called "the collective unconscious" of all human kind which makes of them all the same. Many cannot form significant selves because they are unable or unwilling to come to satisfactory terms with the threatening or "shadow" aspects of the collective unconscious. When one of these factors dominates, it affects the person's attitudes, thoughts, feelings, senses and intuition.

Another important factor in the formation of the human psyche is the human needs; and, to Jung, one of the essential needs of human 'irrational' nature is the idea of God. It is necessary for a person's health that the image of the ideal be charged with power and projected outside him into religious myth. The individual needs a religious figure whose actions may be imitated and whose standards upheld. For Jung, the religious experience must be linked with the experience of the archetypes of the collective unconscious. Thus, God himself is lived like a psychic experience of the path that leads one to the realization of his psychic wholeness and prevent his fragmentation. We can deduce that for the human psyche to be in harmony and attain mental health, it is important for the individual to project himself in some powerful image of a god. This also means that the absence of a god-or a religious myth- leads to a sense of fragmentariness, thus a split personality.

Also of great importance to this study is the Fanonian theory on Colonialism, decolonization and psychopathology. Fanon sees the colonial world as Manichean, a system of violence on false categories of good and evil, light and dark. Though this world is fictional -since reality cannot have categories so definitely separate- it is a very powerful force which legitimizes the heart of colonialism. Moreover, Manichean logic draws on the religious association of light being good and dark being bad. Transcending Manichaeism, Fanon uses mutation to describe the change that some black people undergo. When they 'leave a civilized' nation and return to their homeland having mutated into a superior way of being. This change or mutation is evident through the 'bourgeoisie elite' that took over after colonization and liked the desire of being associated with superiority. In his book *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon begins his chapter "Colonial War and Mental Disorders" with: "For many years to come we shall be bandaging the countless and sometimes indelible wounds inflicted on our people by the colonial on-slaught." (p.181) Fanon explores the Manichean binaries in *Black Skins White Masks* where he exposes the very nature of the experience of being black in a white world. It draws on the vehement belief that the fundamental building block of a racist society and a person's position within society is a result of a person being black or white and these categories exist in constant opposition and conflict.

Another interesting aspect in Fanon's theory of colonialism is his social theory that extends Marx's concept of alienation to the analysis of how race is constructed and reproduced within colonialism. For Marx, alienation represents the systematic denial of species-being, our fundamental nature as social beings that produce the material and social conditions of our existence. As alienated beings, our productive abilities are organized and appropriated by

others, and in this way we are incapable of expressing our humanity. Alienation is an inescapable feature of capitalism, in which capitalist control of the means of production condemns the vast majority of the population to sell their labor power in a relation of exploitation rather than having their productive ability reflecting their essential humanity (or personality). In a way people are ‘converted’ into ‘workers’ who produce surplus values for capitalists. As for Frantz Fanon, race, like class, is a denial of people’s species-being. Their humanity is a function of being recognized by others in a social relationship. That is man is human only to the extent to which he tries to impose his existence on another man in order to be recognized by the other, that other will remain the center of his actions and concerns. Thus, it is on recognition by that other being that his own human value and reality depend. It is in that other being that the meaning of his life is condensed.

Consequently, we may assume that colonialism is not simply the economic exploitation and political domination of the periphery by the capitalist core. It is the separation of colonized people from their individuality, their culture and their humanity. Fanon writes: “Because it is a systematic negation of the other person and a furious determination to deny the other person all attributes of humanity, colonialism forces the people it dominates to ask themselves the question constantly: in reality, who am I?”<sup>5</sup> The colonizer imposes coercive forms of social control and systems of labor on the indigenous people who are physically and symbolically devalued because the colonizer sees colonized people as ‘lazy’, ‘unproductive’, ‘dangerous’ and ‘savage’ who deserve only to be ruled. Eventually, the mental disorders and abnormal behaviors are a result of general oppression leading to unresolved griefs like the inferiority complex. The griefs also include symptoms and manifestations that affect every aspect of an individual’s life. Fanon explains that abnormal behaviors exhibited by the colonized are due to a creation of an “internal”, unresolved conflict. One of the concerns of Fanon was the analysis of the multifold “components of colonialism”. Surely, colonization has detrimental effects on the indigenous people, presenting itself in a multitude of facets: compartmentalization, overt racism, cultural assimilation or acculturation and, most importantly, dehumanization. Nonetheless, the most devastating effects lie underneath and are the ones that affect the identity and the psyche of the oppressed.

To understand better the way the personalities of Munira in *Petals of Blood* and Dick Diver in *Tender is the Night* have developed, this study will try to scrutinize, through the different

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<sup>5</sup> - Fanon, Frantz, *The Wretched of the Earth*, New York, Grove Press, 1963, p200.

chapters, the effect of alienation on the individual leading him to disintegration and fragmentation. In the first chapter, I will explore the social, cultural and political contexts in which the characters under study develop; I intend to show the psychological impacts the war has left on people, and the negative effects of the post-colonial mismanagement of the new political leaders as presented by Ngugi in *Petals of Blood*. Besides, the individual, trapped between these pressures, is in search of a frame he would fit in. Failing to heal his deep wounds, isolated from his society, from his self, the character ends up in a fragmentary state of mind. Fitzgerald's *Tender is the Night* also depicts the state of the disillusioned America in the post WWI era. With his wounded psyche of the 1920's, Dick Diver feels lost between the promises of the American dream and the reality of the post war times. The second chapter will be devoted to the study of *Petals of Blood* both from a structural point of view, and the discourse Ngugi used in his treatment of an issue related to education, religion, Christian customs, and the alienation from the land, all intermingled with the individual's insight. In chapter three and in Fitzgerald's *Tender is the Night*, I will show how the writer succeeds in portraying a character who is a symbol of certain life situations. Through a minute use of style that fits so well in the theme of the disoriented and destabilized mind, and the fragmented soul, the writer centers on how the unity and harmony of the self of the nineteenth century is negated by the disunity and fragmentation of the twentieth century. I will explore whether we should deal with the character's attempt to hold the center of a society in quest of its equilibrium as a salvation to be hailed, or rather as shattered psychic and moral fall to be condemned. In both novels, the protagonists are morally wounded; they fight their inner struggle and succeed to gather their fragmentary selves and rise above the coercive forces that nailed them.

# CHAPTER I

## **The Legacy of War: Ngugi's and Fitzgerald's Social and Political Responses.**

Our lives are a battle on which is fought a continuous war between the forces that are pledged to confirm our humanity and those determined to dismantle it, those who strive to build a protective wall around it, and those who wish to pull it down; those who seek to mould it and those committed to breaking it up; those who aim to open our eyes, to make us see the light and those who wish to lull us into closing our eyes.

Ngugi WaThiong'o

*A Grain of Wheat*

## **A/ Theoretical Preliminaries:**

For a convenient approach to the works under study, recourse to psychoanalysis proves as appropriate as necessary a tool. As a result of both theoretical consideration and practical experience, the range of human problems that could be explained and understood has been enlarged considerably through the years. In the search for a better understanding of human attitudes concerning personality, Sigmund Freud had a tendency to regard human peculiarities of individual behavior as almost direct repetitions of infantile drives or reactions; hence expecting later disturbances to vanish if the underlying infantile experiences are elucidated. However, his theory seems to be one-sided since it emphasizes the genetic cause and underestimates the connection between later peculiarities and earlier experiences in daily life.

When a character's actions and behaviors are no longer explained as an outcome of instinctive drives, modified only by the environment, "the emphasis falls on the life conditions that mold the character"<sup>1</sup>. Hence understanding a novel's characters' trends in a literary work relies on the search for the environmental factors responsible for creating individual conflicts, thus disturbances in human relationships become the crucial factor in the genesis of psychological problems. Then "sociological factors become crucial elements in the genesis of neuroses rather than purely anatomical-physiological ones."<sup>2</sup>The relevant factor in the source of psychological disturbance is, therefore, not only linked to infantile experiences but also to all those adverse influences which make an individual feel helpless and defenseless and which make him conceive the world as potentially menacing. Because of potential dangers, the individual must develop certain "neurotic trends"<sup>3</sup> that permit him to cope with the external world with some measure of safety. Thus narcissistic, masochistic or perfectionist trends seen under this light are not the result of instinctive forces, but they represent primarily an individual's attempt to find paths through a wilderness full of unknown dangers. Mental disorders then represent a peculiar kind of struggle for life under difficult conditions. Their very essence consists of disturbances in the relations to self and others, and conflicts arising on these grounds.

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<sup>1</sup> Karen, Horney, "Some General Premises Of Freud's Thinking" in *New Ways in Psychoanalysis*, Routledge, London, 1999, p.40.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, p.23.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, p.45.

On the other hand, Freud asserts that neurotic conflicts are between the “ego” and the “id” of a personality where the “id” is the sum total of crude, instinctual needs, and the “ego” or “super ego” comprises more goals, self-esteem, ideals, and creative abilities. Accordingly, the essential characteristic of the “ego” is weakness. All source of energy rests in the “id”; the “ego” lives on borrowed forces, so its goals and decisions are determined by the “id”. It must take care that the essential drives do not collide too dangerously with the external world. Weakness in the “id” or the “ego” leads to an imbalance that causes the individual’s weakness. He, therefore, gives the impression of having no say in his life. He is driven by emotional forces which he does not know and over which he has no control. The disturbed individual acts and reacts in rigid ways, often in contrast to his intellectual judgment. Even his attitude towards others is determined not by conscious wishes and values but by unconscious factors.

When considering the relationship between culture and personality misbalance, psychoanalysis finds it interesting to relate cultural conditions and the development of psychic disturbances or neurotic conflicts. For psychologists,

Neurotic development in the individual arises ultimately from feelings of alienation, hostility, fear, and diminished self-confidence. These attitudes do not themselves constitute a neurosis, but they are the soil out of which a neurosis may grow since it is their combination which creates a basic feeling of helplessness toward a world conceived as potentially dangerous.<sup>4</sup>

Consequently, personality fragmentation has at its roots factors that constitute the cultural and social circumstances which create emotional isolation, potential hostile environment, insecurity and fears, and a deep feeling of individual powerlessness. But what are the parts that constitute and control our personality?

In Carl Jung’s theory the psyche is divided into three main parts. The first is the “ego” that Jung identifies with the conscious mind. Closely related is the second part, the “*personal*” unconscious, which includes anything which is not presently conscious, but can be. This part also includes both memories that are easily brought to mind and those that have been suppressed for some reason. It is like most people’s understanding of the unconscious. The third part of the psyche that makes Jung stand out from the rest is “*the*

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<sup>4</sup> Karen, Horney *New Ways in Psychoanalysis*, Routledge, London, 1999.

*collective unconscious*” that we can call our “psychic inheritance”. It is the reservoir of the experiences as species, the knowledge we are all born with. This part is the one that influences all of our experiences and behaviors, most especially the emotional ones, but we only know about it indirectly. An important and interesting aspect related to the collective unconscious is, according to Jung, the notion of “*archetype*”. Archetypes are simply the contents of the collective unconscious which Jung called also *dominants*, *imagos*, mythological or primordial images. The archetype has no form of its own; it works the way that instincts work in Freud’s theory. There is no fixed number of archetypes and they usually overlap and blend into each other. The part of us most distant from collective unconscious is “*the persona*” which represents our public image or public impression that we wish to present as we fill the roles society require of us, yet the most important archetype is “*the self*”. It is the ultimate unity of the personality and is symbolized by a circle or a cross. The personifications that best represent self are Christ and Buddha, two people whom many believe achieved perfection. Here it is worth noticing that in Ngugi’s novel *Petals of Blood*, one of the protagonists, Munira, turns to Christianity, sets fire on the brothel in an attempt to save himself and his village, and to overcome his broken self: “Return to the path ... turn to the Light” Munira intoned to those who came to see him before trial, “Kneel down ... and ask for the forgiveness of Christ.”<sup>5</sup> But Jung felt that perfection in the personality is only achieved in death. The self is an archetype that represents the transcendence -the process of rising above our opposites, of seeing both of sides of who we are- so that every aspect of our personality is expressed equally. According to Jung, “an individual is neither and both male and female, neither and both ego and shadow, neither and both good and both good and bad, neither and both conscious and unconscious”<sup>6</sup>. And yet with no oppositions, the energy created from the opposition-and which is “given” to either or both sides- no longer exists, and the individual ceases to act.

Another important fact about personality to take into account is that any person is really composed of many diverse, fragmentary -and generally illusory- images of self. Those fragments called “*ego states*” communicate together to form a whole. However, in some cases, those various parts cannot hold together anymore which leads to a disorder of personality known as *Multiple Personality Disorder (MPD)* or *Dissociative Identity Disorder*

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<sup>5</sup>-Ngugi, Wa Thiong’o, *Petals of Blood*, Heinemann, 1977, p.341.

<sup>6</sup>-Boeree, C.George, “*Personality Theories: Carl Jung*”, Shippensburg University, 1997, pp. 1-20.

(*DID*). The coordination among these personality agencies results in a healthy one. The personality is always attempting to resolve this interior conflict to keep its balance. However, if personality types are determined by different combinations of attitudes, we should not minimize the social and cultural influences as import factors to personality development. Indeed, psychoanalysts maintain that, as a rule, to keep one's life on track is only possible at the price of repressing important wishes and unconscious memories. The result is a splitting of the self: "Thus, borderline individuals exhibit what may be called a fragmentation of the self"<sup>7</sup> where there is an oscillation between contradictions, the good and the bad.

To better grasp the underlying objectives in Ngugi's works, one needs to read them in the light of Edward Said's "contrapuntal reading"<sup>8</sup> of imperial literature. Indeed, Ngugi's reader has to be aware both of the history that is narrated and of those other stories against which the dominating discourse acts. In formulating his theory, E. Said draws on an analogy from Western classical music to explain the principle of contrapuntal reading. He states that in music, "various themes play off one another; yet the resulting polyphony is concert and harmony,"<sup>9</sup> that is a well-organized interplay that "derives from the themes not from a rigorous melodic or formal principle outside the work"<sup>10</sup>. Making this parallel between an artistic production and a literary work, we can read and interpret Ngugi's novels whose concern is determined by the historical, cultural and political background. Indeed, even if these elements are suppressed and do not always appear on the surface, there still exist traces of responses to colonization. This notion of contrapuntal reading is in fact similar to Bakhtin's view of dialogic interpretation since they both consider the interaction or interplay of mixed feelings that inevitably coexist to form one and unique literary work, and it is the reader's task to interpret this interaction.

Also by referring to the hollowness of humanist principles when they are transposed to an imperial context, Said points to Frantz Fanon who sees the possibility of a real humanism emerging from the struggle for liberation. He even joins Fanon by stating: "For Fanon, violence is the synthesis that overcomes the reification of white man as subject, Black man as

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<sup>7</sup>- Fuchs, Thomas, « *Psychopathology: Fragmented Selves: Temporality and Identity in Borderline Personality Disorder*, »Psychiatric Department, University of Heidelberg, Germany, July 2007.

<sup>8</sup>- Said, Edward.W, *Culture and Imperialism*, Vintage Books, New York, 1994, p.51.

<sup>9</sup>- Ibid,p.64

<sup>10</sup>- Ibid.

object”<sup>11</sup>. Thus, in both E. Said’s and Fanon’s theories there is a common interest precisely in the possibility of a humanism emerging which is truly universal since its central focus is the individual. Quoting Fanon, E. Said states “Liberation is consciousness of self ... not the closing of a door to communication”<sup>12</sup>, but a never-ending process of “discovery and encouragement” that leads to “national self-liberation and to universalism”<sup>13</sup>. In the light of this, it is obvious then that the major focus of these scholars, as of leading writers like Ngugi, remains the individual that constitutes the most important element in a social project. It becomes even more necessary when this project is one of humanistic universalism. That is why E. Said shares the attitude of oppositional intellectuals such as Rushdie, Ngugi, Foucault and others who “show, in Fanon’s words, the violence done to psychically and politically repressed inferiors in the name of advanced culture, and then to begin the difficult, if not always tragically flawed, project of formulating the discourse of liberation”<sup>14</sup>. In this sense, Ngugi’s novels reflect an attempt to overcome the oppression and ‘begin the difficult’ which is to heal the psychological scars and recover the individual’s internal peace. And that is what he already did in his first novels. *The River Between* and *A Grain of Wheat* where there are traces of Fanon’s influence.

In his study of the colonial system, Fanon traces the manner in which the psyche of a human has to change to such an extent that a new meaning can be given to it. To conclude *Black Skins White Masks*, Fanon expresses his innate desire for all of humanity to transcend Manichaeism, a system of violence premised on false categories of good and evil, light and dark as seen by the colonizer. Though this Manichean world is fictional, it is a powerful force that legitimizes the heart of colonialism. So, by transcending this state, humans create a society whereby every human is recognized through “the open door of every consciousness”<sup>15</sup>. That is to say that every human exists beyond the compartment to which he has been restricted and confined in and is rather recognized in his humanness. In his *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon explores the emancipatory possibilities which can be achieved through a practical relation with reality in an attempt to create new truths based on the

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<sup>11</sup>Op.cit, pp. 268-69.

<sup>12</sup>Op.cit, p.270.

<sup>13</sup>Op.cit, p.272.

<sup>14</sup> Said, Edward W, « *Reflection Foucault and the Imagination Exion of Power* », *ile and other Essays*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000, p.242.

<sup>15</sup>Fanon, Frantz, *The Wretched of the Earth*, New York, Grove Press, 1963, p.181.

humanity of every single being. This truth can only be achieved once the individual gets rid of “the truth” driven by colonialist totality and replaces it with his own humanity. In other words, Fanon asserts that in order to create a new society, it is necessary for humans to start anew developing other truths and perceptions of reality that are continuously negotiated and reflected upon. The reality focuses on the individuality of humans and does not confine them to given categories. It rather recognizes and encourages the open door of every consciousness of the individual. Fanon even uses Hegelian thought to explain the necessary process which enables individuals to overcome the rigidity of colonialist thought. Hegel states that “the battle of reason is the struggle to break up rigidity to which the understanding has reduced everything”<sup>16</sup>. Thus, the process starts always with the individual’s reason that can achieve a rigorous destruction of all that is absolute, confining, and categorizing.

Drawn from this, it is likely that once the human psyche is freed from all the boundaries of colonial confinement, he can recover his humanness and better uses his realities to achieve his wholeness. Of course the new realities that the colonized will come to know exist only in action. It is the struggle which explodes the old colonial reality to reveal unknown new meanings hidden by the colonial reality. In fact, national consciousness must be widely enriched by a rapid transformation into a consciousness of social and political needs or rather into real humanism. This is an issue that Ngugi has tackled in many of his works where he calls for a nationalist action and social emancipation of the masses, as in *Petals of Blood*.

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<sup>16</sup>-Rockmore, T, « *Cognition: An introduction to Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit* », Berkeley, University of California Press, p.115.

## **B/The Individual's Rebellion in Ngugi's *Petals of Blood*.**

Writers have always been intent on reflecting the social and cultural situations of their times. In this respect, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o in the African context and F.Scott Fitzgerald in the United States convey their preoccupation with the contemporary realities in their respective societies to mirror them in their novels. Ngugi foregrounds socially and politically conscious Kenyan characters to respond to such issues as education, religion, the practice of indigenous cultures, and Christian syncretism, as well as he highlights the personalities of individuals who feel alienated from their local environment and who continually undergo both an inner and external struggle as reflected in *Petals of Blood* where the political and social backgrounds constitute the setting of the narrative. From a different perspective but with a concern to depict his society under economic and social stress, Fitzgerald focuses on individuals whose itineraries and their traumas exemplify the malaise of Americans in the aftermath of the independence.

At the heart of Ngugi's position regarding Kenyan society is his contention that Kenya's working people and the peasants are marginalized, if not totally ignored. He undergoes a process of making a new history, different from that distorted one written by colonial writers or even by some Kenyan professionals, trained and schooled by means of Western theories. For this, narratives, particularly the novel, could provide Ngugi with the necessary tools to portray a realistic image of Kenya and to counter the false one portrayed by colonialism.

Without any doubt, the early novels of Ngugi affect an authorial personality shaped by different influences starting from the educational system in late colonial East Africa. Undeniably, two important institutions, at least, had an impact on Ngugi's intellectual development: Alliance High School, the most famous first secondary school in Kenya -a model for Siriana in *Weep Not Child* and *Petals of Blood* -and Makerere College in Uganda, the only University College in all of East and Central Africa which is also considered a legendary Mecca throughout the region. There he had access to an education that certainly helped in forging his resistance to imposed values and later his determination to subvert colonial forms of domination. Thus, in the sixties when Ngugi proceeded from Makerere to undertake postgraduate studies at Leeds University, together with other African students, the reading of radical theorists like Marx and Lenin gave a firm direction to the contents of his

writings, marked by a search for liberation and democracy in Kenya. *Petals of Blood* is one of those works, in which the character Karega is endowed with a Marxist sensibility and embodies Ngugi's aspirations to the promotion of the masses.

Before that, Ngugi's early education was very important in shaping his intellect. His primary education in Gikuyu Independent School (1948-55) already gave him an awareness of "colonialism as an oppressive force"<sup>17</sup> but also a pride in belonging to a peasant culture which itself provided him with knowledge of "songs, stories, proverbs, riddles"<sup>18</sup> used profusely in most of his novels. But in the Alliance School, whose curriculum was modeled on that of British schools, the students were conditioned to dissociate themselves from the very people who had brought them up, and who were toiling on the farms to pay their school fees. Thus, distance from home together with the school's ardent Christian ideology sharply diminished the influence of traditions and kinship. Also, and implicitly, English education was associated to urban advancement whereas indigenous languages were to reflect rural backwardness as he shows it in *The River Between* where we are presented with a simplistic polarization of characters as traditionalists and Christians. Waiyaki naively believes that modern education is a key to liberation and communal unity, even when imposed on people. Ngugi's nationalist sensibility was already shadowed in his novel *Weep not Child* where he portrays the Agikuyu community struggling against ethnicity and the myth of origin as the founder of the Agikuyu nation; whereas, as he attempts to foreground also in *A Grain of Wheat*, the necessary struggle is one for a more united Kenya. This struggle should take place without falling back on the organic ethnic community or forgetting the histories of conflicts and differences among the Gikuyu community. However, there were also some benefits for the pupils of Alliance School. Being a national boarding school, Alliance brought pupils – mainly boys- from all the country's ethnic groups to a "paradise of harmony"<sup>19</sup>; thus, applying a microcosmic society for the multicultural independent Kenya Ngugi has always argued for. Later, it also supplied significant personnel for the anti-colonial leadership through its graduate students and staff that were expelled from the school.

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<sup>17</sup>-Sicherman, Carol, *The Making of a Rebel: A Source book in Kenyan Literature and Resistance, Documentary Research in African Written Literature*. Oxford, Hans Zell, 1990, p.19.

<sup>18</sup>-Ibid, p 20.

<sup>19</sup>- Ngugi, WaThiong'o, *Weep Not Child*, Reprint, London, Ibadan, Nairobi, Heinemann, 1976.

In Ngugi's novels, land is linked to the spiritual right of the people for freedom. As the land was given by God, it also constitutes a symbol of cohesion between the living and the dead, so between past and present. It is significant that Ngugi uses land as a metaphor for change and conflict. However, as a consequence of the advent of colonialism, land which once united the Gikuyu now divides them. That was the ultimate dilemma that Ngugi, as a nationalist writer, took on his shoulders, which is to invent a nationalist feeling against the divisions engendered by colonialism. In this sense, the protagonist of *The River Between*, Waiyaki, portrays the image of the modern nationalist builder that Ngugi himself adopts. Even more ironical in Ngugi's schooling is the recognition of the Mau Mau movement that Alliance education could help overthrow the colonial hegemony that the school's colonial policy intended to uphold. Like all such schools, the Alliance High School proved to be an institution controlled by the colonial system (including examinations), through extracurricular activities and through Christianity as a characteristic of missionary agents. Hence, Religion was central to the boys' schooling. There were also clubs for academic purposes; the great majority of the students belonged to the Dramatic society which held annual productions of Shakespeare. There was also the Alliance High School Magazine consisting mainly of reports of students' organizations and to which Ngugi contributed with some reports. That was well reflected in his writings. In *Weep not Child*, the school provides a neutral space for imagining the nation where the young Njoroge and Mwhaki are its most relevant icons. They represent a future pluralistic Kenyan nation that is free of ethnic divisions or racial hatred. For Ngugi, the school constitutes a microcosmic nation of diversity and peace. In other words, the school becomes the imaginary invention with which Ngugi creates a template for an ideal Kenya as Njoroge wished. At times, Njoroge even "wished the whole school was like this. This seemed a little paradise, a paradise which children from all walks of life and different religious faiths could work together without any consciousness."<sup>20</sup>

The school is significant in that it brings together people of diverse backgrounds and cultures, the ahoi (squatters) and the homeguards, the settlers and the natives. For Ngugi, the school, the source of education, constitutes the way to a free and harmonious mind. Njoroge sustains the modernist lexicon of Waiyaki -education for liberation- which represents the hope of a whole generation and especially the educated ones. Yet, like a large part of intellectuals,

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<sup>20</sup>ibid, p 115

Njoroge was disillusioned because of the complex situation that the country faced. In Alliance School there were a few essays on cultural concerns which already showed glimmers of independent thought even if they also suggested a cultural alienation, as when a writer laughs at the “curious” and “superstitious” customs of the Gikuyu<sup>21</sup> before colonization. In addition, one of the most popular clubs in the school, *the Debating Society*, together with the library, afforded Ngugi ways to get in touch with famous world writers. Coming fresh from his Gikuyu Independent School, he took part in a debate on a notion “that Western education had done more harm than good” in Kenya, and “trembling with anger”, he declared that “Western education could not be equated with the land taken from the peasants by the British”<sup>22</sup>. In the library, he found “cherished companions” in the character of Dickens and Stevenson and “stumb[ed] across” Tolstoy’s *Childhood, Boyhood and Youth*. He remembered literally “trembling when seeing Peter Abrahams’ *Tell Freedom* in the hands of an Alliance teacher. But in the process of building his African identity, he was much influenced by the school’s headmaster’s “strongly messianic influence”<sup>23</sup> that he came to Makerere “very much a product of Carey Francis (the headmaster, a devout Christian with a first-division pass in the School Certificate Exam.)

Later, when sent in 1959 to Makerere College by Alliance HS, Ngugi felt initially “on my guard against the sprinkling white faces”<sup>24</sup> in his class. Since the College had affiliation with the University of London, it gave the university an outlook of the curriculum. Thus, Ngugi had another influence from a literature spanning Chaucer to T.S.Eliot. That made him aware of such great thinkers’ achievements and certainly had an impact on his personality. In fact, Ngugi even names T.S. Eliot in addition to Edward Arnold and F.R.Leavis as a main influence in Makerere, noting that “Eliot’s high culture of an Anglo-Catholic feudal tradition” was “suspiciously close to the culture of the ‘high table’ and to the racial doctrines of those born to rule”<sup>25</sup>. African students were meant to study English literature in order to become citizens of the world because English ideas and forms would give them the necessary stimulus

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<sup>21</sup>Ngini,D.K, « *The Gikuyu Before the Coming of Europeans* » The AHS Magazines, Nov. 21-22, 1956.

<sup>22</sup>Sicherman, Carol, *Ngugi Wa Thiongo: The Making of a Rebel*. Opcit.

<sup>23</sup>Tejani, Bahadur, « *Local Significance and the Importance of the Local Audience in Modern African Writing*” (Studied in Ngugi, La Guma, Mphahlele, Okara and Peters). University of Nairobi, 1973, p.106.

<sup>24</sup>- Ngugi Wa Thiong’o, *The Oasis that is Makerere*, Sunday Nation, 24 March,30.

<sup>25</sup>- Ngugi Wa Thiong’o, *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*, London: James Currey, Nairobi, Heinemann, Kenya, 1986.

for developing African literature. In light of these influences, Ngugi's novels indicate a crystallization of his ideas and visions.

If we consider fiction as the literary representation of society as far as it approximates the historical truth within it, Ngugi's novels then form a relevant chapter in Kenyan history. The idea that the real heroes of Uhuru did not derive even an atom of dividend from the Mau Mau struggle was one of his main concerns. Ngugi has turned therefore his literary efforts towards an internal examination of his society in order to decipher the real causes of Kenya's, and thus Africa's trauma that led the nation towards inequality, injustice and exploitation. He hinted at this idea in *A Grain of Wheat*, made it obvious in *Petals of Blood* and dramatized it in *I will Marry when I Want*. However, Ngugi found in the curriculum means for a counter discourse and possibilities for a counter subversion with which he could "hit back at the white man"<sup>26</sup> and restore his Kenyan history.

Another legacy of the war that is to be added to Ngugi's creativity is the list of the prescribed authors in the Makerere School curriculum including D. H. Lawrence and Joseph Conrad. If Lawrence's spirituality and "way of entering into the spirit of things ... influenced [him] quite a lot"<sup>27</sup>, there is also a more fruitful connection between Conrad and Ngugi as far as the choice of themes is concerned. When a student at Makerere College, Ngugi chose Conrad for the special project required of Honors' English students because he found a substantial affinity of sensibilities with Conrad. Indeed Conrad's interest in the individual's alienation, self-betrayal and heroism constituted later themes that were explored by Ngugi with acute sensitivity. After Kenya became independent in 1963, it became clear that Ngugi's bitterness was beginning to show because he was increasingly frustrated by the new African government. He was beginning to suspect that for the national bourgeoisie –the national ruling class- independence did not fulfill the promises that the nationalists had made and for which the resistance had paid the price. In *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*, Ngugi attempts to dramatize "the epic deeds of resistance" of the Mau Mau leader who died (but "will never die") in the struggle against, to quote the author's preface, "Imperialism". Even Conrad's questioning of the morality of actions and his political stand had an impact on later Ngugi's

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<sup>26</sup>- Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, "Why Shakespeare in Africa », Daily Nation, 22 April, 6.

<sup>27</sup>-Duerden, Dennis, *Ngugi wa Thiong'o*in Dennis Duerden and Cosmo Pictorse (eds) *African Writers' Talking: A Collect of Radio Interviews*. London, Ibadan, Nairobi. Heinemann, New York, African Publishing Corp., 1964, p.122.

thematic choice, linked to the “opposition between the conscious self that takes decisions and wills to achieve great heroic deeds [,] and the subconscious which betrays him”<sup>28</sup>, and the impossibility of forgetting the past. These traits of characterization undermine the mind of the alienated individual who is gradually led to an inner turmoil and breakdown as it is the case with Munira in *Petals of Blood* or Mugo in *A Grain of Wheat*, each with a particularly unhappy personal background where the individual must keep on tormenting himself slowly till destroying it, for it is in his nature to annihilate himself. Most of those influences largely contribute to the forging of Ngugi’s use of characters that constantly reflect on their past and question their present situation. When unable to come to term with that feeling of loss and emptiness, they fail to collect themselves and end up fragmented.

Nevertheless, there was another literature that told Ngugi of another world that was similar to his. It was in the books of diasporic writers that he read at Makerere library –as there were no such books on the syllabus. The writings of Peter Abrahams, Chinua Achebe, George Lamming, Cyprian Ekwenzi, Aimé Césaire, and Leopold Sedar Senghor taught him about his African culture, roots and political topics that were considered unsuitable to the classroom. Initially, Ngugi and his schoolmates were physically and morally confined to a Makerere education that was isolated from its roots, African literature. Consequently, through an alienating education, Ngugi and his likes tended to develop a subconscious sense of distancing and isolation. They formed “a community [literally and figuratively] fenced in.”<sup>29</sup> This, in turn, would give them a feeling of loss and disintegration since they could not, by birth or inheritance, accept or accommodate a borrowed social order that was completely alien to them, nor could they fit again in their mother earth because they have been nourished in a different soil. Ultimately, it was no accident that these feelings were not to be excluded from Ngugi’s writings where he transposes his experiences and his generations’ to characters. Karega and Munira are ones that reflect Ngugi’s and his likes’ questioning which lead to their feeling “not at ease” with their condition in the “new” order.

Kenya remains for Ngugi the explicit locale of all his writings. *A Grain of Wheat* is set in the days leading up to Kenya’s independence, but the story does more than tell facts. There is a sensitive portrayal of a human weakness that appeals to man’s sensibilities. The

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<sup>28</sup>-Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>-Ali, A. Mazrui, *Political Values and the Educated Class in Africa*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1978, p.254.

confession of a hero is of crucial significance since it reveals how a man and a woman representing the primordial Gikuyu couple, are separated by betrayal and guilt, but find themselves together again and their union will bring a child. Thus, the story ends with a note of hope. Ngugi represents independence as a new beginning for the Kenyans, all the Kenyans. Both the resistance fighters and the loyalists who supported the British and even the peasants can re-establish a community with an understatement that none is without guilt and the acceptance also that they face a common enemy in the new urban society. That was the Kenyan inheritance from the colonizer. The farm that the villagers intended to buy from a departing British settler has been taken by their member of parliament, who will stay in the capital for the independence celebration rather than join their community. It is Ngugi's call for reestablishing a new order in the inherited society from British dominance. A society that has become through the years of colonization a selfish society dominated by personal interest and individual welfare away from its communalism. And that was another plague that colonialism engendered. Ngugi seems to warn the younger generation of the danger lurking in the horizon that constitutes another threat to independence, the capitalist neocolonialism which continues to 'underdevelop' the African society. Along the story, all characters starting from Gikonyo to Mugo and Mumbi, come to realize that the war was a real calamity that has left undeniable scars on their psyche. Therefore, their lives and future are seen through a disturbed mind. That is the most ravaging trauma of war that Ngugi's later narratives hint at.

Another important interest of Ngugi is the situation of peasantry as a dispossessed group. In this sense he echoes Fanon's idea of the peasantry as both the most exploited group and as a potential that provides revolutionary change in the postcolonial state. Thus, it is of most significance that land constitutes one of the main settings of *Devil on the Cross* and *Petals of Blood*. Fanon's criticism of the national bourgeoisie and his prediction of their neocolonial mentality overshadow the postcolonial novels of Ngugi. According to Fanon, the African revolution must be powered by the peasants because the African elite has been occupied mimicking the culture of the colonizer while the working class has become a kind of labor aristocracy working for the privileges of white workers. For Fanon, and consequently for Ngugi, it is the peasants and the proletariat, by contrast, who are the true liberationists. That is why, in both novels the village symbolizes land as an ideal state and as a home for the peasantry. Yet, with the coming of colonialism and later with capital investment in Ilmorog, peasants and workers become landless and witness economic deprivation. They find

themselves living on the slave wages of African landowners and African businessmen in partnership with multinational companies that took over Ilmorog in the name of social and economic development. Their lives contrast sharply with that of the wealthy colonial settlers. That is the loyalists that Ngugi calls “homeguards” that emerge to benefit from Uhuru. Thus, independence does not bring any economic gains or social comfort to peasants and workers who continue to suffer even after independence. That is the betrayal that Ngugi denounces. Ironically, the village becomes the land of contradictory forces of poverty and wealth in independent Kenya so that the postcolonial state inherited the sufferings and ills of the colonial state. The betrayal is well exemplified in Kimeria who betrayed Abdullah and Ndinguri during the Mau Mau war and becomes the new hero of political independence. Through Waweru -the landowner- and his father Ezekiel, Ngugi shows that the exploitation of deprived peasants and workers has become a family business.

According to Ngugi, the most important aspect of the African community is the common ownership of land where all worked for the common good. With the advent of colonialism, conflict and suffering ensued. Therefore, Ngugi always links the postcolonial situation and experience to the colonial context that he uses as an important backdrop against which the post-independence experience is under examination. The story underscores the betrayal of the ideals and goals of the national liberation movement by those who gained power in the newly independent Kenya. As these leaders were controlled by self-interest, they no longer believed in the ideals of the nation-building concepts but in their own benefits. The Mau Mau struggle stands as the major icon around which a national identity is built. Their struggle provides the seeds of sacrifice and resistance. When, in the story, Kenyatta addresses a meeting, the narrator painfully stresses that among speakers, “There was also a Luo speaker from Nyanza showing that the party had broken barriers between tribes”<sup>30</sup>In the same meeting Kihika talks of “the call of a nation in turmoil.”<sup>31</sup>

In his writings, Ngugi is keen to show that the liberation war affected people’s life differently since it also bears a disruptive side. The ideal African family of Ngotho is torn apart. It brings along new forces of change within the Agikuyu society. Indeed, it leads to a new order of power and authority in Ngotho’s household. Ngotho’s son, Boro, wants to

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<sup>30</sup>Ngugi wa Thiongo, *A Grain of Wheat*, Heinemann, London 1967, p.14.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid, p.15.

administer oath. Animated by a loss of authority brought by the young Mau Mau fighters, Ngotho becomes interested in the Mau Mau struggle. From that, Ngugi is pointing to the real motives of those who took command of the country after independence and showed that their interest in power was not always motivated by a nationalist impulse. The war then engenders also a generation conflict. Ngotho is interested in the war only as it will restore his power. Here he faces a moral dilemma: either to defend his power and authority or to follow the young generation. Ironically, the other harsh aspect of the struggle is that it also alienates Boro further away from his family and from its primary goal to restore land. Through these characters, Ngugi seems to warn the young generation of the danger of division and separation. The bloody war that people fought and in which they lost too many of those whom they loved should not serve to alienate them from their community. That is the lesson Ngugi tries to teach his fellows by highlighting the effects and traumas of the war on ordinary individuals. That is exactly what he does in *Petals of Blood* where some of the characters like Abdulla suffer from the consequences of war. He paid physically by losing his leg, and he still leads a miserable life after independence. Moreover, Ngugi directly hints at the incessant betrayal wherein the individual themes of betrayal only translate political themes of betrayal as well. That is found in *Petals of Blood* in the character of the MP, Nderiwa Riera-aa: “What was an MP? A new type of government agent” (*Petals of Blood*, p18) whom the villagers elected to be their voice in the government, but “they had hardly seen him since”(18). He failed to keep his promises and betrayed their hopes.

As many other writers, Ngugi began to ask some questions about the nature and purpose of radical intellectualism in postcolonial societies. Their questioning was related to their practice as writers: for whom they were writing, and who was reading them. The questions they asked were also related to the role of intellectuals and their position regarding their duty in their society. A literature written by the elite, about the elite and directed to the elite simply could not bear the heavy burden of social malaise. For that reason, Ngugi and other writers began to think of new ways of addressing their communities. Ngugi’s vision was also intermingled with that of the artist when he asked:

Will the artist choose the angle of vision of the possessing classes?

Or will he choose the angle of vision of the dispossessed and therefore struggling class?

This is the area of spiritual Freedom, or call it the area of self-liberation!<sup>32</sup>

That is, for Ngugi, in order for the writer or the artist to find his own freedom and liberate himself from all the Manichean constraints imposed by colonialism, he has first to immerse himself in the struggles of the Kenyan workers and peasants. This process is also a step towards liberation from foreign domination of the people's economy and culture that should start with self-liberation. In his works, Ngugi dealt with the position of intellectuals that he presents as vacillating between the collaborating -the comprador bourgeoisie- and the non-collaborators; they are the educated elite who were often not sure of the side they should take. These characters adopt a safe status of an internal isolation or exile. In *Devil on the Cross*, the character of Gatuiria, just like the teacher in *Matigari*, or Munira in *Petals of Blood*, prefers the culture of silence to active political engagement. This attitude expresses Ngugi's sense of disillusionment with the intellectual elite in Kenya. Gatuiria and Munira rebel against the material obsession of their parents, but they are unable to act and change things except for idealistic, spiritual and academic postures. Practically, these intellectual characters are inefficient and inactive. Munira is similar to Gatuiria in his position. Although being one of the main protagonists of the novel, he remains a detached and confused intellectual. He hates his father's lifestyle, but secretly wishes to be a lord, a master and owner. Torn between these two opposites, he is entrapped in the secure classroom walls. He finds refuge in religion and teaching to escape the harsh reality. Gatuiria, whose name means 'the seeker', is portrayed as having some revolutionary impulses; for that he bears the novel's optimistic trend. By rejecting his father's property, he is taking position with the oppressed. Sent abroad to study business, he rebels and chooses to study music instead. On his return, he devotes himself to the restoration of African culture through music. This would symbolize his patriotism. Yet, we can see in his commitment to music a refuge and a way of rejecting his background. As it is a means of dealing with his alienation to heal his soul from the fragmentation he endures.

And in this sense, *Petals of Blood* is another instance of an alienated part of society that undergoes a social, economic and political malaise. The intellectual part is personified in the characters of Munira and Kariga, the village teachers who were unable to fit in the Ilmorog village with which they had difficulty to communicate. More than that, they were refuting the

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<sup>32</sup> Ngugi Wa Thiongo', "Freedom of the Artist" in *Barrels of a Pen: Resistance to Repression in Neo-Colonial Kenya*. London: New Beacon, 1983, p.59.

new leaders' values which stand in opposition to theirs. Beside the struggle they had to lead against the new bourgeoisie, they had also to face their internal struggle. Whether openly claimed or unconsciously recognized, the shaping of Ngugi's personality is reflected in his claims. Already in his play, "*The Black Hermit*", he overshadowed his stand. The opening performance of this first full-length Anglophone East African play put on the National Theater moved many in the audience to tears:

... a modern African writer had analyzed our alienation, had understood the process of history that made us, had exposed the acculturation imposed upon us as by our foreign education and reminded us in the tears of joy and independence of the bitterness of the struggle which lay ahead.<sup>33</sup>

However, for intellectuals like Ngugi, being the chosen ones of the nation makes it a huge moral and psychic burden on their shoulders. Indeed, already as Makerere students, they were not "disembodied spirits" at all but complicated people "torn two ways" between "the West and ... the tribe"<sup>34</sup> in other words between their desire and their duty. Those intellectuals realized painfully that they "were supposedly the elite" as Peter Nazareth recalled, "Yet somehow there was this feeling that we were not good enough"<sup>35</sup>; they constituted the future on whom depend -as the orator says in Ruheni's novel *The Future Leaders*<sup>36</sup>- the hopes of the peoples of the great territories of Uganda, Kenya and Tanganyika. But sooner, the narrator dismisses the speech: "How can they all be the future leaders? And who will do the work?"<sup>37</sup>. That question about the relationship between intellectuals and workers was increasingly preoccupying Ngugi's mind for many years, mainly as he went abroad for further education and was caught up in the international tornado of ideas. Ngugi's position regarding the duty of intellectuals certainly grew out of the feeling of late sixties and seventies' African intellectualism. Structurally and ideologically, writers -as other members of their society- were undergoing the same malaise. They had experienced decolonization as a time of great massive transformation. Yet, shortly afterwards, they realized that their

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<sup>33</sup>Tejani, Bahadur, *Modern African Literature and the Legacy of Cultural Colonialism*, « *World Literature Written in English* », 1979, p.52.

<sup>34</sup>- Ngugi wa Thiong'o, « *Can the Educated Africans Meet this Challenge?* Sunday Nation, 27 May: 31, 1962.

<sup>35</sup>- Lindfors, Mazungumzo: *Interviews with East African Writers, Publishers, Editors and Scholars*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Center for International studies, 1980, p.84.

<sup>36</sup>- Ruheni, Mwangi, *The Future Leaders*, Nairobi, Ibadan, London, Heinemann, 1973, p.1.

<sup>37</sup>- Ibid, p.66.

revolution had been betrayed and the liberation they had celebrated at independence had little effect on their daily life. Independence did not really bring a change for the majority of society; rather, it was to suit the narrow class interests as lawyers, bankers and big landowners. That is why intellectuals, more than any members of their society, became painfully conscious of their dreadful situation. Consequently, there could not be tranquility in the midst of such weary situation which led some writers to feel so crippled by their isolation and lack of social recognition. This feeling was certainly to be reflected on their productions.

Like other African writers such as Chinua Achebe, Kofi Awoonor, Ayi Kwei Armah, and though with his specifically leftist approach, Ngugi has sought to denounce the failure of the post-independence political class to manage Kenyan affairs. He portrays the political and economic leaders as a corrupt group, characterized by a conspicuous tendency to greed, materialism and above all a lack of interest in their country's future. The political leaders are represented as agents of neo-colonialism, living in luxury, and imposing a continuous poverty and powerlessness over the peasants and proletarians. For that reason, Ngugi has been deeply concerned with the paths not taken by Kenya with the unchanged situation of the masses, and the dislocation of the unity that existed and bound people at the time of decolonization. That was the bitter legacy of colonization. Moreover, throughout the decades following independence, the national bourgeoisies of the various post-colonial societies increasingly gave way to social violence, deprivation and fragmentation. This situation led to an intensifying dependence of Africa on the imperial western powers which gave way to a heightening of a discernible questioning from writers. In their works, they implicitly raised such questions as "What had gone wrong?" trying to explain why the post-colonial era failed. Some of the disillusioned and disappointed intellectuals were even radical in their critical position since for them there was no other alternative to the social injustices in post-independence regimes but a revolutionary struggle against dictatorship and neo-colonial class domination. This is in line with Berthold Brecht's pronouncement that "There is only one ally against growing barbarism – the people who suffer greatly from it. It is only from them that one can expect anything. Therefore, it is obvious that one must turn to the people, and now more necessary than ever, to speak their language."<sup>38</sup> Like many intellectuals of his generation, Ngugi discovered that "the ruling elite was more interested in considering its own

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<sup>38</sup>- Brecht, Berthold, *Popularity and Racism*. Trd. Stuart Hood, *Aesthetics and Politics*. London, 1986, p.80.

dominance, and in monopolizing the continent's natural resources than in improving the abject condition of the common people."<sup>39</sup> That is because the modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of colonial society has not done away with class antagonism. It has only established new classes, new forms of oppression, and has led to new forms of struggle. This epoch of the neo-colonial bourgeoisie has engendered a new class antagonism where society as a whole is split into two hostile camps, two antagonistic classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Under the name of civilization, the bourgeois ruling class in Western countries has compelled the newly independent nations to adopt also the bourgeois mode of production, to adhere to marketing mechanisms suitable for the creation of comprador bourgeoisies. It has subjected the country to the rule of the towns creating enormous cities just as it has made the underdeveloped countries dependent on the 'civilized' ones. Like all bourgeoisies all over the world, in Africa it had put an end to all the patriarchal idyllic relations and torn all ties that bound man to his natural roots and ancestral belonging. The only binder it has left between people is that of crude self-interest and a callous and brutal exploitation. In this process of market development, it has turned man into a mere productive means as it has resolved the individual's value into exchange value, and in the place of chartered freedoms it has set up a single one, "free trade". Thereby, on its way, the new bourgeois class has drowned out all religious fervor replacing them by a shameless exploitation. Taking the reins of the power, the bourgeoisie became more and more oppressive; as it developed, the capital increased and so did the class of laborers.

On these grounds, Ngugi has been continuously preoccupied with the contemporary socio-cultural and political reality in Africa. That is why he has chosen to picture his society throughout his work. One instance of Ngugi's works is the richly evocative *Petals of Blood*. In his depiction of a society undergoing a social malaise, Ngugi has a deeply disturbing picture of the decadent political systems of a newly young nation of late bourgeois worldwide morals and African values have been lost. It is a society where even the man of good intentions begins to doubt his own sanity, thus, questioning even his own idealism.

The novel sheds light on the close relationship between political leaders in neo-colonial Africa and the imperialists. Nderi Wa Niera, the MP who personifies this category, used the

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<sup>39</sup>- Ogunbesin, K, *New West African Literature*, London: Heinemann, 1978, p6.

people's mandate given to him as a "license to amass wealth and barter his nation's interest for profit in joint business with the imperialists."<sup>40</sup> Indeed the novel depicts an emergence of a rapacious class represented by Kimeria, Chui, and Mzigo. It hints at the dispossession of the peasantry of their land as expressed in the appropriation of Nyakinyua's land. Former peasants like Abdullah are replaced by the urban elite of property owners. As the African political space becomes more turbulent and unbearable for the people, the neo-colonial African experience becomes tenser. Ironically, those who fought for independence and lost relatives or friends and even parts of their bodies, like the crippled Abdullah, are neglected and left to suffer. Paradoxically, those who were betraying the struggle for independence like Kimeria became members of the ruling class. Peasants and workers become the victims of tyrants who mistreat people in the name of democracy and economic development. The rulers become pitiless and corrupt leading the political sphere and the whole country to a state of anomy. Like a "rotten" fruit nothing comes from it except degeneration and disintegration.

In fact, *Petals of Blood* gives us one of modern African literature's great epics that reconstruct a nation's history from pre-colonial times to the betrayal of independence. Through the lives of a large cast of characters and the experiences of their families, the reader comes to witness the history of Kenya from the vantage point of ordinary people. Ngugi constructs a chronicle of exploitation and struggles for liberation, notably the resistance against the imposition of British rule at the end of the nineteenth century, the Mau Mau rebellion in the 1950's and most importantly the resistance against exploitation from local rulers. By doing so, Ngugi is pointing to a bitter and stark reality: the promise of independence has not been fulfilled. More than that, the patriotic fighters of the past have been betrayed by the new rulers. The flower of suffering has borne no fruit for the men and women in the villages and the city slums; it has been stained by the blood of corruption and exploitation. Already in his opening chapter, the image is presented in the explanation Munira -the village teacher- gives to his pupils when examining a flower that is hollow and does not have the fullness of color: "This is a worm-eaten flower ... It cannot bear fruit. That's why we must always kill worms". *Petals of Blood* (p.22) shows Kenya as a land of greed and corruption where the ruthless few impose their will on the poor masses to exploit them. As the village turns into a prosperous one, the people become victims of progress. Those Africans

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<sup>40</sup>Amuta, C, *The Theory of African Literature*, London: Zed Books Ltd, 1982, p.145.

who profit are corrupted and serve international financiers. While the political message is obviously to overthrow those corrupt statesmen, it does overshadow the drama of the main characters' lives. Their disappointment and hopes are experienced and felt not only related.

In *Petals of Blood*, Ngugi examines the struggles that pull a society apart in a country that has just emerged from colonial rule. However, the ordinary people, the workers, the peasants who expected so much from their new leaders now find themselves dealing with an even bigger enemy in the form of an alliance between foreigners and the new elite. Indeed Kenya remains a country in transition. Behind a façade of peace, Kenya's full potential continues to be stifled by poor and dictatorial leadership and corruption that has been allowed to become part of Kenyan society. The obstacles that stood between the villagers and the benefits of independence were social, economic, historical, political and psychological. However, in his usual dual vision of chaos and hope through the novel, Ngugi seems to be insisting that the actual situation was liable to change. According to him, a meaningful social change will occur with time, but conditions will change for "the peasants, aided by the workers, small traders and small landowners ... have mapped out the path" (*Petals of Blood*, 344) to change the chaotic inherited conditions of colonialism. The legacy of war had a tremendous impact on their lives. Many have lost members of their family, others have lost their lands, their only source of survival, and others have even lost part of their body. Even more tremendous was the loss of their self. When people lose their dreams and their hopes, the psychological scar, the loss left on their soul is then bigger and more torturing than any other form of loss.

Ngugi portrays workers and the emergent petit bourgeoisie that robs them of any attempt to economic or social improvement in the context of decolonization or post-independence. The peasants and workers are doomed to be poor, so they find themselves in a vicious circle that makes their entire struggle fruitless and vain. They had no democratic scores in the postcolonial state after long years of struggle for independence. Even within their limited space, they cannot aspire to freedom or emancipation and, when they try to manipulate spaces open to them, like Wanja does in *Petals of Blood*, all their efforts are swept away by big capitals. On the other hand, the native bourgeoisie, are mere 'watchdogs' of foreign capitals. Not only are they uncreative, but they also are reckless imitators of western culture. Moreover, they continue to serve their western masters dutifully. Accordingly, the Kenyan petit bourgeoisie have no motivation for improvement. They do not seem to desire to be their

own masters but they, instead, want to be a copy image of the western bourgeoisie. However, if some want to have full control of their own lives like Mwereriwa and Mukirai, they are eliminated because they do not fit anymore in the mold of that bourgeoisie.

The violation of land by colonial and postcolonial oppressors is done through religious, cultural and educational institutions which participate in the oppression of the peasants. Ngugi sees the wound that the Christian religion inflicts on people as a “psychological wound ... on the whole generation”. (*Homecoming*, p.xii). For Ngugi, religion is used as a tool for oppressing workers. In *Petals of Blood*, Waweru is presented as a man who embraces Christianity as far as it is rewarding to him. He took refuge in religion at a time of Kenya’s struggle for independence, denouncing anti-colonial activities such as Mau Mau oath rituals as the devil’s work. In addition, cultural and educational institutions are presented as tools for mental slavery that perpetuates mental dependence in the post-colonial state. Ngugi’s criticism of the blind imitation of Western values is represented by the native bourgeoisie in *Devil on the Cross* and *Petals of Blood*. Kihaahu is the example of the alienated black who strives to become white by all means starting by changing his name to a white one which shows his cultural dependency, another effect of colonialism on him. The love for Western goods reaches absurdity when Gitutu suggests that they should import air. For the African elite, goods are valuable only if they are imported. Thus, Ngugi is directing attention to the national bourgeoisie which he sees as worse than Fanon’s idea of them as entrepreneurial because they are mere consumers who help to maintain trade imbalances between the poor and the rich Western countries while maintaining poverty in their own countries.

When Ngugi depicts in *Petals of Blood* the take over of Abdullah and Wanja of Theng’eta Breweries as a conspiracy between rich African businessmen and their foreign allies, he refers to the conspiracy of the African leaders in the post-independence Kenya with the international capital as the major factor of the cultural and economic decadence in Kenya. They only serve to lead African society towards an impoverishment and an abandonment of African values. Apparently, Ngugi is suggesting that there seems to be an understated pact between the African leadership and foreign capital to exploit Kenya’s resources and wealth at the expense of the poor masses. In his critique of the classes, Ngugi echoes Fanon’s ideas of the national bourgeoisie as an uncreative lot poorly mimicking its European counterpart and disregarding the African masses because it simply cannot cut its links with the Western

bourgeoisie which it serves blindly. Yet, as a response to the state of degeneration in the post-independence Kenya, Ngugi seems to be suggesting that workers can bring in a change because they are the ones who resist the leaders' exploitation of land and people. As Kenya's history is a story of heroic resistance of ordinary people, Ngugi sees that workers and peasants can lead a revolution as their ancestors did during the colonial period.

Ngugi's approach has contributed significantly to the analysis and understanding of African politics by showing that dependency of African societies is partly imposed by outside forces. Through centuries of exploitation of the African resources, the West was able to establish poverty among African societies, turning them into continuous receivers of the crumbs that fall from the master's table. The prime obstacles to the national development of African countries are the colonial heritage and the unequal division of labor and wealth. In a class society engendered by capitalism, the struggle between the owning but non-working capitalist class and the working but non-owning proletariat can only be resolved through a collective revolution. If the economic factor is the most crucial one determining every relationship, political revolution is an important workable means of bringing about a change in a class exploitative society. This applies to Ngugi who seems to adopt the core idea of Marxism about the primacy of matter over mind. Man's material well-being determines the degree to which he can take part in other activities. A person, who is hungry and with basic needs, will hardly think of engaging in an economic or political venture because his or her primary concern will be to meet these needs. That is why the continued existence of poverty and inequality in post-independence Kenyan society made Ngugi turn to Mau Mau revolt, seen as the tradition of struggle, in order to look for an economic and social revolt that would establish equality. In *Weep not Child*, *A Grain of Wheat*, or *The River Between*, the Mau Mau war becomes an icon through which Ngugi imagines the birth of a new Kenya.

Ngugi traces the pattern of exploitation back to pre-colonial times when Munira's grandfather was driven from the family land by more powerful Mbari lords and wealthy houses that could buy more lands to become even more powerful. With the imposition of colonial rule came new masters and a different power. Munira's father joined the white man's church to become Ezekiel and, in time, with the magic of cash and transgression of the law, a powerful landowner and a church member. A generation later, the betrayal of a Mau Mau

fighter to the British gave emergence to the fortunes of a prominent industrialist in independent Kenya.

When the Trans-Africa Road was being built through Ilmorog, the movers of the new order, the predators, appeared on the scene: the Member of Parliament who used to be seen in his constituency only at election time, the industrialist, the headmaster of the boarding school, and the education officer for the area. Two are supposed to be educators and one is a politician, but their common trait is that they are entirely engaged in enriching and establishing themselves as the bourgeois of independent Kenya at any cost.

Then, the newly established order gave birth to newly rich people, to a few who were engaged in shady businesses. Peasants and herdsman were obliged to register their land to use the title deeds as guarantee to obtain loans to work their lands. As they had no other income, some of the peasants used that money to pay for their children's school fees, but even those who bought imported fertilizers to plant their fields were unable to produce enough to meet their food needs and pay back the loans. Trapped as they were, their lands were sold by auction and that created "several Ilmorogs":

One was residential area of the farm managers, Country Council officials, public service officers, the managers of Barclays, Standard and African Economic Banks, and other servants of state and money-power. This was called Cape Town. The other –called New Jerusalem– was a shantytown of migrant and floating workers, the unemployed, the prostitutes and small traders in tin and scrap metal ... concern, appropriately called Ilmorog African Diam.

...The shopping and business center was dominated by two features. Just outside it was a tourist cultural (Utamaduni) village owned by NderiWaRiera and a West German and Cultural and Educational Tours. Many tourists come from a cultural fiesta to look for the Theng' eta plant, whose leaves when dried and smoked had, so it was claimed, the same effect as hashish. The other was Theng' eta Breweries which, starting on the premises owned by Mzigo, had now grown into a huge factory ... (pp.280-1)

That was the image of the new post-independence Kenya. In his novel Ngugi, thus, focuses on a new exploitation and a different struggle. After colonialism, Kenya witnessed the emergence of a political regime that is authoritarian and corrupt, the rise of the robber barons,

and the pauperization of the masses. The characters of the novel are differentiated by the major changes each of them undergoes. Even if they have been good men once –the headmaster once a good man, and there was a time when the Member of Parliament was truly ‘a man of the people’- they have become the unscrupulous men of the new order. They act according to the bitter rules of political and economic arrangements inimical to the masses. Pitiless and blood-thirsty as they have become, they only deserve to be bought. They are the ‘worms’ that have to be eliminated for a better order to emerge. That was the situation that Ngugi and his people were caught in. After the struggle for their independence with all the promises it held, Ngugi and other intellectuals envisioned a struggle against the capitalist system that proved even more dangerous than their first struggle. As Karega reflects:

The true lesson of history was this: that the so-called victims, the poor, the downtrodden, the masses, had always struggled with spears and arrows, with their [songs of hope] to end their oppression and exploitation: that they would continue struggling, creating a more humane world ... for the use of all; so that all flower...would ripen and bear fruits and seed.(p.303)

Like Ngugi himself, the protagonists in *Petals of Blood* can no longer bear to see their sufferings and sweat being exploited by those who have taken over from the colonizers. As a case in point, the intellectual Munira undergoes an inner turmoil that leads to his break down and psychic disintegration. In his other novel, *Devil on the Cross*, Ngugi portrays those corrupt spirits and traders of human skins symbolized by the character of Nding’ uri who

... began to fart property, to shit property, to sneeze property, to scratch property, to laugh property, to think property. Property would fly from other people’s hands to land in N’ding’ uri’s palms.”... He became mean. He became cruel ... extending the boundaries of his own property further and further

Those who resist temptation and submission become the subversive groups, from the point of view of authority. Munira, Karega and Abdullah would react to create a new order, the order of the grassroots. However, Munira cannot challenge that order without doing violence to his own self. It is clear for him that he is not fit to oppose the order of oppression and betrayal of the nation, however disillusioned he feels. Through *Petals of Blood*, Ngugi offers a systematic

scrutiny of the betrayal of the promise of independence. By depicting the emergence of a bourgeoisie based on an unfettered political control and privileged access to the resources of the country, the novel also sheds light on the anger of the masses at the national bourgeoisie. This class consciousness was not to take place without individual consciousness, and here Munira reflects the resentment of society, even if Karega for his part adopts a more active and dynamic attitude in order to oppose the situation from a grassroots perspective.

Since in Ngugi's novel the "disturbed" personalities are only social figures representing facets of a dislocated society, male characters as well as female ones suffer equally from a fragmentation of the self. In fact, the prostitute Wanja is also losing her mental equilibrium because, after being impoverished, she turns to the most materialistic and selfish businessmen, loyal to imperialist purposes, and lures them to her brothel. If by acting in this way Wanja is attempting a process of re-adaptation to fit into the new structure of society, Munira's fragmentation shows all the despair and hopelessness of the individual to re-found a sane and safe society. However, even if the fragmentation of the characters leads to different positions, it is essentially generated by a feeling of loss resulting from a complete disillusionment. This bitter feeling is shared by a whole generation of post-independence Kenyans who had yet to suffer the traumas caused by post independence mismanagement and injustice.

## **C/The Post World War I Era: F.S.Fitzgerald's Tender is the Night.**

Appearing as a chronicle of the Jazz Age, Tender is the Night evokes an era of which Fitzgerald stands as one of the most striking examples. Indeed, the alienation of the disillusioned America became a central social problem diffusing widely through society. Gifted and imaginative people were becoming alienated from an individualistic society more and more motivated by crude self-interest and shallow materialism. The individual's vision of what is human for him and for society was confronted with the real ties of the newly established social order. Such realities were intrinsic to any society motivated by profit. Being presented as misfits, leading a silent inner struggle, these individuals, like the protagonist Dick Diver, become lost, disoriented and wholly fragmented.

The knowledge of a writer's early literary life often offers clues to his later artistic development. In the case of F.Scott Fitzgerald, the autobiographical factor is important both because his works repeatedly deal with the historical period he lived in, and because he experienced an era in which the American dream was being swept by disillusion. For most analysts of American literature, F.S.Fitzgerald is identified with the twenties. He was so immersed in the twenties that many critics labeled him the writer of immersion. He is considered as the spokesman of his generation and stands as an exemplary figure for the twenties and thirties, decades expressing charm, waste, genius and dissipation. Fitzgerald's goal in writing novels was to create fiction with no hero, a modern vision of odyssey that shows the actual condition in the post First World War era. Man is lacking heroism or rather there is no more place for heroic deeds in an era of corruption and moral disintegration that threatens and finally annihilates any attempt at purity and nobleness. The era of the twenties and thirties has become an era of lost values. But an era is more than just a time span; it is a period bearing political, social and cultural major events, and the way people felt about them, and how they experienced them.

In his literary work, Fitzgerald portrays protagonists with a problematic destiny. He describes an age of individuals who came on the scene and burned themselves out even before they were able to conceptualize their dreams and hopes. In Tender is the Night, Dick Diver is uncertain and often asking himself what to do with his life. This uncertainty grew out of the abrupt change of social context during the first quarter of the twentieth century that made the

national character develop in ways that few were able to foresee. That generation, like Dick Diver or even Gatsby in *The Great Gatsby*, grew rather weak, lacking autonomy and unable to assert any agency or will.

Born in 1896, F.Scott Fitzgerald grew up with the cultural standards, values and manners of the late nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth. The world of his boyhood was a time of great American fortunes but enormous disparities in society. Whereas workers were “wage slaves” and women denied career opportunities, the upper led a rich easy life. When Fitzgerald’s father lost his job, the family could live comfortably on his wife’s inheritance. Fitzgerald was always aware of his being the poorest boy at a rich boys’ school, and such feelings helped drive his relentless need for recognition and achievement. He later fulfilled this need through writing. The class system was rigidly maintained, but Americans still believed that their country was the land of opportunity where the role model is the self-made man; the successful businessmen were heroes of their society. Fitzgerald wrote a great deal about one material form that the idea of progress took in America, that of great houses and many not so great. He has provided the many houses in his fiction with their provenance, and they have known marketplace value. He describes the acquisition of places built to express wealth and confidence in “*The Diamond as Big as the Ritz*” and *The Great Gatsby*. But these places do not last long. They endure just about every fate known to man and reality. Towns, neighborhoods, buildings, and even a certain billboard in *The Great Gatsby* take on symbolic values, suggesting at first confidence, success, and an ephemeral idea of progress. The pre-war years were also a period of social reforms and progressive movements. This period also established the beginning of American Socialism with the Woobies (International Workers of the World). Though never politically active, Fitzgerald –like other privileged collegians– regarded himself as a socialist. His first novel, *This Side of Paradise*, ends with the denunciation of capitalist inequality. Living in the twenties, he was both the product of the great change in the postwar American society and the spokesman of his generation. He says:

That America passed away somewhere between 1910 and 1920, and the fact that gives my generation its uniqueness, we are at once prewar and postwar. We were all well-grown in the tense Spring of 1917, but for the most part not married and not

settled. The peace found was almost intact ... Men of our age in Europe simply did not exist ... They are twenty five years old.<sup>41</sup>

“So, we inherited two worlds the one of hope to which we had been; the one of disillusion which we had discovered early for ourselves. And that first world was growing as remote as another country, however close in time.”<sup>42</sup>

In *This Side of Paradise*, Fitzgerald was reworking familiar material for the story of a young middle-class man striving to prove himself worthy of a beautiful, wealthy woman in a society where the dream of success could be realized. Yet, in composing *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald at once broadened and deepened his trademark theme of the inefficacy of idealism in the modern age. The protagonists are no longer the young and revealers of such entertaining diversion as “*The Offshore Pirate*” (1920). Their desire to live a life less ordinary is complicated by palpable sense of desperation and self-delusion.

Another characteristic of F.S.Fitzgerald is that he was an ardent student of history and had been influenced by Oswald Spengler’s *The Decline of the West*, which predicted twentieth century wars and dictatorships. Reflecting these ideas in his subsequent works, he was regarded as a symbolic Twenties’ figure. A figure he transferred to most of his characters such as Gatsby and Dick Diver whose parties had become the quintessential Twenties parties. Yet, Fitzgerald’s view of the Twenties was serious and complex, for he recognized the glamour in man’s life as well as the waste, the charm and the self-destruction. In an essay, “*Early Success*”(1937), he wrote: “All the stories that came into my head had a touch of disaster in them. The lovely young creatures in my novels went to ruin ... my millionaires were as beautiful and damned as Thomas Hardy’s peasants.”<sup>43</sup> Looking back at that era he named, he wrote in “*Echoes of the Jazz Age*” that “It was an age of miracles ... an age of excess ... an age of satire.”<sup>44</sup> For Fitzgerald, the economic and social reality of his early life determined the way he responded to issues of money and class and thereby, the way he wrote *Tender is the Night* and the way he portrayed his characters. This explains in a way why he is considered an autobiographical writer whose best works relied upon his dealing with personal material. In fact, writing about the past and including historical events helped him understand it because he also dissected that past with acute scrutiny. As a result of his backgrounds, he

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<sup>41</sup>-Fitzgerald,F.S in “*Esquisse*”, October 1968, 70, pp.119-120.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid, p.121.

<sup>43</sup> Edmund Wilson,ed, “*The Crack Up*”, New York: New Directions, 1945, p.87.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid,p.14.

made the great concern of his fiction common human issues like ambition, the American dream, the influence of the past, the efforts to reshape oneself, and wealth and its effect on individuals. Besides, there were shadows of intellectual influence around Fitzgerald, beginning with his reading of great novelists who analyzed the world, to the critical ideas about literature transmitted from friends like Edmund Wilson and H.L. Mencken. In an interview with the “*Richmond Times-Dispatch*”, Fitzgerald spoke of old and new books that mattered to “the present generation”:

Will James Joyce be to the next two generations what Henry James, Nietzsche, Wells, Mencken, Dreiser and Conrad have been to the present generation? ... While Conrad's *Nostramo* is the great novel of the past fifty years, *Ulysses* by James Joyce is the great novel of the future.<sup>45</sup>

Fitzgerald was not really writing about private issues but about the historical transformation that shaped the society of his generation, the lost generation. The changes brought by consumerism in the early twentieth century were crystallized most visibly in conception of identity, selfhood before the modern age had been defined by such deterministic criteria as class, race, regionalism, and morality. Yet, the explosion of consumer goods provided individuals with new tools for packaging their personality in captivating ways. Advertising insisted that conception would bring “wholeness”, a term that designated the integrated sense of well-being, and happiness necessary for individuals to survive the fractures of modernity and to achieve their full psychological and economic potential. In *Tender is the Night*, Dick seems to obey this rule since he is at ease and feels good as long as he possesses goods, but when he loses his wholeness, he is also dispossessed of his most valuable goods. “Every man is a combination of many different personalities, a battlefield in which the fighters are his different selves”, advertising guru Bruce Barton wrote in a 1928 *Good Housekeeping* article. Another novel that is typical of Fitzgerald's fiction is *This Side of Paradise* in which Amory's varied attempts to create a personality through style in his journey to self-discovery exemplifies the writer's concept of consumerism and personality. More commonly, the persuasive tactics that the characters employ to win over the objects of their affection enable them to realize their true selves.

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<sup>45</sup>- Fitzgerald, F. Scott, *F. Scott Fitzgerald on Authorship*, Ed. Matthew J. Brucoli and Judith S. Baughman. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996, p91.

By describing the emerging culture of consumption and leisure that promoted a fierce attitude of frivolity and indulgence, very much reflected in the characters of Daisy and Tom Buchanan in *The Great Gatsby*, rather fashionable in the post WWI, Fitzgerald cast himself as a social historian too. On these grounds, Fitzgerald is to be considered as a representative voice of those 'roaring twenties' and a major writer whose fiction resonates beyond its twenties' backdrops since it addressed certain timeless truths about human personality and its different fluctuations. More than that, his works offer serious philosophical reflections on such important concerns as morality, tragedy and desire. One of the explored issues which confirm Fitzgerald's stature is his attitude towards the American Dream. According to the critic Marius Bewley, Fitzgerald could be judged as a major writer because his fiction addresses "the problem of determining the hidden boundary in the American vision of life at which the reality ends and the illusion begins."<sup>46</sup> It is evident that his characteristic themes reflect the temper of his times and give evidence of the moral confusion that arose from the postwar revolutions, the felt exile of an entire intellectual generation for whom expatriation - or escape- was synonymous with freedom, and the effect of American culture's glorification of immoral responsibility. Those were the traumas imposed on a postwar generation.

Undoubtedly, among the illusions to which *Tender is the Night's* hero clings is the American dream of self-making, the belief that one can overcome the constraints of social class and family background simply by inventing an ideal personality. By making his hero Dick Diver fail to reach an internal stability even when accomplishing a successful career, Fitzgerald dramatizes the ephemeral nature of the success dream as if to question the very value of success. Yet, this novel is also the most complex of Fitzgerald's novels because of its concentration of details which distract the reader's attention. In addition, the broken chronology in the story tends to confuse the reader. Critics like Kirk Curnutt<sup>47</sup>, and Matthew Bruccoli proclaim that reliance on facts interferes with a writer's free critical insights, but I think cultural backgrounds become relevant for a better understanding of a novel.

As all writers are the product of their time, one of Fitzgerald's distinctions from other American writers of his generation is his inclination to take history to a personal level. He

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<sup>46</sup>-Bewley, Marius, "Scott Fitzgerald's Criticism of America », *Sewanee Review* 62 (Spring 54), pp.223-46.

<sup>47</sup>-Curnutt, Kirk, "Youth Culture and the Spectacle of Waste: *This Side of Paradise* and *The Beautiful and the Damned*." in *F. Scott Fitzgerald in the Twenty-First Century*. Ed. Jackson R. Bryer, Ruth Prigozy, and Milton R. Stern. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2003, pp 79-103.

insists on relating what happens to him to what befalls his social environment, and he does so even in his autobiographical writing and his fiction. In fact, he managed quite well socially and economically in the 1920's and 'cracked up' in the 1930's, just like America. As the spokesman of his time, Fitzgerald was so fond of an intimacy between his career and the course of American history in his time that it seems that he used the one for us to understand the other. In one of his best known essays, "*Echoes of the Jazz Age*", written in 1931, when he was in his sixth year of labor on *Tender is the Night*, he gave many details about that decade, which he related to his life (he uses 'we' confidently in the essay). Those details are fragments of social history but also fragments of crafted legend as well as triviality of myth making. This idea undermines the major subject of *Tender is the Night*. The latter is a work that succeeds in lifting experience to the level of history. As any other work of art, the novel comes as a perception of life organized with the writer's perspective and sense of the society. In his novel, Fitzgerald describes a society of the living, relates it to the society of the dead, and tries to lift experience to the level of history. In other words, he relates present to past and intermingles them with the future. Fitzgerald felt that America, unlike any other nation, was "the history of an idea rather than a people."<sup>48</sup>

The novel is also shedding light on the nature of the post-war world, for the greatest part of the book is devoted to giving this new state of civilization a dreadful character. Fitzgerald is dissecting the post-war decade to demonstrate how the older cultural heritage of values of courage and decency that constitute Dick's legacy from "his fathers" has been displaced by the money values of civilization. There is Mrs. Speers' remark to her daughter Rosemary, the actress Dick fell in love with, that "economically you are a boy"<sup>49</sup> alluding to women's anticipation that no longer needed man, not because of her own success but due to the money she possesses. Here, we are far from the American dream of success as a grant to the individual's will. In another instance, Dick comes to a sudden view of himself "swallowed up like a gigolo" (254) which may be taken as the most grotesque demonstration of the corruptive power of money since he only relied on his wife's money and not on his own will and free enterprise. In a number of ways Dick's progressive "lesions of vitality" (214-240) and Nicole's strengthening, her growing hardness are made to correlate with the piling up of money, appurtenance, and material. That is to say that a positive relationship between money

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<sup>48</sup>- Fitzgerald, F.S, « *The Crack Up* », Ed. Edmund Wilson, New York: New Directions, 1945, p.197.

<sup>49</sup>- Fitzgerald, F.S *Tender is the Night*, Penguin Putnam Inc, New York, 1977, p.98.

and values was hardly conceivable. The more people accumulate wealth and material comfort, the more they become emptied of their soul, dehumanized, and feeling the black void left by despair. Thus, *Tender is the Night* whose action terminates either in 1929 or in 1930, is certainly a book about the 1920's written in the 1930's – the Boom seen from an intellectual's eyes. While working on *Tender is the Night*, Fitzgerald wrote a short story, "The Swimmers", which he published in the Saturday Evening Post on October 19<sup>th</sup>, 1929, just a few days before the Crash. The story sets against each other two eras and ethics –one of money and the present and the other of the Virginia gentleman and the past. The hero has an unfaithful French wife, and throughout the story there is a motif of men sacrificed to women. "American men are incomplete without money" remarks the hero. On the eve of the Crash, Fitzgerald had already shown how man was losing his principles and morals, and accepting to be used up by a woman for the sake of money as the pathway to success. By doing so, man has already -unconsciously- accepted a kind of corruption and agreed upon losing part of himself, his wholeness. And when this money belongs to a woman, the price to pay is too high. Similarly, in *Tender is the Night*, Dick accepts to marry Nicole despite the difference in social status. He knew, insightfully, that due to her great fortune, he was selling part of his *self*. He had to forfeit some of his principles, make some concessions, and even accept what he would not have accepted in a different situation. The loss of his principles made him a crippled man, unable to act. The statement of the hero in "The Swimmers" parallels somewhat an important idea expressed by Dick Diver: "He knew though, that the price of his inactness was incompleteness" (p.5). This reveals Fitzgerald's acute conviction that money is corruptive and leads ultimately to man's psychic fragmentation. That is why when Warren's money –his family in law- 'completes' Dick, he begins to disintegrate. It is an inner struggle between the old values that mock the new ones, between human nature that mocks money as only the hero, Dick, can resist temptation. Despite his disintegration and moral fragmentariness, he decides to leave that corrupt world of money and retrieve his. Like Gatsby's final statement in which America is at last proclaimed a "willingness of the heart", the failure of that willingness is the story of *Tender is the Night*, the decadence of the American promise of success and prosperity. Such willingness failed to materialize in practice because the attraction of money was irresistible. As a result that willingness turned so weak that it became the risk of the idealistic side of the American gamble and more dangerously a threat to personality's balance.

This echoes what Walt Whitman wrote in 1867: “The United States are destined either to surmount the gorgeous history of feudalism, or else prove the most tremendous failure of time.”<sup>50</sup> Beside that, there was the Americans’ firm belief that they were a distinct people; a belief that was a factor of great importance to the individual triumph. However, by the post-World War I era, for some Americans as for many other observers, America the land of individual liberty, the promised land of innovation and freedom became viewed as an unsettled land of arrogance, manic consumerism, neurotic restlessness, social indiscipline, and disorder. The old expectations were not met because the anticipation of a New World as a place of renewal and transformation was fraught with tensions. Those tensions were created by the anticipations themselves and became an integral part of American identity; the tension of youth versus age, newness versus heritage, innocence versus experience, purity versus corruption, spontaneity versus sophistication. However, the post war America had a tendency to deny the existence of these tensions just like Dick who was simultaneously in love with two women. Like Fitzgerald, Dick seems to have lost faith in the ideals of civilization. The disappointment grew as deep as the failure of America to carry its promises forward. Actually, those principles constituted the aspects of life that originally made the United States what it became, the world’s most powerful nation. Jay Gatsby says: Civilization’s going to pieces ... I’ve gotten to be a terrible pessimist about things.”<sup>51</sup>

Throughout the novel, Fitzgerald illustrates the paradoxical quality of economically powerful Americans as he knew about it from his own experience. Money gives Americans power and an apparently unlimited access to life’s leisure and comfort. Yet, at the same time, it insulates them from the outer world. Even if the book is set almost entirely in Europe, Europeans are visible only as providers of services to be paid, and just as often, to be paid off as the fired cook, Augustine thinks about Dick and Nicole, who appear to her as nothing but “disgusting Americans who come here and drink up our finest wines” (296). In the novel, Americans are seen by Europeans only as foreigners who consume their heritage. The European participants at the conference Dick attends in Berlin are contemptuous of the American naiveté and crude empiricism, but they are suitably respectful when “The Americans ... play their trump card”, announcing their “colossal gifts and endowments and

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<sup>50</sup>- Whitman, Walt, « *Democratic Vistas* » in « *Leaves of Grass and Selected Prose* », ed. Bradley, New York: Holt, 1949, p.489.

<sup>51</sup>- Fitzgerald, F.S, *The Great Gatsby*, Penguin Books Ltd, Harmondsworth, Middlessex, England, 1950, p.161.

training schools” (218-219). Thus, Americans are presented as devoid of any morals and are only given respect because of their money. They hold no relationship more substantial than that of money. By this, Fitzgerald is alluding at the fact that the money of the Americans in Europe reduced all human interactions to mere exchange of commodities.

In this respect, Fitzgerald seems to join Marx’s and Engels’ *The Communist Manifesto*. In the advanced stages of Capitalism, Marx and Engels write, “In place of the old wants, satisfied by the production of the country, we find new wants ... to satisfy the new desire, the bourgeoisie must move over the whole surface of the globe to settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere.”<sup>52</sup> This idea is well illustrated throughout the novel; representing the Divers as, first and foremost, pioneer consumers who create a desire for new commodities. This includes “a portable bath-house for dressing” and a “pneumatic rubber horse”, which are but a few examples of the “first burst of luxury manufacturing after the war” (26). In fact, a large part of the story is set against the backdrop of the war. The Divers sought life’s leisure of the summer stay at the French Riviera to the complete dehumanization of themselves. Because everything can be bought and even hoarded and left behind, everything becomes exchangeable. Thus, nothing has value and nothing remains permanent. This produced in the Americans of the Twenties a sense of plenty and interchangeability which in the end produces no tangible happiness. For Dick and Nicole Diver -and even some of their acquaintances- the sophisticated sense of the arbitrariness of all values is made evident already in the opening pages of the novel. Dick Diver is throwing a party, a purely social act, but he doesn’t care to know who the people he invites are, and even hopes that it will be a really bad party. Likewise, their friend Tommy Barban, who is going to war, is participating in an enterprise that permits him to accumulate more money even illegally, but he does not care for whom or what he is fighting. They all seem to find new principles of association, as in a party game, to fill apart, only to find themselves “hollow” and living in a “waste land” as described by the poems of T.S.Eliot. In the story, Fitzgerald is skillfully painting not only objects and values as arbitrary, but the emotions and gestures of the characters also. They only do things for their own sake, for the pleasure they provide, and not for their value. Dick provides and governs a world of valueless emotion experienced for its own sake, the party.

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<sup>52</sup> Marx, Karl and Engels, Frederich, *The Communist Manifesto*. Ed. And Tr. Leo Huberman and Paul M.Sweezy. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1968.

When the icons of the past no longer exist, the family is no longer sacrosanct; religion, community and other forms of social authority disappear. The new generation was no more guided by old morals but by new habits where the pursuit of happiness was inseparable from that of money. In Fitzgerald's world, those who are part of the "youth culture" have lost all connection with past heritage of morals. Instead, the young have become guided by new habits, not by old standards. Moreover, they have no older people whose opinion they respect and no sacred texts by which they abide. Dick had already cut links with his family, and had returned to his hometown only to bury his father. He belongs to a time of uncertainty, the "infinite and unbridgeable"<sup>53</sup> gap that Fitzgerald used to refer to between generations; that is the lost generation or the generation of loss. With this acute sense of time and place that helped him to evoke stimulating experiences, Fitzgerald succeeded in transferring his own feelings about a world he was part of into his characters. That is because he was more concerned about how his characters actually were and felt when they lived their experiences. He thought of that era as one that:

It was borrowed time anyhow –the whole upper truth of a nation living with the insouciance of grand ducs and the casualness of chorus girls. But moralizing is easy now and it was pleasant to be in one's twenties in such a certain and unworried time.<sup>54</sup>

It was precisely the abrupt change of social, cultural, and political context during the first quarter of the twentieth century that dictated the conduct and thoughts of the modern character. Those changes provided writers like Fitzgerald with a new view of their character as a social being. In modern works, characters are perceived as weak, dependent, unable to assert consciousness or will. Throughout his writing, Fitzgerald moralizes upon the pursuit of disembodied prosperity resulting in the loss of values and even one's self. The descent of Dick's personality is the end result of the dissolution between prosperity and internal stability. One of Fitzgerald's appreciated talents is his ambivalent perspective, his ability at once to participate in an experience and to step back as a social observer to assess its consequences. By indulging in describing his characters' lust for luxury and social ascendance, Fitzgerald is also bitterly assessing his society of the twenties and its characteristic flaws which makes "Dick got up to Zurich on fewer Achilles' heels than would be to equip a centipede, but with

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<sup>53</sup>- Fitzgerald, F.S, *The Stories of F.S.Fitzgerald*. Ed. Malcolm Cowley. New York: Scribner's, 1951.

<sup>54</sup>- Fitzgerald, F.S, « *The Crack Up* ». Op.cit.p.21.

plenty -the illusions of eternal strength and health, and of the essential goodness of people- they were the illusions of a nation, the lies of generations ...”(6).

In a culture in which the creed is to achieve success and in which happiness is confused with upward social mobility, Fitzgerald’s characters seem often to be acting against their aspirations, thus moving to their downfall. That is because success may involve a price too high to pay. *Tender is the Night*, as other stories and novels of Fitzgerald, is in particular about the ending of dreams, not their fulfillment. The story ends in a self-imposed exile and not in success because Fitzgerald’s depiction of the modern American character, represented by Dick Diver, is meant to point to the scars and traumas of the war on the individual’s self when he is disillusioned.

Fitzgerald was a fluent interpreter of public ideas. He understood that the nature of American issues in his era was more cultural than political or social. Those issues found expression in his writings where they had tendency to be acutely stated than they had been before he analyzed them. Fitzgerald succeeded because he deployed ideas about human nature and life in a deeply convincing way. His originality lies in the fanciful imagination and artistic skill with which he questioned the effects of a civilization ruled by the twin lusts of money and success. By doing so, Fitzgerald was also pinpointing the traumas of the war that were taking their toll on the post war generation, or rather a generation of loss.

## **A – Social Anomy and the Quest for Salvation:**

In his preface to the volume of criticism *Homecoming* (1972), Ngugi has shown his preference for writing functional literature. He believes that there exists a close relationship between creative literature and the social, economic, and political forces in African society. For Ngugi, writing is more than a pleasurable achievement. It is the duty of African writers to reflect people's struggle in their works, especially in their novels: "I think that if the novel is to be meaningful, it must reflect the totality of the forces affecting the lives of the people".<sup>1</sup> His example of the great novels that mirrored particular historical moments is Tolstoy's *War and Peace* of which he says:

Take a novel like Tolstoy's *War and Peace* or his *Anna Karenina*- surely you will find that not much is left out of these novels. Most of the economic, political, cultural, and spiritual forces at work in Russian society of the nineteenth century are reflected there.<sup>2</sup>

That is precisely what Ngugi tends at through his portrayal of characters in *A Grain of Wheat* or *Petals of Blood*. Instead of stressing the weaknesses of the human conditions, he is also showing the human resistance to oppression as the main agent which incites the strong desire in humans to transcend the negative aspects of life. That is why, in his novels, the individual is presented as the social being capable of changing his world:

"What I have tried to do in *Petals of Blood* is to depict peasant and worker characters in their world outlook and also in their own view of classes and their relationships within their struggle, and especially as a people capable of freeing themselves from the clutches of their enemies, because this is historically true"<sup>3</sup>.

In his novels, Ngugi tends to create human beings who are not slaves to their environment. On the contrary, they often try to confront the impinging forces of society in order to alter their world in spite of the restraints which they face:

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<sup>1</sup>-AmootiWalrumba, "Ngugi on Ngugi" (1979(1990)) interview, cited in Reinhard W. Sander and Bernth Lindfors eds, *Ngugi waThiong'o Speaks*, James Currey Ltd, Britain, 2006, p106.

<sup>2</sup>- Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>- Ibid, p 107.

I try to show human beings as capable of changing their natural and social environment. With that optimism, I do try to look at those forces which prevent human beings from being able to change their natural and social environment<sup>4</sup>

As an intellectual, Ngugi thinks that he has different inclinations. He also considers the intellectual a spokesman of a given class because he reflects and articulates ideas which are in agreement with that class. Since Ngugi sees capitalism as the catalyst for imperialism, he has to reflect his position in his writings to open his people's eyes to the evils threatening them:

It depends on where one is standing in relationship to both the mirror and the object being reflected in the mirror. In other words, a writer must turn in a social position that allows him to see as much of the society as possible.<sup>5</sup>

Actually, the content of his *Petals of Blood* can be seen as an indictment of the economic, social and political mismanagement of modern Kenya. In this newly independent country, as the novel illustrates, "freedom" has not brought the better life for which many people sacrificed their lives. The novel dramatizes the neo-colonial system now ruling Kenya, and shows that the new leaders are exemplifying a corruption that has become a daily practice; hence the title of the novel suggesting that the flower of freedom has been stained with blood. *Petals of Blood* is indeed to be read against a background dominated by a discourse of disillusionment engendered by the failure of the Kenyan post-independent regime to implement the promises for which people fought. From Ngugi's radical view, African leaders were in many ways the African successors to colonial exploiters. Moreover, according to Craig V. Smith, "Revisionist" social scientists were formulating a new paradigm to explain the Third World's continued subjugation to the West"<sup>6</sup>. If in the 1950's the optimistic "development theory" held that nations should be helped until they could function on their own, later it was replaced by a more critical "dependency theory," whose most famous

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<sup>4</sup> - Jurgen, Martini, Anna Rutherford, Kirsten Holst Peterson, Vibeke Stenderup, Bent Thomson (1980), op.cit, p123.

<sup>5</sup> -Emman, Omari, "I Am Not Above the Contradictions Which Bedevil Our Society" (1981), op.cit, p 13.

<sup>6</sup> -Craig, V. Smith, "Rainbow Memories of Grain and Loss": *Petals of Blood* and the New Resistance. Cited in Charles Cantalupo, *The World of Ngugi WaThiong'o*, Africa World Press, Inc, Trenton, New Jersey, 1995, pp 93-108.

proponent is Samir Amin<sup>7</sup>. It implies that newly independent countries should be “monitored” by western powers, which is only a disguised form of neocolonialism.

Accordingly, the capitalist system operates in a way to keep underdeveloped nations in a continuous state of dependency, willing to exchange their natural resources, labor and sovereignty too cheaply for the consumer imports they are unable to produce themselves. So, Ngugi, among other intellectuals, has been a witness of a time of change, promise, failure but also of deception in “third world” Kenya. Hence Ngugi’s outstanding and topical novel, *Petals of Blood*, is the expression of the predominant malaise in post-independence Kenya. *Petals of Blood* came to map out the socio-cultural changes which in fact reveal different inadequacies: the western cultural influence, economic and political collapse, the penetration of neocolonial interests into Kenyan politics, the bureaucratization of state power and its monopolization by the one party government. Therefore, one class prevailed in a country ruled under a crudely capitalist system. Ngugi’s novel constitutes a multifaceted exploration of the antagonistic events and forces that tell the story of the people’s resistance. That is why, throughout his text, Ngugi seems deeply concerned to trace buried stories of struggle of individuals, past struggles against colonialism like Abdulla did, or present struggles with the miserable daily life after independence “...it was a new kind of war ...but war all the same”<sup>8</sup>. Not only does the novel uncover those experiences, but it also tends to investigate their disastrous effects on people and the psychological scars it leaves on the most sensitive part of the individual, his soul. Mentally disturbed characters make one of the major concerns of Ngugi as this disturbance is perceived as one of the main facets of a social malaise in his deprived society. Munira’s self is split between a dominating socio-political system that keeps him a silent hostage, and his will to communicate—a symbol of his aspiration to freedom. That gives way to his refusal to be overwhelmed by the new order engendered by colonization, decolonization, and neocolonialism. Through a minute study of the character of Munira, we can find out the thematic function of this borderline personality in its most scattered aspect, fragmentation.

Unlike the earlier novels which were concerned with the cultural aspects of imperialism, *Petals of Blood* is more bent towards the social, economic and political repercussions of imperialism. One important aspect that the novel examines is the class structure in the African

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<sup>7</sup>- Samir, Amin, *Neocolonialism in West Africa*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1973.

<sup>8</sup>-Ngugi, WaThiong’o, *Petals of Blood*, Heinemann, 1977, p116. All further references will be to this edition and will be cited in the text page number.

society: "...and the class struggles that are inherent in that kind of structure."<sup>9</sup> Thus, Ngugi consistently expresses his ideological reflections about his society. Specifically in *Petals of Blood* "Kenya is a class-structured society with different classes standing in different positions vis-à-vis the forces of production and vis-à-vis the forces of imperialism."<sup>10</sup> In this context of class position, there exists an ideological position which reflects the spirit of that class. That ideology is often expressed by characters representing a given class. In *Petals of Blood*, for instance, the young lawyer, who is a man of ideas, stands for an ideologist of the group. He certainly enunciates ideas of revolution inherent in patriotism: "I would say that the lawyer's position represents not necessarily the ideological mind of the working class, but patriotic nationalism of a national bourgeoisie."<sup>11</sup>

In *Petals of Blood*, Munira being held on suspicion of murder goes on a journey through hell. He slowly comes to the realization that his society is out of joint because it has lost its values while he thinks he has not. In the midst of a society which has sold its soul to the devil, Munira is psychologically torn, striving to stand on moving ground. It is his awareness from the very beginning that makes his journey dehumanizing and morally painful because through his experience, Ngugi tells a haunting tale of people whose hopes were lost and whose dreams were made sour, raising the simple voice of humanity against the perversity of its dehumanized conditions. However, by illustrating the dissolution of the personality and disordered self of Munira, Ngugi seems to imply that the price was highly paid because while trying to ascertain himself socially and intellectually, Munira has lost his self. Ngugi meant to reproduce the varied nature of reality as well as the fragmentariness of human experience because what matters in the realist social novel is not so much the depiction of 'objective' reality, but the weaving and unweaving of the protagonist's soul as he experiences the flux of life. James Ogude states that "the novel became Ngugi's weapon for preserving the body and for overcoming the state of fragmentation imposed by the regime."<sup>12</sup>

Some characters in *Petals of Blood* are sophisticated, each in his own way. They express different views. Ngugi certainly used the novel to articulate complex aspects in his society. Underneath the narrative, the reader can sense shades of a bitter judgment which in fact only reflects the contradictions within his culture. By using the novel as a form of freedom, Ngugi

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<sup>9</sup> - Onuora, Ossie Enekwe, « *We Are All Learning From History* »: Interview with Ngugi WaThiong'o, (1996) in Reinhard W. Sander and Bernth Lindfors, eds, *Ngugi WaThiong'o Speaks*, James Currey Ltd, Britain, 2006, p138.

<sup>10</sup>-Ibid, p 139.

<sup>11</sup>-Ibid, p140.

<sup>12</sup>-Ogude, James, *Ngugi's Novels and African History: Narrating the Narration*, Pluto Press, London, 1999, p56

illuminates human relationships which only the novel can treat. That is why, he focuses on the human behavior of characters that are put under certain circumstances, and confront given social forces. Yet, the purpose of the narrative is not so much to report those social forces; it is rather to reveal the human impulse which sustains the individual:

The initial reason one goes to Balzac or Zola or Flaubert is not to learn about the social forces. You go because of the human appeal. But obviously you begin to see the other forces that bring about that particular type of relationship between people.<sup>13</sup>

This effect is felt in *Petals of Blood* where Ngugi points out the peasants' and workers' struggle in Kenya and their consistent battle against political and economic exploitation. Indeed, Ngugi asserts that "As a writer from the Third World, I am condemned to continue to voice the cries of protests."<sup>14</sup>

Ngugi sets as his object to draw pictures that correspond faithfully to the harsh reality lived by the majority of people in post-independence Kenya. His works bear significant allusions and the themes of his novels are concerned with forms of struggles that bear a collective sense and not a personal significance. However, his works have been taken literally and not always interpreted the way he intended. This is what he reproaches the critics for when he says in one of his interviews: "...It is not to be taken literally! This is an important dimension of the novel, and so far, of the critics I have read, few have seen this aspect,"<sup>15</sup> referring to the way his works have been approached by most critics. According to him, the social condition of the peasantry under the repressive regime he depicts in his works is often considered as historical facts. In fact, they are allusive to a degenerative situation which affects the individual's stability within his society. Even after his arrest and the banning of his works, Ngugi remains convinced that, as an intellectual and African writer, "One is trying to warn all the time."<sup>16</sup>

From its publication in 1977 to the present time, many literary critics have approached *Petals of Blood* with particular attention to the ideological message it contains and which reflects Ngugi's vision of a Marxist interpretation of Kenya's history. Nevertheless, our reading of the novel imposes a consideration of the viability of its characterization and more

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<sup>13</sup>- Jacqueline, Bardolph and Jean-Pierre Dunx, "An Interview With Ngugi waThiong'o" (1983), Op.cit, p 164

<sup>14</sup> - Raoul, Granquist, "Ngugi WaThiong'o: An Interview", 1983, Op.cit, p.171.

<sup>15</sup>- Jaggi, Maya, "Ngugi WaThiong'o: Matigari as Myth and History", (1989), Op.cit , p263.

<sup>16</sup>-Op.cit ,p.28.

specifically that of the protagonist Munira within the ideological framework in which he develops. At first glance, *Petals of Blood* is a novel which could be read as an exemplar of a political and social criticism that takes the form of a crime story. After the three directors of Ilmorog brewery Chui, Mzigo and Kimeria have been murdered in a fire, the four principal characters of the novel are arrested. The novel opens with their arrest: Munira, the protagonist, headmaster and teacher of Ilmorog school, Karega once a teacher at the same school and now a trade-unionist, Abdulla, the owner of a local shop and bar, and Wanja, a very attractive young woman who was working in the bar before becoming a prostitute and owner of the brothel where the fire was set.

The novel unfolds progressively through sequences of time moving from present to the past and back to present. We learn that it was twelve years since Munira first made his way to the village of Ilmorog. He had come to start a school that would provide the village's children with a good Christian education. When he came, the village was a remote sleepy wasteland. He was not the first teacher to come to the village. In fact, others had come before him but had left. That is why the villagers thought that Munira too would "...go away with the wind" (5) like the ones before. However, Munira proved stronger than he looked and could resist the hardships of the village. More than that, he even found support from others, like Abdulla and Wanja, who adopted him and became his friends. And within six months he came to "feel as if Ilmorog was his personal possession: he was a feudal head of a big house or a big mbari lord surveying his estate" (21). In fact, their lives were to be entangled through the series of events that changed Ilmorog; a change which was also to alter the lives of people exemplified by these four characters.

Ngugi is overtly stating his ideological purpose, attacking fiercely the capitalist mentality that has wasted Kenya's wealth for almost a century and continues to abuse it. However, from another stand, the novel is also a deep reflection of an ideology that is rather more humanistic than political. It consists of a collective consciousness from people. Ngugi is pointing to his society's malaises, only to make it (re)discover itself because understanding the self is the first step or the prerequisite for a good remedy. Then, action is needed to heal the wound. By making Munira diagnose the sickness of the village—the brothel where the capitalists gather—as the source of the problem, Ngugi is emphasizing the discovery of the self, a consciousness which would pave the way towards a collective action. Metaphorically, the novel is an account of Kenyan people's struggle against imperialism and the neo-colonial form to which it has been subjected after independence. The writer also invokes an important issue

concerning the need for Kenyans to resume the struggle. He considers that more than before, people should fight for their freedom because the objective set after independence is to achieve democracy: “The right of Kenyans to debate what determines their lives.”<sup>17</sup> The task is made even tougher for intellectuals, who have to engage to fight a dangerous philosophy of “Nyayoism”<sup>18</sup>, and which constitutes a real threat to the African identity in general and the Kenyan one in particular. It assumes the necessity of conformity of thought. That is, everyone should think the same way and has no right to question things or even to think differently. For the elite, as for Ngugi, this situation is as dangerous as ridiculous since this process of following blindly the inherited culture from colonialism simply engenders a cultural, economic, and political dependency, thus imperialism on the psyche of people. That is why Ngugi considers that independence has not brought a change but a continuation of the same social, economic, and political situation.

The most dangerous effect of this philosophy is the loss of one’s identity and thus, the complete identification with the values and personality of the once colonizer. This has an important repercussion on those who rule Kenya. Their practice of power is copied on the imperialist one as they think that all that comes from the former white colonizer is good and must be adopted. And so, the new rulers become just by-products of their former colonizers. Surely, the consequences of this unusual situation instilled by the consciousness created by colonial rules are reflected on the state of mind of the African individual. Once he loses his own cultural landmarks and identity, the individual turns scattered and thus, liable to any potential disintegration.

Munira is the one around whom the narrative is built. Born into a wealthy family, his father is a prominent landlord, religious and obsessed with doing good. This motivation was the main reason for his coming to the remote village of Ilmorog. Through Munira, Ngugi has created a complex character to attempt to portray a man of epic characteristics and to dramatize the contradictions of African society. Munira is genuinely religious, yet his fervor turns into fanaticism which only leads to violence and tragedy. He is also the mysterious teacher, described by inspector Godfrey as “the odd man, the black sheep of an otherwise white family” (330).

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<sup>17</sup>- Whatiri, Raina and Timmins, John, “An Interview with Ngugi WaThiong’o” (1984) cited in Reinhard Sander, Bernth Lindfors, *Ngugi Speaks*, James Currey Ltd, Britain, 2006, p 228.

<sup>18</sup>- A word taken from Kiswahili and meaning: “Follow in my footsteps”.

As the different stories of the characters move back and forth, we learn about them: when Munira first came to the village, Abdulla was already there. Wanja joins them; her desire to marry Munira is doomed because Munira is recovering from the trauma of his failed arranged marriage. Later, Karega joins them and is close to Munira because he also was expelled from the high school of Siriana. From their reminiscence we come to know about Munira's rebellion at the school from which he was dismissed because of a strike. He is portrayed as a rebel against the social and political situation. His rebellion is also one against the material lust of his father. Yet, he is incapable of any active political engagement, preferring the culture of silence, "he would suddenly become conscious of never having done or willed anything to happen, that he seemed doomed to roam this world, a stranger"(18). However, his deep sense of disillusionment, silenced for a while, would lead to a state of entrapment and escape. Even if detached, he is in fact so filled with feelings of inadequacy, failure and isolation that the need to free his soul from the state of confusion he lives in grows more and more intense. Thus, the only way to end his internal suffering is to find refuge in an escapist religiosity which becomes a way of reordering his fragmented and pathological world. Like Karega, Abdulla, and Wanja, Munira is the loser under the new order. Like them, he also has turned his back to the cities where the new established order and dispensation reign and has taken refuge in Ilmorog village, once a market town, now a remote village stricken by a drought.

Both Ngugi and Fitzgerald portray characters with no real family ties. When the reader first meets Munira or Dick Diver in *Tender is the Night*, they both had already left home and family. They both start a new life in a different space, far from home. In this way, Ngugi and Fitzgerald meant to isolate their protagonists, presenting them as strangers and outlying from their homes before their societies. Scholarly research has shown that social alienation is often perceived as a problem of the colonized intelligentsia. Munira is a member of his society's elite, and his estrangement does not result only from intellectual questioning, but also from disowning his father's collaborative role in the colonial period. When he settled in Ilmorog, he had already cut himself from all family links and whenever talking about his parents -most of the time his father- he makes them belong to the remote past, thus distancing himself from his family bonds. He takes the role of an outcast in his community. Ngugi argues that colonial alienation takes two interlinked forms: "an active (or passive) distancing of oneself from the reality around; and an active (or passive) identification with that which is not external to one's

environment”<sup>19</sup>. In *The Will to Power*,<sup>20</sup> Nietzsche writes that consciousness is only a means of communication; it is evolved through social intercourse and with the view to the interests of social intercourse. “Intercourse” is understood to include the influences of the outer world and the reaction they compel on our side; also our effect upon the outer world. In *Tender is the Night*, the protagonist Dick Diver asked Nicole for marriage, her sister Baby Warren first rejected the idea because he was not as rich as the Warrens: “That’s just it,” complained Baby stubbornly. “Nicole’s rich.” Another reason for Baby’s refusal was the fact that Dick was not a descendant of a family bearing titles; whereas, “They were an American ducal family.” “We don’t know who you are.”<sup>21</sup> That was the social rejection that Dick Diver had to experience. Considering Munira’s case, when he first came to Ilmorog, he was rejected by the peasants who did not see any need for education and refused to send their children to the school. Thus, the social intercourse had been broken from the beginning. However, this was not enough to dissuade Munira, who was more determined than ever, to teach Ilmorog children. It was not long before Munira could really establish himself as the village’s teacher “Was it a wonder that teachers ran away at the first glance? ... But Munira stayed on...we were all whispering- was he a little crazed?” (6)

At the same time, when Munira appears on the scene, the trans-Africa Road is being built. The road that would bring many changes to the village would also affect the social life of people. The village of Ilmorog has been transformed from a “small cluster of mud huts” (120) to a “bustling new town of stone, iron, concrete and glass and neon lights.” (261). This transformation has also brought with it much of the materialistic baggage associated with western progress, and with this progress has also come corruption and the abuse of power. Munira, more than the other protagonists, is one of the shakers and movers of the order. Like the others, he witnesses a new exploitation and struggle imposed by the emergence of a political regime that is authoritarian and corrupt, the rise of robber barons, “drinkers of human sweat, eaters of human flesh” (236), and proletarianisation of the masses. As an intellectual, Munira was not to feel comfortable anymore since - like Ngugi - he rejects those who gained advantage by joining the new faith or by betraying Mau Mau principles like Mzigo; those who obtained riches through political and administrative office like Chui, and those who exploit women, like Kimeria did with Wanja. For him, they represent the unscrupulous men of the

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<sup>19</sup> -Ngugi, WaThiong’o, *Decolonizing the Mind : The Politics of Language in African Literature*, Westlands Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers Ltd, 1980, p28.

<sup>20</sup> -Friedrich, Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, Vintage Press, New York, 1968, Sec 708.

<sup>21</sup> - Fitzgerald, Francis, Scott, *Tender is the Night*, Penguin Popular Classics, London wc2R, England, 1997, p.60.

new balance of social forces which he strongly rejects since they only act out the rules of political and economic arrangements inimical to the masses. Hence, Munira is no longer at ease with his environment and becomes uncomfortable with himself.

In his concern with the issue of the self, Nietzsche consistently insists on the social nature of consciousness: “the man who would not belong to the masses needs only to cease being comfortable with himself, he should follow his conscience which shouts at him: “Be yourself, you are not really all that which you do, think and desire now”<sup>22</sup>. In his creation of Munira, Ngugi has succeeded in making us, readers, accept him as a true social individual whose actions are unpredictable. Perhaps more than any other of Ngugi’s characters, Munira tends to have a more psychological than typological significance. His motivation for action is determined by a tension between his society and education or rather his duty and his desire. Ngugi is much concerned with the individual’s psychology and the repressive social environment:

[Munira] always felt in himself a strong tension between this vigour that was Limuru and that long night of unreality that was his past ... between the call of life and an escape into a family ... between the desire for active creation and the passive acceptance of one’s ordained fate.(88)

As a character, Munira is portrayed in a way that serves to illuminate some of the ambiguities and dilemmas created by the circumstances and so do the real experiences of the other characters. Knowing about Munira’s past is significant in that it helps to better understand the present state in which he is confined:

Munira’s stomach tightened a little at the revelation that Abdulla had fought in the forests. He also felt guilty as if there was something he should have done but didn’t do. It was the guilt of omission: other young men of his time had participated; they had taken sides which defined them as people who had gone through the test and either failed or passed. But he had not taken the final test. (62)

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<sup>22</sup>-Walter, Kauffman, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, (Princeton, New-York:PrincetonUniversity Press Fourth, 1974, p158.

By not taking sides, Munira has failed. Indeed, what engenders Munira's guilt and makes him feel ashamed of his past is his father's past collaboration with the British and the wealth he accumulated by turning others into slaves in his land. This fact puts a strain on his consciousness since he ends torn between loyalty to his family and loyalty to his country, feeling that he failed in the past and longing to take part in Kenya's present struggles. Nonetheless, he is paralyzed by a strong alienation imposed by the post-independence situation. That alienation results initially in a state of inaction and passivity that is barely acceptable by readers who may fault Munira for his inertia and ineffectualness. When we know about his father's deeds, we can explain Munira's rejection of the crass materialism of all those who are supposed to take care of the people. Munira learns how his father turned Karega's mother into a slave as he comes to know also that his sister Mukami, who was Karega's girlfriend, was driven to suicide by his father too. These facts unconsciously add to Munira's disillusionment, and he becomes alienated from Karega but at the same time wants to save him from Wanja.

As an intellectual, Munira vacillates between two types of characters that constitute Ngugi's binary opposites. He is not as powerful as the exploiter that embodies the values of the comprador class and capitalism motivated by self-interest and serving his own politics of oppression. On the other hand, Munira does not really belong to the other type which represents the victim or the oppressed embodying the workers and peasants. Being neither an exploiter nor a victim, Munira stands in a twilight zone, "I dwelt in the twilight of doing and non-doing"(47), "...a teacher, or a priest, is only a public servant; I might have said a public victim", (44) characterized by idealism, rebellion but also escapism:

But he had never lifted a finger to fight against the process. Life for him had always been a strain. His father thought him a loss. And he, Munira, always felt a need to break loose.(91).

Though Munira had no feeling of admiration or love for his father, he nonetheless, envied him for his serenity and sense of security: "how proud he now was of a father so serene, so sure and secure in both wealth and faith!"(93). Munira was proud of his father's state of mind because compared to his state of uncertainty and feeling of great loss and indecision, his father at least "had stood by some principles." (94). Munira prefers the culture of silence to active political engagement. Here he expresses Ngugi's attitude of disillusionment with

Kenyan intellectuals “He was shouting Kamaru sings about ourpast: he looks to our past, he wants to awaken us to the wisdom of our forefathers.What good is that to the chaos that is today?”(82). However, his rejection of the crude materialist life of his father already constitutes a rebellion even if he is unable to do any action to move things except for idealistic or academic purposes, thus he escapes to Ilmorog “to be born” (189).

When he realizes the atrocity of life in the village due to the exploitation by materialist leaders and the drought that dashes all hope for a better situation, Munira finds himself useless, paralyzed “Why, I asked myself, had they not built smaller serviceable roads before thinking of international highways?...Yes. Yes...when hyenas grow horns.” (48). Munira’s disillusionment grows so intense that he just wants to detach himself from the whole world around him and to feel unconcerned:

What did it matter to me that theable-bodied had fled Ilmorog in search of the golden fleece in cities of metallic promises and no hope? What had it all to do with me? I was not and I had never wanted to be my brother’s keeper (49).

He becomes so troubled with feelings of failure and inadequacy that, little by little, he isolates himself within the classroom’s walls and wants to remain uninvolved.Teaching,then, becomes a refuge and a more secure way to remain untroubled. Beside teaching, Munira used to meet with the villagers for Theng’eta drinks, which also constitutes for him a means to forget the harsh reality: “I have lived in a world to myself. I hardly ever read newspapers.” (52).

Munira is not the only one hurt in Ilmorog.Like Munira’s father who drove his daughter to suicide, Kimeria also is another evildoer who in the past had destroyed Wanja by abusing her and taking her innocent youth and abandoning her. When, in chapter 6, Karega, Munira, and Wanja are on their way back to Ilmorog from Nairobi, they are all under the feelingthat this time they are driven neither by idealism nor by any need for personal healing, but rather by an overriding need to escape. More than the others, Munira thought of many things he did not understand like his father’s actions and attitudes or the ordeal that the nation was undergoing. He feels the gigantic deception “being played on a whole people by a few who had made it, often in alliance with foreigners” (106). He comes to the realization that he was seeking “a new flowering of self” (107). He is convinced that he has been used and actively participated in the nation’s betrayal. Yet, he has not shown the agency shown by others like the workers who protested, or like the men and women who were openly criticizing the situation at the risk of their lives. Actually, precisely at that time, he realizes that his feeling of this

discomfort stems from the inner doubt that dawns on him, a doubt about his past, his present situation, and what he could do for his future: “Was there no way of using their energies and dreams to a purpose higher...?” (103)

It is precisely at that stage of his life that Munira's state leads towards his downfall. Because he continuously ponders memories of past deeds, his own actions, his father's, his community's, Munira feels guilty and can never reach happiness. “Man is the animal which is able to make promises”<sup>23</sup> wrote Nietzsche in his *On the Genealogy of Morals*. This could simply mean that man has an accurate memory, which does record words and actions, and this is what enables him to project his wishes and purpose into the future. However, he also has an inner censor, his conscience that keeps a close watch on his promises and obligations lest they should be violated. On the other hand, Nietzsche wondered whether this kind of historical memory bars humans from happiness, and to make his point clearer, he draws a parallel between human being and “the beast”: the latter, by living unhistorically, “closely tied to the peg of the moment not knowing about past or future”<sup>24</sup>, lives in simple happiness. However, for man, who is unable to forget, happiness remains forever out of reach. This point is also sustained by Freud's pessimism regarding the progress of culture and the moral constraints and abdications imposed by culture on the individual. They necessarily conflict with his quest for happiness, causing all kinds of neurotic sufferings. Indeed, Munira is relatively happy when he is not involved in any form of action and peacefully enjoying his slumber: “how had I become involved in all this? I was happy in my previous slumbering state,” (103) he wonders when he finds the young Karega in a city bar completely drunk and takes care of him and of Wanja whom he also finds in the bar. When he knew about Karega's hardships as a sheepskin and orange seller, Munira again feels uncomfortable. It is as if the more memories he accumulates, the more morally hurt and fragmented he becomes: “the constriction in my stomach tightened, for in that instant... I knew that – but what? A strange thing. A burning pool in my stomach. Fire-tongues... spilt bill. I was alone” (105), though he is sitting with Karega and Wanja in the room. When the individual's present becomes haunted by the past, then the human equilibrium is affected and his future threatened: “my life had been lived in broken cups of memory,” (53) thought Munira. It is precisely the memories that Munira accumulates which deprive him of inner peace and harmony.

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<sup>23</sup>-Nietzsche, Friedrich, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, eds Keith, Ansell-Pearson, Trad. Carol Diethe, Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp. 134-138.

<sup>24</sup>- Ibid

When life becomes hopeless in Ilmorog because of the drought, Karega thinks he cannot teach under those conditions where theory seemed a mockery of the reality. How could he teach the children the glorious past of their African ancestors when the pupils are fainting with hunger and malnutrition? He then thinks of a brilliant plan, and he broaches it to Munira: to send a strong delegation of men, women, and children to the capital city to meet with the Ilmorog MP in order to obtain help from the government. Uncertain and undecided as he is, the only answer Munira gives is: "What can I do? It is not my fault" (112) thinking "I seem unable to settle. I keep on moving driven by other people's promptings; can I never will my own actions and decisions?" (114). That is another instance where he could not make a choice but leaves the decision to others because it seems safer to him not to face the reality and take a clear stand. Undoubtedly, the journey to the big city, "Toward Bethlehem" is a turning point in Munira's life as it constitutes a big step towards a confrontation with his self. Indeed, it makes him see with extreme acuteness what human beings are capable of when they are driven by an inner need for survival. It is not surprising then that Munira is to write years later that "It was the exodus to the BigBig City that started me on that slow...inward journey to a position where I can now see that man's estate is rotten at heart" or "...The exodus toward the kingdom of knowledge," (118) knowledge about himself.

For the German tradition in literature, the concept of ideal of the nineteenth century thinkers envisaged a harmonious individuality in which intellect and feeling were equally balanced and vehement passions firmly anchored, or in Schiller's terms reconciling the instincts and senses with reason's laws. However, that ideal is rarely reachable mainly when we consider the human psyche that is far from being ideal. Looking at Jung's comments on this aspect of personality precisely, we find him considering the persona as the social mask and making a distinction between the persona and the personality. Arguing in a tradition derived from Schiller, Rousseau and Marx, Jung develops The Relation Between the Ego and the Unconscious, a theory of the psyche and its relation to the world of labour that foregrounds the notion of alienation. In the world of relations, Jung claims, the outward relationship of the individual to the world around him is far from being an expression of individuality, in fact imposed upon the individual by the class and labour relations of society. Jung labels this merely social role as "This segment of the collective psyche; often created with much effort, 'the persona'" functioning as an 'other' self. In Jung's concept, the encounter with the other is vital. However, the risk we run when we over identify with the persona is subtly different: rather than the self, which is our own other, the persona, is the self which is given to us by the

others. As Jung put it “The persona is that which in reality one is not, but which oneself as well as others think one is”<sup>25</sup>. Yet, this mask is necessary. The professional mask of the professor, the tenor, the poet, or the lifestyle of the husband, the wife ... for example allows us to negotiate our way in society: and it is this form of adaptation to external reality, a complex system of relations between individual consciousness and society that renders Munira feel displaced. Whereas all the villagers, men, women and children saw in him the teacher, the provider of knowledge, education, discipline and order, under that teacher’s mask, Munira is internally lacking peace and solace. He is so confused and unsettled because he is unable to reconcile his personal consciousness, or self-realization, with his social surrounding. Actually, the danger of keeping to the persona consists in its liability to distract the individual from “The inner adaptation to the collective unconscious”. That is, an individual can easily succumb to the social demands that would take him away from the call of the collective unconscious -what he thinks he should do, or how he should behave.

Ideally, the individual triumphs if he reaches the archetypal totality because the difficult task is to negotiate this relation between, on the one hand, the personal or the individual and, on the other, the collective in the social, political in the archetypal sense. Hence, the deep inner feeling that is devastating Munira results from his incapacity to establish a balance between his desires, his own will, his individual consciousness and his duty towards his community, or the order established by the outer world which constitutes the collective psyche: “To choose involved effort, decision, preference of one possibility. This could be painful. He had chosen not to choose. Yet he felt guilty.” (71).

In the chronology of events, Munira’s absence from Ilmorog lasts five years. When he comes back, progress has indeed arrived in the location. The village to which he had come first in search of self-knowledge is now undergoing an unexpected development. Munira witnesses the physical and spiritual changes that have transformed the village. Those changes brought a materialistic development linked to western progress, but they also brought the drawbacks of that progress, namely the abuse of power by the new corrupt leaders. The brewery, formerly owned by Abdulla and Wanja, is now owned by a multinational corporation. The bitter reality that Munira has to face is that wealth in the village only profited greedy investors and businessmen from faraway Nairobi. Shops and shopping centers mushroomed out of the various farms. The farmers and the herdsmen can even get loans from

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<sup>25</sup> -Jung, C.G., *Collected Works*, trd. B.M. Hinkle, London: Routledge, 1953, 9§ p221.

the African Economic Bank for building plots. “Demarcation.Titledeeds.Loans.Fencing the land.Barbed wire.A Farmers’ Marketing Co-operative.Milk.Wealth.” (268). In the new Ilmorog, an era of prosperity seems to have arrived. However, that is not what Munira feels because he does not recognize the old village he left. Much had happened during the time of separation. The old Ilmorog and everybody have been changed, “Utterly changed” (269). Munira bitterly realizes that the old Ilmorog he had left has vanished. If when he came the first time to Ilmorog, he wanted to forget his past and start a new life, this time he returns to the village in search of the life he once enjoyed there. If in the first coming he started to find solace for his pain in the company of his new friends Karega, Abdulla and Wanja, this time progress has separated them:

...five years since he went away and left a curse behind him, as if he knew that with his going the old Ilmorog would also go. His face was gaunt ... there was light and fire in the eyes. And yet his face was still, skin held tight against the bones.(p.269).

That was another twist of destiny to Munira. The place in which he very much hoped to find the ethical values to restore his confidence is gone. The essential feature of all personality disorders is the existence within the individual of two or more distinct aspects of personality, each dominant at different times. The personality that is dominant at any particular time determines the individual’s behavior and social relations. Hence, one can assume the aspect of personality looking for its wholeness was not the one of Munira the teacher but of Munira the friend, the son or the lover.

Whereas everyone seems to conform to the new establishment in Ilmorog, Munira reaches a feeling of loss and disorientation, as the world he wanted to belong to has become a thoroughly dehumanized society in which everyone, including Abdulla, Karega and Wanja specifically seems to conform. This feeling of loss forbears Munira’s personality which becomes more and more destabilized and fragmented. It seems that he has lost the last chance to find his secure self. Because in some disturbed personalities or in neurotic disorders the capacity of the individual to integrate contradictory aspects and tendencies in his life is made possible at the price of repression, Munira loses -or represses?-his important unconscious wishes and possibilities for personal development, his ambitions. Thus, Munira becomes

unable to tolerate the threatening ambiguity and uncertainty of his social background. He cannot more comprehend nor tolerate the abrupt changes that occurred in the village during his absence, as if time was running at a faster pace than his. The price to his attitude is the deep feeling of inner emptiness caused by his inability to integrate past and future into the present and thus to establish a coherent sense of personality because before that “There past-present-future were one.” (212).

For Jung, the key to seemingly insoluble problems, like Munira’s state of uncertainty, lies in a complex interchange of energy: “Whenever a damming up of libido occurs, the opposites previously united in the steady flow of life fall apart and henceforth confront one another like antagonists eager for battles.” These opposites, then “exhaust themselves in a prolonged conflict, the duration and upshot of which cannot be foreseen” but something new comes about. For, from “the energy which is lost to them is built that third thing which is the beginning of the new way”<sup>26</sup>. Jung describes this way in terms of the play of opposites in the psyche. Yet, when Jung states that the solution to the contradiction between desire and experience does not lie in the possibility of thinking it or in the discovery of a rational truth, he underlies that it is in the discovery of a way that real life can accept. That way is for many individuals simply a fragmentariness due to that play of opposites which in Munira’s case were on the one hand his duty towards the peasants and their children, and on the other his desire for Wanja’s love and life in harmony with himself. That desire grows so intense that Munira cannot tolerate Wanja meeting Karega. In fact, in personality disorder there is a distinctive quality that Munira does not escape from. It is that aspect of brittleness which gives him a prominent hypersensitivity to potential slights conjugated with a high vigilance to the world around him. That is why he observes all that is happening around him with scrutiny as he was persistently scanning the others’ actions mainly Wanja’s and Karega’s, for potential danger. Thus, by misinterpreting others’ intentions and by suspecting other people, Munira is also alienating himself by retreating in his own circle of thoughts. As a person with a borderline personality disorder, he lacks the capacity to establish a coherent self-concept and becomes unable to comprehend what happened and what was happening to him:

... but how could he recount his own descent into a five-year hell at Wanja’s feet? She had somehow gripped him, possessed him, turned his head and made his heart beat with a thousand pains and sighs. She was his ruin. (269).

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<sup>26</sup>Op.cit, p.136.

He seems to live in a trance, his head and heart overloaded with his desire for Wanja, but still fearing her influence on him. He adopts what could be called a marginal stance in society, switching from one present time to the next. His means of defense consists in a temporal splitting of the self that excludes past and future as dimension of commitment, responsibility and guilt. Since Munira does not seek any kind of commitment, neither socially nor politically, it becomes evidently safer for him to repress his past and the uncertain future. He prefers to immerse himself in the present; however, unfortunately for him, even the present does not seem to provide any satisfaction to him anymore. On the contrary, his present seems to slip between his hands giving him a sense of loss and dispersal. When he returns to Ilmorog after five years, he bitterly realizes that

...everybody was utterly changed...The way Munira told it was as if things had happened in a neat sequence of time and place. Yet, Munira had experienced the events and the changes as chaos *inside* and *outside himself*, and he a comic *spectator*...unable to act(269).

Munira, a religious man, becomes so puzzled and angered by Wanja's illicit affairs that he only sees her evil side. In fact, because of what she underwent, Wanja "wore a new mask" and became powerful in her community: "Wanja... had money and she was powerful and new women feared her" (270). The new face of the village brought more business in the bar. The road-workers had given her and Abdulla a head start. Besides, she and Abdulla are the only local people who have succeeded in building a house in the New Ilmorog. Whereas Munira is still hoping to renew his connection with the weak and hurt Wanja before his departure, she has become a different woman. In the new Ilmorog and the money that Wanja makes in the bar, she could build a new hut. But, because of the injustice she has been victim of, she understands that in the New Kenya nothing is for free and decides to make everyone pay for what she has to offer. Wanja and Abdulla have been dispossessed of their building that was meant to become Wanja's and Abdulla's Theng'eta breweries. The new owners of the breweries are master-servants of bank power who drove in Land Rovers or Range Rovers depending on the current car fashion: "They have even taken away my right, well our right to brew." (279) announces Wanja bitterly.

Wanja's experiences and suffering constitute the threshold of her consciousness about her situation and also the growth of her social awareness. That awareness leads to the crucial choices that she makes to start anew her life in the "New Jerusalem" where she builds her brothel, "Sunshine Lodge"... "as famous as the church" (281). With the new face, Wanja became "... a really a new her" (279). Through this reversal of Wanja's state, we can see a release of a new energy which underpins her desire for revenge from the rich exploiters but also a desire to realize her social ambition, constantly stifled by oppressive forces of capital and male exploitation. That is another deception added to his earlier disappointment:

Munira had thought that... the understanding which had earlier existed between him and Wanja would be rekindled. He tried a reconnection ... he only met with eyes that bade him no welcome.(271)

Munira bitterly realizes that he is excluded from the group, unwanted. Hurt in his deepest soul, he is deprived of his last gleam of hope to fill his emptiness with love; he feels a tremendous loneliness descending upon him, and he is haunted by the past that has always shadowed him "An outsider. A spectator."(270). Not only is he uncomfortable with his self because he does not like nor accept his state of passivity, but that feeling is also deepened when he is rejected by others. Then, he only finds comfort and company in Theng'eta drinking, his only friend:

It was only in Theng'eta that he had found personal reality and he was then able to view the burn-out cigarette- ends of his life, his illusions, his desires (269).

That is another failure which only leads to his decline as he has lost control of himself. Again, he is a spectator this time; he is just watching his own decline. Deep inside himself, Munira even feels shame and disgust at his helplessness.

At this state of total confusion, moments of painful indecision mingled with a sense of guilt, Munira needs clarity of vision that would put an end to his suffering and gain inner peace. It is more like a spiritual trial, a soul searching for solace. In fact, the shock and humiliation he receives from Wanja the night he goes to her for love and is asked for payment triggers his recovery from his state of decay "...he was not to forget the shock and the humiliation of the hour. It was almost like the first time, long ago, when he was only a boy" (280).

That is a stimulus that also brings to the surface his old psychological wounds. That is the spiritual trial he has been through. Thus, he is so wounded and disturbed by Wanja's new business in the brothel. He was particularly irritated by her secret meetings with Karega. According to his shuttered mind and bitterly hurt heart, Wanja personifies the devil and Karega would never escape from her poison: "I felt the devil at work" 66). He feels compelled to save Karega from Wanja's claws. He almost considers it a messianic duty, to save Karega and the village: "How does one tell of murder? Murder of the soul...the operation of God's law, the revelation of His will." (45). Munira sets fire to Wanja's home which is to him no more than a whorehouse. However, the psychic ruin reached at the last chapter shows also that his state of disturbance and the feeling of emptiness is also ultimately linked to love or rather the lack of love, the love of Wanja which he could not gain. We come to believe what Julia Kristeva affirmed "L'amour ne nous habitejamais sans nous brûler<sup>27</sup>". When Munira decides to burn the brothel, he is burning what, according to him, has been the source of society's problems and despair. By saving the young Karega, he is also saving the future of his community since he sees in Karega the future hopeful generation that would unite the workers, the active class in society.

Therefore, as psychoanalysts often insist, it is not possible for individuals to lead a harmonious life under repressed memories and wishes. The result is a fragmentation of the self, a shifting view of oneself with sharp discontinuities, rapidly changing roles continuity over time and across situations with no project of self-development for the future. Despite Munira's individual power that is shown at times, undeserved and abusive, he and Abdulla hope for a better world to come; Abdulla in the physical realm and Munira in the spiritual one. Abdulla copes by reinventing himself as circumstances demand and his principles allow. Yet, while sharing Wanja's and Abdulla's capacity for personal transformation, Munira seeks an answer for the uncertain situation amid the prevailing national confusion. With no sense of self-development or a clear vision of his future, Munira, triggered by a jealous machination over Wanja's love, starts the fire at her brothel as an act of revolt. That revolt is against himself first: "Peace, my soul" (45), against his inaction and quietness before it is directed against the agents of evil in his society.

Through this type of character, Ngugi is pointing to the devastating position into which the intellectual is being confined in the newly independent Kenya. Those who refute neo-

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<sup>27</sup> -Kristeva, Julia, *Histoires d'Amour*, FolioEssais, Gallimard, 1985, p24.

colonialism and refuse to be evildoers, who try to work for a better life in Kenya, are not the ones who can actually change the prevailing situation since they do not hold any political position, and they are not the decision makers. Consequently, they are bound to witness their society's disintegration and annihilation while losing their wholeness. Thus, Munira constitutes Ngugi's reflection of Kenya's malaises that nibble society and mainly its most sensitive part, the intellectuals. However, from his deep faith in his community's power, Ngugi draws his belief in the possibility of a healing process which stems from everyone's involvement and more importantly from the intellectuals' willingness to regenerate and reconstruct their society. Yet, Ngugi undermines that any society's development should start from its roots, the individual.

## **B- Discourse of Fragmentation:**

To approach *Petals of Blood* with a particular interest in the ideological message it tries to convey, and which in many instances reflects Ngugi's postcolonial conviction, one needs to study the discourse he uses to this end, in view of his search for a regenerated Kenyan society.

Ngugi's style and themes are indeed interrelated in his narrative, and the issues he tackles are attached to his choice of language. Ngugi's diction is geared to an authorial desire for social progress in *Petals of Blood*. This is why Ngugi paints a number of scenes and portraits of characters to mirror the actual decadence characterizing Kenya after independence. In his discourse and throughout his narrative, popular aspirations are foregrounded. His thematic choice and discourse are also influenced by his reading:

I avidly read Engel's *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*...and the first volume of Marx's *Capital* as well as his two studies on class struggles, *The Class Struggles in France*. I was excited when I read in Engel's *Anti-Duhring* the notion that movement and hence change was fundamental in nature, human society, and thought, and that this motion was the result of the unity and struggle of opposites.<sup>28</sup>

Here Ngugi quotes his interest in Marxist literature and writers of progressive imaginative literature like Brecht and Gorky whose novel, *Mother*, Ngugi thinks should be read by all African patriots. These influences have a large impact on Ngugi's ideas of people's struggle, imperialism, and regeneration. In fact, this notion of the duality of images was later used by Ngugi, especially in *A Grain of Wheat*, where a grain of wheat "dies" to bear a new life.

In *Petals of Blood*, Ngugi is depicting a society bent on self-destruction, crippled both materially and psychologically. It is mainly composed of people depersonalized because of many years of domination and who absurdly continue to satisfy the insatiable desire of an

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<sup>28</sup>-Reinhard, W.Sander and Bernth Lindfors ,eds, *Ngugi Wa Thiong'o Speaks*, James Curreys Ltd, Britain, 2006, p106.

alien master, capitalism. Already in *A Grain of Wheat*, Ngugi intellectually probes the nature of power, nationalism, and the possibility of national unity. Symbolically, and like Wole Soyinka's play *A Dance of the Forest* or Ayi Kwei Armah's *Two Thousand Seasons* and *The Healers*, Ngugi sets forth the view that the politics of the present can be only built on a thorough understanding of the past. That is, each man must come to a realization and acceptance of his own past in the best way he can. Yet, in the process some are bound to be sanctioned because they themselves have tried to distort their own past lives by shrugging their responsibility to the group, the community, or the whole nation.

Like many African writers, Ngugi has gone through different stages in his literary career. At the beginning, the anti-colonial literature focused on the demand for independence and self-rule. In *Weep Not Child* (1964), Ngugi portrays the dispossessed Africans who, at a given time, were demanding equity and the recovery of their land. Later, by the late 1960s, Ngugi changes the lenses through which he sees the social ills in his society. His post-independence discourse focuses henceforth on the effects of both colonialism and neo-colonial systems on the souls of people. As Peter Nazareth says, "Not only does he [Ngugi] want to show how Kenya gained its independence, but also he wants to find out what happened in the process to the souls of the people."<sup>29</sup> Hence, his literature becomes one of disappointment and disillusionment. It represents the African politicians as corrupt and worse than the white masters. So, that situation saw the emergence of a post-colonial African literature that was critical of the established order and questioned the validity of a political system that does not satisfy the needs of its people.

According to Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin (1997), as a school of thought, post-colonialism is "designating an amorphous set of discursive practices, akin to postmodernism"<sup>30</sup>. This is true to a certain extent because like postmodernism and poststructuralism, the post-colonial discourse that Ngugi adopted was subversive and was attacking the rapacious and corrupt system at home. This idea is sustained by Rayman Selden who insists that post-colonialism is associated with a "set of concerns marked by indeterminacies and decenteredness...associated with deconstruction"<sup>31</sup>. In this sense, post colonialism and modernism have some common features, like subversion of centers-the center

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<sup>29</sup>-Killam, G.D, *Critical Perspectives on Ngugi WaThiong'o*, Washington, D.C: Three Continents Press, 1984, p245.

<sup>30</sup> -Ashcroft, B, Griffiths, G& Tiffin, H, *The post-Colonial Studies Reader*, London: Routledge, 1997, p 117.

<sup>31</sup> -Selden, R.A, *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theories*. Hertfordshire: Harvester Wheat-Sheaf, 1994, p 188.

cannot hold anymore- both tend to deconstruct existing orthodoxies into the realm of social and political sphere only to re-construct them. That is why the novel, as a mode of expressing thoughts and feelings, constituted for Ngugi an efficient tool of presentation. For him, before interpreting any revolutionary act, there is an urgent need for a historical re-construction directed towards freeing the minds of the repressed from the implanted myths. In other words, the past must not only be reconstructed, but it must also be re-created and orientated towards the present exigencies and daily struggles of people. In one of his interviews, Ngugi says: “When you write an English novel...you tend to assume the whole body of novels and novel that has gone before you”<sup>32</sup>. There is here an explicit assumption that Ngugi has been influenced by English novels and their characteristics. And one of the pillars of the modern novel is the ‘objective’ description of reality, or what some Marxists have described as “bourgeois realism”. A “good novel” is defined by the British author and poet Marjorie Boulton as one which “is true in the sense that it gives a sincere, well-observed, enlightening picture of human life”<sup>33</sup>.

Ngugi made “that picture of human life” his continual combat. For the historical and political writer, his challenge was to provide in his novels a version of historical reality. And one of these realities is his people’s struggle for liberation. However, to serve as a weapon of revolution, history has to be based on the collective consciousness and on actions of the oppressed, not on individual acts of heroes. Though Munira, Wanja, Karega, and Abdullah have been hurt by their own lives, they remain victims of their own society and systems which exploit them. These protagonists succeed in gaining our sympathy because their moral struggle is revealed within their souls. Munira struggles psychologically against the shattering experience of failure- in the eyes of his surrounding- caused by his refusal to cope with the order that is imposed by the neo-colonial elite and the new contradictions in his society. Ngugi the artist succeeds in making the reader sense his protagonist’s inner conflicts. Using a variety of devices, elements of a fable, parables, symbolism, together with a plot charged with dramatic episodes, Ngugi makes us follow Munira in a gradual moral decline and fragmentation of his soul.

Actually, Ngugi’s recurrent return to the past is linked to his deep desire to de-construct the social knowledge of Africans infiltrated by an imperialist culture, and recover the African past

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<sup>32</sup>-Wilkinson, Jane, *Talking With African Writers: Interviews with African Poets, Playwrights and Novelists*, London, James Currey, 1992, p 127.s

<sup>33</sup>- Marjorie, Boulton, *The Anatomy of the Novel*, Boston:Routledge&Kegan Paul, 1975.

equilibrium. In doing so, he attempts to re-order and reconstitute a social and political unity and forge a coherent vision of change against the state of fragmentation, and social displacement. Typical in Ngugi's mode of writing, *Petals of Blood* is fragmented and impressionistic, based on dozens of short individual scenes, each one contributing a vital part, like a piece of a puzzle. Yet, this novel explores more deeply the very nature of his society - and of every society as well- the individual citizen, his duty towards himself, his family, and his community.

If Ngugi's novels as a whole have been largely perceived as discourses on cultural decolonization, it is because they involve the quest for a new socio-political order. In this quest Ngugi ultimately presents land as a recurring economic and political metaphor in the process of decolonization in Kenya that ought to free the minds of people first. In *Petals of Blood*, the dry land in the village symbolizes fairly the state of deprivation in the new Kenya. If fiction is a representation of history, Ngugi's novels present, then, a common characteristic to the extent that history is an important component of the narrative structure he deploys. In this sense, O. Louis Mink says history and story can be both seen as "A primary and irreducible form of a human comprehension, an article in the constitution of common sense."<sup>34</sup> In *Petals of Blood* Ngugi is shaping, ordering, and re-interpreting his people's history by breaking the linearity of historical time the same way he breaks the narrative structure. As Carol Sichermann puts it:

Ngugi blurs the lines between history and literature and that, perhaps as a consequence of his blurring of the two genres, the distinction between Ngugi and his narrators and certain characters also becomes blurred.<sup>35</sup>

That is, as we get more and more immersed in the narrative; we no longer come to make a clear distinction between the historical accounts of Ngugi and his characters' experiences.

On these grounds, Fitzgerald's writings also abide by this rule. Historical reference is part and parcel of his work as he often -like Ngugi- reflects his generation's experience in a

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<sup>34</sup> -Mink, O.Louis, « *Narrative Form as a Cognitive Instrument* » In *The Writing of History and Historical Understanding*, edited by Robert.H.Canary and HenryKozicki, Madison, Wisconsin Press, 1978, p132.

<sup>35</sup> -Sichermann, Carol M, "Ngugi WaThiong'o and the Writing of Kenyan History". In "*Research in African Literatures*", 20, n03, 1989, pp. 347-70.

specific social context marked by a cultural change in the post World War America. Fitzgerald describes the new culture of consumption and leisure that leads to an attitude of indulgence and frivolity. And by pointing to the emergence of permissive practices tainted by liberal expressions of disregard for morality and authority that became a fashionable trait in that period of time, the writer is directing his readers' attention to the dangerous repercussions of the new culture brought by modern times on man's soul. Because those changes constituted the first material for his writings, Fitzgerald has been labeled as "a social historian."<sup>36</sup>

Likewise, Ngugi believes in the importance of historical change and the use of narrative as a tool for ordering and shaping history. The novel becomes for Ngugi a space where he teaches his readers history as an effective means to drive a moral lesson and take up a role and function in the making of Kenya's contemporary history. He then, seeks to teach mainly the marginalized classes of Kenyan society, workers and peasants, in order to equip them with the constructive knowledge that will make them oppose absolute power because for him history can constitute the best remedy to society's sicknesses and an effective weapon against the tyranny of the rulers:

... It is precisely because history is the result of struggle and tells of change that it is perceived as a threat by all the ruling strata in all the oppressive exploitative systems. Tyrants and the tyrannical systems are terrified at the sound of the wheels of history. History is subversive.<sup>37</sup>

Even if it is a murder that sets the novel in motion, and the solving of that murder brings it to a close, all the details of the plot revolve around a central problem that expresses itself recurrently as it is inseparable from the characters' life. It hints to the fact that the powerful are most interested in gathering evermore wealth and power while the weak become even weaker and suffer unbearable injustices. For his narrative, Ngugi uses a broad canvas filled with a multitude of characters who are each presented in a series of flashbacks from various narrative perspectives -a technique Ngugi admired in Conrad.

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<sup>36</sup>- Kirk, Curnutt, *A Historical Guide to F. Scott Fitzgerald*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2004, p.5

<sup>37</sup>- Ngugi, WaThiongo, "*Moving the Centre: The Struggle for Cultural Freedoms*". London: Heinemann, 1993, pp. 96-97

These narrative techniques are geared to Ngugi's overall aim in the novel. In this way, the author can encompass the vast spectrum of characters and their different viewpoints as well as he validates the joint efforts of his people, since Ngugi's positive vision of the people's struggle also celebrates the individual's revolt. A graphic representation of the novel's many pieces would reveal a spiral-like construction. The various stands of the plot move deeper and deeper through the history of Ilmorog, which is, in a way, the history of Kenya and more specifically that of its systems of power. This crude reality is set in *Petals of Blood* with an artistic creative impulse accentuated by the narrative's presentation of multiple other narratives piled up in the story. The narrative constitutes a consciously political novel that presents the characters as painters, performers and at the same time critics of their social conditions. Ngugi skillfully exposes and explains a situation shared by many people. He makes us not only understand the circumstances but also reflect on the living conditions of the Kenyan people at large.

In this respect, *Petals of Blood* serves the similar narrative purposes to the murder in Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace* of which the critic Percy Lubbock says it is a combination of two stories "It is like an Iliad, the story of certain men, and an Aeneid, the story of a nation, compressed into one book"<sup>38</sup>. It is the way Tolstoy combines the personal Iliad-like novel with the historical Aeneid-like novel that forms the dualistic structure of *War and Peace*. Likewise, the complexity and peculiarity of *Petals of Blood*, lacking the singularity of viewpoint, derives from the tension between two constant and interlocking strands: the collective and the personal, the events of a nation and the experiences of individuals. Hence, the protagonists of the novel have a dual significance. On one level, they reveal individuals in their quest for self-definition; on the other, they are participants in a mass movement whose constituents remain undisclosed to them. The same duality of public events and individual events reveal basic truths about the individual's personality and the relationship between moment-by-moment experiences of individuals and their long-term search for meaning to the destiny of their nation. It generates the individual's inner conflict and individual turning points of the novel.

A clear example of the way Ngugi endows situations and characters with dual significance is Wanja, who is presented as a weak, abused, and deprived woman. At the beginning, she is depicted as a young schoolgirl who falls victim to a wealthy former homeguard, Kimeria, who

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<sup>38</sup> -Lubbock, Percy, *The Craft of Fiction*, New-York: The Viking Press, 1957.

made her pregnant before rejecting her. She is a victim of capitalist power, but her society's traditions force her to accept the repressive system under which she lives. However, gradually, and according to situations and circumstances, we see her coming to social consciousness through dreams and ambition. Ultimately, her individual as well as her community's experiences and events contribute in making her understand the ravages this repression provokes in the soul of man. This dualistic structure that links the personal and the collective on which Ngugi relied in *Petals of Blood* certainly comes from Tolstoy's influence on him: "I remember once stumbling upon Tolstoy's *Childhood, Boyhood, Youth*, and one of my only two published efforts at Alliance was a short remembrance of my childhood influenced by my reading of Tolstoy."<sup>39</sup> However, this issue could just come from any worldview since one of the most important quests it raises is how can people be untied and their actions effective? The characters suffer because they discover that they failed. Their quest is marked by an idealism that finds no ground in practical experience. Munira, Karega and even Abdulla failed to do their logical duty towards their country; they failed to arise in the face of oppressors. "Wanja too was right. Everybody had been right except himself with his enthusiasm and idealism: where now the solidarity and unity of blackness?" (198).

The structural integrity of *Petals of Blood* derives from Ngugi's two-leveled handling of his material through the vehicles of characters, settings and narratives. Individual parts of the novel are integrated into the whole by including individual stories of the protagonists within the whole story, or 'the parallel plot' technique. The characters are, thus, allowed to tell their personal stories and experiences. This technique allows Ngugi to enrich the significance of particular incidents by linking them to collective events without altering the general flow of the happenings. This duality -characteristic of modernism that is largely used by Fitzgerald in which one thing is used to express two seemingly opposites ideas- enables Ngugi to compare the nature of individual experience of his characters with real historical events that took place in the village or in Kenya. The old woman Nyakinyua's long story about her husband's death and the subsequent hardships she underwent, is a good illustration of the way Ngugi contrast the 'inner' with the 'outer' states of human condition. In other words, the writer explores the conscious motives with the unconscious ones, and illustrates the conflict between the individual's free will and 'necessity', or between man's desire and his duty.

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<sup>39</sup>-Reinhard W. Sander and Bernth Lindfors, eds, *Ngugi WaThiong'o Speaks*, James Currey Ltd, Britain, 2006, p.105.

So it was *not he, alone, as an individual: so a whole community and region* could be condemned to only giving! ...a whole community of direct producers reduced to beggary and malnutrition and death (198)

The interrogations and the responses by the four characters Munira, Karega, Wanja and Abdulla are not presented in straightforward direction; information is rather provided in fragments. In a dissecting way, Ngugi opens up the post-colonial present for all kinds of scrutiny. He ponders present Kenya by continuing two narrative techniques he had already developed in earlier novels *Weep Not Child* and *A Grain of Wheat*. He uses multiple narrators whose perspectives differ according to their social belonging and personal stories. Ngugi successfully organizes these narratives with flashbacks that take the reader from present situations to past years since independence. By breaking the linearity of time, Ngugi plays with the effects of causality and logic; for instance, when Karega begins searching for the knowledge he needed to develop a policy about his future, he “hoped for a vision of the future rooted in a critical awareness of the past” (198). In this way, Ngugi creates a canvas whose threads of motivations, circumstances and meaning are interwoven like the Africa he jokes about “Africa, after all, did not have one but several pasts which were in perpetual struggle. Images pressed on images.” (214). From the present Ngugi moves to the past of the protagonists and even to the past of their ancestors. After the death of the three directors of the brewery, inspector Godfrey is in charge of the investigation. He is a relentless interrogator of Munira and his friends. It is precisely through his investigation that the reader learns about the four protagonists’ life and their involvement with one another forming a real jigsaw for the reader to decode. Even physically, the four characters move back and forth between Ilmorog and the capital city, Nairobi. From one time to another, the events as well as the four characters break off to go out on their own, only to come together again: Karega and Wanja return to their home village in the highlands while Munira goes to help an oppressed Kikuyu tribe. Later on, they gather again to get involved in some traditional ceremonies. After a while, Karega disappears moving around the country, only to reappear years after. Resuming life in the New Ilmorog, he suspends time to tell about his adventures and the different jobs he has done in Nairobi and Mombasa. As readers, we are transported by the writer into the characters’ minds to witness their questioning about what happens to them and their responses when it happens. However, the information is formulated in bits or fragments which the reader should gather meticulously to keep the thread of the story.

The narrative is planned in such a way as to give the text a self-deconstructive efficacy that is sustained throughout the story by interlacing cohesive and fragmenting techniques of narration in order to suggest the characters' fragmentary status and the alarming decay of post-independence Kenya. It is no surprise then, that the link between the novel's structure and the theme enhances Ngugi's work and reflects the ambiguities, inconsistencies and contradictions that occur to mirror the novelist's relation to society. In the narrative Ngugi depicts the hardship that the villagers endure under dreadful social and economic conditions. Their homes-in fact huts covered with mud- are deprived of the necessary comfort that would permit them to lead a decent life. Added to that, the drought reduced their labour to "scratching the earth." (24). Even their children were not spared; they "were often a nauseating sight: flies swarming around the sore eyes and mucus-blocked noses. Most had only tattered Calicoes for clothing" (24). In the opening chapters, the reader is first introduced to the village to witness "DEATH IN DESERT: HUNGER IN ILMOROG." (184). Then, he learns about the characters' lives who tell their stories in turn. The narrative is, thus, broken into parcels through flashbacks presenting images of contrast with the opulent life the few rich can afford in the city: they are "the monster demanding more and more sweat and giving only very little" (289).

In *Petals of Blood* Ngugi relies for his narrative construction on a motif that is of considerable significance, the journey. The narrative thus develops with the circumstances surrounding a delegation sent to the capital city from a drought-stricken village. The mission is composed of worthy citizens willing to inform officials of the harsh living conditions in their village. However, this mission is met with insensitive treatment and a rude reception. This delegation's mission takes on a central role and sets the chain of events in motion. The journey also "brings the beast down to Ilmorog"<sup>40</sup> which ultimately leads to the industrialization of the village, thus creating a new Ilmorog that is dehumanized and dispossessed of its grassroots spirit. The peasants witness the widespread use of the locally brewed Theng'eta, the negative transformation of Wanja, and the ultimate destruction of the oppressors, Chui, Mzigo, and Kimeria: "yes, Ilmorog was never quite the same after the journey" (190) writes Munira years later in his prison notes.

In fact, Ngugi uses this narrative technique of the journey to underscore the characters' growth of knowledge. It enables us to follow the protagonists' state of consciousness and

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<sup>40</sup>-Pagnouille, Christine, "Ngugi WaThiong'o's Journey of the Magi" : Part2 of *Petals of Blood*, Research in African Literature, 16.2, 1985, pp 264-75.

development before, during and after the journey. Hence, the journey becomes a means that transports the characters and most importantly Munira from a state of awareness to a higher degree of consciousness. Munira as well as Karega acquire more understanding about their own situation and can achieve a clear vision of their social relationship with each other and within their community. During their journey on donkey back from Ilmorog to Nairobi, the villagers underwent dreadful conditions; they suffered from thirst, hunger, and fatigue. Yet, the events they had gone through contributed to their maturity and even changed their perception of life. Upon his return to Ilmorog, Karega is convinced more than ever of the necessity to continue the struggle. He starts organizing the workers, showing good leadership qualities. Munira is also transformed after coming back to Ilmorog; the knowledge he acquired gives him such awareness about his duty towards his society that he becomes more conscious about the difficult responsibility that rests on his shoulders. He is now deeply convinced of his duty to save the village from corruption and misconduct. Hence, even the hardship of travel shared by the members of the delegation and their exposure to the humiliating treatment in the city contribute to creating stronger bonds for a communal solidarity. We can sense here Ngugi's call for the masses' forces to contribute to the building of their nation.

In that sense, the journey becomes a useful and effective trope for Ngugi to serve a metaphorical purpose. It represents a pilgrimage through which characters undergo a transformative progression; it is not fortuitous that Ngugi calls that chapter: "*To Bethlehem*". On a technical level, the journey also serves to keep the thread of the narrative and the structure of the plot while Ngugi shifts within the time and space sphere, from the present to the past and back to the future without breaking the overall cohesion of the plot. When the old woman Nyakinyua is the narrator, she tells the events using the past tense since the reader can know only by report what concerns her own life. Yet, as the events draw near the present, she uses the present tense to vivify her people's-her husband's- struggle and reanimate it in the minds of her listeners. That is because Ngugi believes there is an urgent necessity for Africans to look back to their roots if they want to build their present and move forward to a more secure future: "dreams of a total liberation so that a black man could lift high his head secure in his land, secure in his culture"(220). Because when people know about their history(their past), they can better grasp their real situation(present) and acquire knowledge that would secure their tomorrow(future). That is also one of the thematic messages Ngugi is pointing at

in his novel. This can remind us of another radical writer, George Orwell, who states that “Who controls the past controls the future; who controls the present controls the past”.

The use of multiple voices together with the multiple references is meant by Ngugi to give even a deeper dimension to time and space where the characters travel with their different stories to different places and moments in history. He refers to the historical heritage of Africa, and gives religious allusions at other times. The reader senses within the biblical references hints at the allusions of regeneration and re-birth or birth after death like, for instance, in *Petals of Blood*, when the events take place during the drought, the village seems to die, and later it flourishes again. So, there always exists a possibility for a future coming out of the present whose seeds go back to the past. Ngugi perceives the notion of place and time as ‘spaceless’ and timeless.”<sup>41</sup> Like James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, in the “Penelope” section where the present is used instead of the past all the way through, Ngugi uses the present to make the past continue in the present. As Dorrit Cohn, a scholar of comparative literature, remarks:

As most grammars tell us, the present is the most pluri-significant of all tenses...the so-called irrealist present that cloaks fantasies and imagined scenarios in the same tensual grammar as perceptions and descriptions of the real world. Used as a global fictional tense, the present can potentially bring into play all these meaning and more, fusing and confusing, consuming and subsuming them too create a grammatically homologous of unparalleled semantic tension, instability, flexibility and filed ambiguity».<sup>42</sup>

Hence, Ngugi persists in featuring protagonists who function more as collective leaders, a group of protagonists who reflect, in fact, any individual. That is why the narrative can be related to any place and any time since the characters’ experience is one that can be shared by many readers: “...There is a collective protagonist who is not really bound by time or space.”<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>- Ngugi, WaThiong’o, *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. London: James Currey, 1986, p46.

<sup>42</sup> - Cohn, Dorrit, « The Deviance of Simultaneous Narration » in *The Distinction of Fiction*, Johns Hopkins: University Press, 1999.

<sup>43</sup>- Reinhard W. Sander and Bernth Lindfors, eds, *Ngugi WaThiong’o Speaks*, James Currey Ltd, Britain, 2006, p.321.

The opening lines of *Petals of Blood* set a space where Munira, representing the post-independence Kenyan intellectual, is in flux. This unstable and insecure identity is reflected in the multiple voices of the text. By using different points of view, the writer suggests the self-reflexive ambivalence of subjects. These various narrative points of view reflect also the overall dispersal of perspective on self in post-colonial Kenya where people were still in search of a communal unity that should start with a unity of identity. There are multiple narrators, observing and narrating events using a plurality of standpoints and voices that sometimes blend and even clash. The characters alternate, in turn, with the omniscient narrator to relate the events from their own perspective giving the reader a free access to their lives, opinion and interpretation. We, as readers, follow their different narratives, and even narratives within narratives. In this way, we come to learn about Munira's past in Siriana, Karega's involvement in the students' strike, and Wanja's descent into disgrace.

The omniscient narrator uses narrative techniques like multiple voices and figurative devices that tend to decentralize the text, to blur its perspective and, thus, to lead the narrative towards a process of self-decomposition that parallels Munira's self-deconstruction. The initial story unfolds progressively and branches into individual stories. This type of voice has also the privilege of draining a chain of other tools that serve also to decentralize the main 'voice' into other voices, such as stream of consciousness and interior monologues with which Ngugi skillfully makes the reader access the protagonists' thoughts. And the narrator has also license to present the characters to the reader in a seemingly uncontrolled plan-the characters seem to act and speak freely and spontaneously- allowing the reader to better follow Karega in his questioning or Munira when he could not grasp the new situation in Ilmorog, and feeling that things were just falling apart around him. The interior monologue presents a disordered play of observations, feelings, reminiscences and ideas as filtered through Munira's complex mind:

But at that moment, sitting in the midst of the neutral gloom of my house, I just felt strange inside: here I was, embers of curiosity stoked to a glowing intensity...I must not lose my hold on the present...I had feared [Mzigo] might suddenly turn up and, finding no pupils, he would transfer me back to places and people I had left behind, denying me the challenge of nation-building in remote Ilmorog, my new-found kingdom. (54)

Another effective tool Ngugi uses to reveal realities about the protagonists is the intimate dialogues they hold in private. Furthermore, dialogue is used to distribute the voice of narration among diverse points of view in the text, thanks to the reliable narrator's supposed ability to memorize the exact utterances of the characters in their conversations. The conversations between Munira and others generate some insights into the characters' life. It is precisely during one of the conversations Munira had had with Karega that he knew things about his own father and sister. Through dialogues, the narrator allows the protagonists to speak freely their minds without interference from the omniscient narrator's voice. Despite the resultant convergence of diverse voices and perspectives that deconstruct the story line, *Petals of Blood* presents itself as a coherent piece of discourse. That is because the narrative projects a series of separate narratives and multiple voices that accumulate to constitute one voice that is communal. That is meant to serve a thematic purpose because one of Ngugi's scopes was to try to resolve a complex ambivalence directed towards a sociocultural modernization of his society. At the same time, he acknowledges the powerful attractiveness of modernization but also its corruptive capacity and inability to cohere with traditional African values and cultural needs.

The technique of multiple points of view and the plurality of narratives Ngugi uses echo the sense of the many voices that rise together to constitute the whole community. The turmoil that prevails in the whole society should appeal to everyone's conscience: "The crisis was a community crisis needing a communal response" (123). By bringing past stories of struggle into the present, Ngugi is shaping, re-ordering, and retrieving the lost significance of historical identities threatened by imperialism, which he sees as "the rule of consolidated finance capital with economic, political, cultural and psychological consequences for the people."<sup>44</sup>

Till nowadays, Western philosophy has emphasized man's ability to exert self-control and long-term self-determination. This capacity is the basis for holding persons morally responsible for their actions. In literature, this leads to the concept of 'narrative identity' which implies a meaningful coherence of the personal, past, present, and future in the life of the characters. Similar to the unity of a story that is narrated: "We live immersed in narrative, recounting and reassessing the meaning of our past actions, anticipating the outcome of our

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<sup>44</sup> - Ngugi, WaThiong'o, *Decolonizing the Mind : The Politics of Language in African Literature*, London: James Currey, 1986, p46

future projects, situating ourselves at the intersection of several stories not yet completed”<sup>45</sup>. Thus, the unity of the individual’ self is akin to the unity of a story. And the unity of a character’s life is the unity of a coherent narrative enacted through the course of that life. Nevertheless, that narrative identity is essentially based on the individual’s capacity to integrate contradictory aspects and tendencies onto a coherent, unified sense of his self. He has to control divergent tendencies, desires and striving permanently; otherwise, the story would splinter onto incoherent fragments. This is what happens to Karega and Munira when they have to gather pieces of their past and present to envisage the future and encapsulate them into a coherent whole to give sense to their self and thereby their existence. Looking from this perspective, we better grasp Ngugi’s perpetual time shifts between the present and the past and towards the future, until making the time notion blurred in the reader’s mind. The choice of broken chronology is surely dictated by Ngugi’s nationalistic vision. Nevertheless, this dreadful process of unification is achieved with great sacrifice from the individual’s part. As Nietzsche and Freud have taught that is only possible at the price of the repression of important wishes and possibilities for personal development.

Ngugi certainly succeeds in letting the reader realize through the characters’ sufferings and inner fragmentation that these states also reflect the despair, misery, and indulgence of a whole generation of Africans. Ngugi skillfully renders the position and role of his characters. Munira and Karega for instance, are presented as firm and strong protagonists at the beginning but are in fact made weak and dislocated in a universe of conflict where individual aspirations are in a radical way by the forces that have taken political power. It is this perspective that makes of Munira’s isolation a source of psychic disequilibrium. He is thus portrayed by means of a series of ambiguities and ambivalences. On the other hand, he feels he is destined to fulfill a mission for his people. Part of him wants to escape and free himself from the pressure of social demand; whereas, the other part is inclined to revolt and save his community from sin and corruption in this newly independent Kenya.

Because modernism also suggests an aesthetic approach to the political issue, Ngugi illustrates his narrative with some modernist elements which certainly add aesthetics to his work. Indeed, he endows the novel with symbols representing a wish to see the fruit of the people’s labor. Even through the isolation of some characters like Karega, Wanja or Munira from a world to which they did not want to belong- for different reasons- they, still, seek to re-

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<sup>45</sup>- Brooks.Peter, *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narratives*, New-York, Random House, 1984, p3.

order 'their' world. The symbolic nature of the motifs hidden within the lines of the narrative provides meaningful hints to the theme set consistently throughout the novel: Individuals are affected by their personal circumstances but keep hope in a better future. Every protagonist seeks refuge from his personal problems, attempting to escape in a 'past' story of his. Their memories provide a healing process to their tired selves. Ngugi plays on the dual function of memory and distortion. The same reasons have made Wanja, Karega, and Munira leave the city and settle in Ilmorog, and have made them re-order their lives and heal their hurt selves. Thus, their once deplorable past turns into a therapy and a bridge towards their future.

There is also a modernist touch in the notion of duality: duality of the modern and the traditional can be found in the case of Wanja, "The barmaid farmer"(6) vacillates between her role of prostitute barmaid and as agrarian earth-mother. "Wanja" is an adaptation of the Gikuyu word for "mother earth" or "spirit of the land". So, she stands as a metaphor for the spirit of Kenya. She is not at heart a wicked and shameless woman, but because she has been humiliated, ill-used and exploited by Kimeria, Chui and Mzigo; she is fighting for survival amidst blood thirsty exploiters.

Ngugi's picture of contrasts can also be seen in his portraits of the opposites through the use of a dualistic relationship such as the contrast of rich and poor, the strong and weak, the oppressor and the oppressed. Small shopkeepers such as Abdulla are unable to promote their financial situation while the new investors become stronger and richer. The once beautiful and intelligent student Wanja has become a brothel owner to serve the instinctive decadent desires of the new rich men. The venerable Mau Mau hero Abdulla is a ruined, poor, and weak cripple in the independent and "free" Kenya for which he paid with his leg while the greedy directors of the brewery enjoy an easy and prosperous life of pleasure in the clubs.

Besides, the fire set by Munira constitutes the novel's apex. Though it is a destructive and futile act of violence, we can also consider it an expression of the powerlessness and impotence of a category of intellectuals in Kenya. That act reflects the feeling of a man whose dreams and hopes have been betrayed by his own people, the very ones he trusted. As the fire "forming petals of blood"(333) with its tongues of flames, consumes Wanja's house with the three directors in it, Munira is convinced that he only did what he considered the rightful and legitimate because "the world was wrong, was a mistake"(332); he simply obeyed the higher law of God by breaking man's law: "What was important was not just passive obedience to the law but active obedience to the universal law of God."(332)

Opportunities and contradictions inherent in the African background, added to those of the emergent modern culture create multiple conflicts on every level, within society as well as individuals. This is precisely the interplay that Ngugi creates between repressive structures and the individual's psyche. And this constitutes one of the interesting ways to study Ngugi's characterization. Historic moments in society engender in the individual some demands as part of nationalism, a collective patriotism or a collective consciousness. However, as individuals they also have specific histories which dictate the way they react to the demand of history. If authoritarian political systems in post-independence Kenya form Wanja's or Munira's perception of the social order they live in-whether they accept or reject it, their specific past does dictate their relationship towards each other and towards the political background. And this is well reflected in Ngugi's choice of language.

Here again, we find a modernist motif: split, or double-consciousness. This way recalls James Joyce's opening of *Ulysses* with a conversation bearing a dual understatement. During a swimming session in the river, Stephen Daedalus voices his resentment at Buck Mulligan and Haines, which he sums up in an Irish proverb about weapons: "Horn of a bull, hoof of a horse, smile of a Saxon". In this scene, Haines and Stephen parry about religion, freedom, and the state:

-“After all, I should think you are able to free yourself. You are your own master”

-“I am the servant of two masters”, Stephen said.<sup>46</sup>

Likewise, Ngugi reflects this double-meaning in his use of multiple voices, just like Ngugi himself who, according to the Ugandan writer and critic Peter Nazareth, “had presented different voices: the Ngugi of the village, who is in pursuit of a deeper Christianity, the Ngugi of secular radical political ideas, and the Ngugi who is struggling to be born but being resisted by the first two”<sup>47</sup>. In the novel, there is Munira of the village who is in pursuit of a pure Christianity. On another level, we find the Munira of a political ideology who rejects the situation that prevails in the country. Within him, each Munira, or rather each ‘self’ of Munira, is struggling to come to being but is resisted by the other ‘self’. These multiple ‘Muniras’ often rival and repress each other within the narrative structure, creating a tangled plot. This two-dimensional characterization of Munira is surely meant by Ngugi to foreshadow the political ideology that reveals the dilemma of African intellectuals within

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<sup>46</sup> - Joyce, James, *Ulysses*, Ebook. www.Gutenberg.org, August 2008, p. 35.

<sup>47</sup>- Nazareth, Peter, “*The Second Homecoming: Multiple Ngugis in Petals of Blood*, Marxism and African Literature”. Ed. George M. Gugelberger. Trenton, New York: Africa World Press, 1986, pp119-29.

society and the painful consciousness consequent on occupying two incompatible realities. The character's hesitation is then, indicative of the direction that the discourse in the rest of the novel takes. It foreshadows the self-deconstructive efficacy of the narrative. The mutual relationship between opposites in the linguistic elements of Munira's uncertainty and indecision signals the novel's overall aim: to refigure post-colonial identities as unsettled, disrupted and in search of wholeness and order, but at the same time resistant to any foreign totalizing imperialistic attempt.

Throughout his narrative, the writer hints at a better future for Kenya: "It was another year of hope in Ilmorog." (268). Actually, one of the most hopeful signs for a flourishing tomorrow in *Petals of Blood* appears in the last chapter when the reader is informed of the pregnancy of Wanja, thus giving a sense of promise for a new birth, a better future in Kenya. Ngugi calls, therefore, for a regeneration out of the misery and disappointments that have plagued the peasants all over the narrative. That is why Wanja, when revealing the identity of the father of her baby to her mother, sketches a drawing. Once she finishes, she feels "a tremendous calm, a kind of inner assurance of the possibilities of a new kind of power" (338). It is not fortuitous, then that the last spoken word in the novel is "Tomorrow" (345). By such an image, Ngugi is inciting his people to keep faith in a brighter future in Kenya.

The narrative closes with the Ilmorog workers planning a general strike and a march through the town joined by the unemployed, farmers, and some small traders and with a very important person in authority being gunned down in Nairobi by the Wakombozi, the Society of One World Liberation, hinting at a revolutionary stream. So, after the social fragmentation and state of despair generated by the political corruption of the élite, Ngugi is, nonetheless, pointing to the regeneration of the young population that mirrors a new hope for a more promising future.

Considering the fact that in African society, the community element is the central interest for everybody, we can then classify Munira in the category of the disoriented intellectual since he endures a double rejection, that of his own family-mainly his father- and that of his community, the social bond that he never really wanted to cut himself from. That contributes partly to his dislocated mind. Thus, we are inclined to consider that this psychological breakdown reveals in fact a fragmented personality that is only the consequence of the indigenous upbringing in the individual's childhood and the social demands and pressure to

which a post-colonial individual is confronted in consideration of the reality of African society in after independence.

From another perspective, in the traditional African context, one is tempted to analyze Munira's situation from a mythical side in the traditional African oral literature according to which the 'insane' is endowed with a special wisdom, "Le fouestquelqu'un qui a tout perdu sauf la raison"<sup>48</sup>. Hence, we come to adopt Ngugi's attempt to counterbalance those two facts of fragmentariness to better draw a metaphor of the 'illness' of the contemporary Africa as a whole and Kenyan society specially. In fact, when Munira departs from his homeland to settle in Ilmorog, he is in search of the self, like his society that is in need to retrieve its roots. He left the facilities of urban life, the comfort of his home and the city and ran towards the simple and quiet life of the villagers who adopted him. That is an implicit call from Ngugi to his fellow Africans to embrace their culture and roots if they are to flourish among other nations. Yet, that regeneration which Ngugi is seeking through Karega would only be possible when the "worms" are eradicated, and the wounds they caused healed. When one tells about his ailments, he often relieves them; this is what Ngugi aims at by pinpointing recurrently to his people's malaises. The struggle continues: "They must go and confront that which had been the cause of their empty granaries...had sapped their energies and caused their weakness"(p117). After the struggle against the imposition of colonial rule, after the struggle for independence, Ngugi envisions a struggle against the capitalist system. That is made explicit in Karega's words:

The true lesson of history was this: that the so-called victims, the poor, the downtrodden, the masses, had always struggled with spears and arrows,...and hope, to end their oppression and exploitation: that they would continue struggling until a human kingdom came: a world in which goodness and beauty and strength and courage would be seen not in how cunning one can be, not in how much power to oppress one possessed, but only in one's contribution in creating a more humane world in which the inherited inventive genius of man in culture and science would be not the monopoly of a few...,so that all flowers in all their different colours would ripen and bear fruits and seeds...they would sprout and flower...(303).

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<sup>48</sup> - Chesterton, Gilbert, Keith, *Orthodoxy*, Green Clover, Flammarion, 2011.

Then, through Karega, Ngugi's voice and emblem of youth is throwing a light of hope for flowers to bloom in a better future: "we waited for flowers to blooms(268), for a better "Kingdom".

# **CHAPTER II**

## **THE FRAGMENTED MIND IN PETALS OF BLOOD**

Being is one thing, becoming aware of it is a point of arrival  
by an awakened consciousness and this involves a journey.

Ngugi WaThiong'o

In the Name of the Mother:

Reflections on Writers and  
Empire.

# CHAPTER III

## Estrangement and Isolation in *Tender is the Night*

The loneliest moment in someone's life is when he is watching his whole world fall apart and all he can do is stare blankly.

F.S.Fitzgerald

*The Great Gatsby*

## **A-A Fragmented Soul in a Changing World**

Published in 1934, F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Tender is the Night* is focused upon in this study as one of the novels that illustrate modernist concerns with selfhood and man's psychic condition in the American literary scene of the first quarter of the century. The temporal situation of the novel refers to an era in which transformation is observed as due to the rapid progress in the scientific and technological fields. The novel represents a clash between the nineteenth century transcendentalism and the idea of fragmentation in the modernist era. Transcendentalists had a tendency to offer an idea of unity concerning the place and the humans in the universe as well as coherence between nature and society concerning time and space. But as a novel written after the First World War, *Tender is the Night* is well centered on the negation of unity and absence of harmony within modern society and thus, within the self. The twentieth century witnessed the collapse of values and morals facing the individual's endeavor to regain the integrity and coherence that would enable him to create a new kind of selfhood and self-regeneration. In other words, F.S Fitzgerald is telling in *Tender is the Night* the story of a twentieth century American selfhood. The protagonist, Dick Diver aspires to re-create an order out of the disordered universe and chaotic situation of the modern postwar time with a view to shaping a new form of unity. This would eventually secure the tradition of the pre-war era with its moral values and integrate it into the modern context.

An important characteristic of this new era is the modern rejection of lives "regulated by social conventions"<sup>1</sup>, hence, the worship of the uniqueness of the human experience and personal freedom. However, modern life offers not only scientific advancement, but it also establishes a sense of relativity and discontinuity in the human mind as a number of analysts have remarked. That conception was to become part and parcel of modernism. Accordingly, a free life is governed by "hazard of belief and hazard of enterprise"<sup>2</sup> asserts the editor of William James' collection of essays. That idea was to be developed by most modernist writers about alienated national life in the America of the 1920s. As for Fitzgerald, behind the conception of Jay Gatsby in *The Great Gatsby* or Dick Diver in *Tender is the Night*, lays the Jamesian belief that the energy of individual desire is a social good. The story of Jay Gatsby is also the story of a whole generation believing in idealism from the turn of the twentieth

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<sup>1</sup> - Kern, Stephen, *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918*, Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press, 1983, p.63.

<sup>2</sup> - James, William, *The Philosophy of William James Drawn From his Own Works*, Ed. Horace N. Kallen, New York: Modern Library, 1925, pp8-9.

century through the 1920s. Like a witness, Fitzgerald's reader comes to see the greatness that every individual should fortify in himself to set in motion the creative energy lying in his soul. Fitzgerald has made this conception crystalize in characters like Jay Gatsby or Dick Diver. This is reminiscent of Ngugi's works which also focus on the individual's responsibility as a societal project. Indeed, for Ngugi, as for Fitzgerald, it is important for man to consolidate his own strength and utilize it to secure a position in his society. William James himself stated: "Everything we know and are is through man. We have no revelation but through man...However mean a man maybe; man is the best we know"<sup>3</sup>. Whatever the choices they have made, Fitzgerald's characters indeed act in accordance with their belief in American greatness.

Fitzgerald's ideas of American history were very enthusiastic though affected by the thought of others, mainly the German philosopher and writer Oswald Spengler and the Irish writer Shane Leslie with whom he became friendly. Their views and explanation of WWI were different, but they still influenced S. Fitzgerald. The chief influence on the historical aspects of *Tender is the Night* was Spengler's *The Decline of the West*<sup>4</sup> which Fitzgerald called his bed book and which he read while working on the novel. Spengler wrote pessimistically about Western civilization and its future. For him, historical time is organic, working not just on the analogy of a natural cycle, but participating in the rhythms of biological life and death. He speaks of the "hardening" of a "culture" into a "civilization" wherein he believes that the culture has literally become sclerotic, stiffened, rigid, and morbid. Spengler sees himself primarily as the initiator of a new conception of historical time setting himself against that view of history which is linear and concerned with causality. For him, the causes of historical events are just trivial.

Yet, what Fitzgerald was concerned with, in fact, was not only the evolution of ideas and attitudes but also the character as individual energy. Nevertheless, many of his characters were uncertain what to do with their lives. As a modernist, Fitzgerald believed in the ability of science to explain everything. Using expressionism, impressionism together with Freudian theories, modernist writers were concerned not quite with "why did something happen," but rather with "how it felt when it happened". And, since science explains everything, life has lost its mystery and Man, not God, anymore, could rule the world. In the opinion of the literary critic Irving Howe about Modernity, this concept "consists in a revolt against the

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<sup>3</sup>- Ibid, pp.242-43.

<sup>4</sup>- Oswald, Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, 2 Vols, tr. Charles Francis Atkinson, New-York, Knopf, 1928, p429.

prevailing style, an unyielding rage against the existing order”<sup>5</sup>. Yet, to many, Modernism could only represent chaotic accounts of a twentieth century situation. This situation was itself chaotic, a threat to the rules by which man’s existence had been traditionally ordered. ‘Order’ tends to represent a planetary system in which things are arranged to “hold together” by some cohesive forces, and the failure of which results in simple disintegration. In the modernist view, the cohesive forces have become so loose that the order has been broken down to be replaced by “dis-order”. Things could no longer hold together, were falling apart because in the distortion of the order, “mere anarchy is loosed upon the world”<sup>6</sup>.

As there is an evident interaction between culture and society, it is also evident that modernist writers are very much aware of the state of the world around them. As a novelist, Fitzgerald was an eye-witness of his time and society. Economically, the period was one of widespread turmoil and suffering, including the First World War and the beginning of the economic depression. Politically, there was the increasing challenge to Capital by labor, no longer prepared to accept a completely subordinate role as the economic benefits of industrialism became more obvious. Socially, this was paralleled in the efforts of other dominated groups to improve their status, as old simple verities seemed no longer true. Accepting one’s place, loyalty to authority, and unquestioning obedience began to break down. Overall, man’s understanding of his existence on earth was changing. Philosophers like Nietzsche, who had already emphasized the importance of instinct rather than reason, made a great impact on literary works. And psychologists like Freud and Jung had shown the power and significance of the unconscious mind. The impact of their studies is echoed in Fitzgerald’s works. In fact, Fitzgerald’s fiction emphasizes the controlling and diminishing power of society which renders hope illusory. The individual, however, struggles to preserve hope through a belief in his illusions because it always provides a substitute for an actual happiness.

Psychoanalytic interest in the forms of a fragmented personality lays the emphasis on a symptomatic form of character pathology known as the Borderline Personality Disorder-BPD. It is viewed as a structurally defective and therefore more severe form of personality disorder because it represents fragile conditions of personality. It is due to the fact that “it holds together an intact psychological structure”<sup>7</sup>. As it is characterized by vulnerability to self-

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<sup>5</sup>-Irving, Howe, ed, *The Idea of the Modern in Literature and the Arts*, New York: Horizon Press, 1967, p13.

<sup>6</sup>- Yeats, W.B, *Essays, Poems and Introductions: “The Second Coming”*, ed. Richard J. Finneran, New-York: McMillan, 1983, p.49.

<sup>7</sup>- Kenberg, O.F, *A Psychoanalytic Theory of Personality Disorder*, in J.F. Clarkin and M. Lenzenweger (Eds), *Major Theories of Personality Disorders*, New-York: Guilford Press, 1996, pp106-40.

cohesion ruptures, it is liable to potential fragmentation. The individual with this type of personality is also characterized by an excessive orderliness, attention to detail, and frugality. In his lifestyle, Dick Diver pays much attention to his look and every detail in his house and clinic. This compulsive attention paid to his belongings motivates his pride to appear always as an exemplary being. Likewise, when he organizes parties, his intentions are to impress his guests. Classical analysis in ego psychology regards characteristics such as these as constituting the central conflict in the individual's struggle to maintain autonomy and control or a conflict of autonomy versus shame and doubt. Feeling shameful about his behavior as a crawling drunkard, or when he is brought to the police station because involved in a brawl, Dick is deeply aware of his misbehavior and also feels guilty of the pain he is causing to Nicole. However, his personality has been rendered so fragile and vulnerable that he has lost all capacity for self-control and composure, thus the ensuing feeling of guilt and loss: "He had hardened himself about [Nicole], making a cleavage between Nicole sick and Nicole well. This made it difficult now to distinguish between his self-protective professional detachment..."<sup>8</sup>. The protagonist, Dr. Richard Diver—called Dick—is "a natural idealist, a spoiled priest", as Fitzgerald described him "superhuman in possibilities", but the circumstances made of him a hero with internal contradictions which reflect the uncertainties of his dying world.

One can note that Fitzgerald's cultural ambitions are clearly expressed in an early letter sent to Maxwell Perkins in 1925 about the new novel he was beginning to write: "It is something really NEW in form, idea, structure—the model for the age that Joyce and Stein are searching for, that Conrad didn't find"<sup>9</sup>. Fitzgerald worked on this material intermittently for over seven years and what emerged after that, but not until 1932, was the story of Dick Diver, a brilliant psychiatrist whose career deteriorates after marrying a wealthy patient. If the novel is apparently about patriarchal violence, father-daughter incest, it is more specifically about the traumatic after-effects of the First World War on Fitzgerald's generation. The world of *Tender is the Night* is an *after* "World" of history where the old values of the glorious past have been lost as a tribute to the after-effects of the First World War.

Many critics have complained about the unclear causality concerning Dick Diver's gradual decline of character. They have found this decline not enough documented and that "the

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<sup>8</sup>-- Fitzgerald, Francis, Scott, *Tender is the Night*, Penguin Popular Classics, London WC2R, England, 1997, p 209.

All further references will be to this edition and will be cited in the text page numbers.

<sup>9</sup> - F. Scott Fitzgerald, *A Life in Letters*, ed. Brucoli, New York: Scribners, 1994, p.108.

events of the narrative, tragic as they are, are insufficient to motivate his downfall”<sup>10</sup>. However, Fitzgerald portrays the decay of an individual crippled by extraneous forces that he could not face because of his fragile personality. In an artful manner, the writer deliberately lets the reader unravel the threads of the narrative to find the elements he needs to complete the picture he has painted. Of his hero’s fate, Fitzgerald wrote in his “General Plan” for *Tender is the Night* in 1932:

The novel should do this. Show a man who is a natural idealist, a spoiled priest, giving in for various causes to the ideas of the haute Bourgeoisie, and his rise to the top of the social world, losing his idealism, his talent and turning to drink and dissipation.<sup>11</sup>

At first glance, *Tender is the Night* appears indeed as a chronicle of the Jazz Age of a certain caste of Americans living an unworried life. What is even more significant is that Fitzgerald was part of that world, and he successfully found an appropriate place to transfer the American Dream to the beaches of Europe, the Riviera. There, he introduces through Rosemary Hoyt, the actress, Doctor Dick Diver the psychiatrist, who appears young and full of vitality, a “well formed, rather athletic and fine-looking fellow. Also, he is very intelligent, widely read-in fact he has all the talents especially great personal charm”(345). Thus, the hero, as called by Fitzgerald in the novel’s sketch, is presented as an idealist living in the prestigious world of the haute bourgeoisie. Using his charm and talent, he falls in love with one of his patients, Nicole, who happens to suffer from psychological problems. When she was sixteen years young, she had been raped by her father. Dick marries her and is entirely dedicated to completing the cure. Over a period of years, he treats her successfully while sinking into an emotional and physical decline that leads him away from Europe to wander aimlessly in an obscure part of upstate New-York.

Scott Fitzgerald’s critics often lay the stress on the documentary aspect of *Tender is the Night*. Indeed, the novel details quite accurately and comprehensively America’s situation during the 1920s. It was an America of the genteel American idealists who strove to create illusions of beauty and extravagant wealth, only to fall prey to the triple temptation of money, sex, and illegal practices. This shapes Fitzgerald’s unique perception of the modern wasteland

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<sup>10</sup>-- MattewJ.Bruccoli and Judith. S. Baughman, *Reader’s Companion to Fitzgerald’s Tender is the Night*, University of South Carolina Press, 1997, p 36.

<sup>11</sup> -Ibid, p 6.

in his novel. So conceived, the story of Dick Diver's long descent or "dying fall", as Fitzgerald named it, from his initial eminence into ultimate obscurity, repeats a pattern of disillusion and decline already firmly displayed by the time Fitzgerald was writing the novel. In fact the same pattern is apparent in *The Great Gatsby* and in such other similar narratives of the twenties. Already in his first published novel, *This Side of Paradise* (1920), considered by many scholars and readers an autobiographical story, Fitzgerald describes the early Jazz Age, his age, with its vague values of money, beauty, fame and a rather distorted sense of social success and propriety. The dream of success and its adverse consequences constitute the main concern of *The Great Gatsby*. If that novel brought success to Fitzgerald, it also brought him personal and social disintegration eventually. That is why *Tender is the Night* came to turn into fiction that part of Fitzgerald's life and experience as a writer but also as a husband whose wife suffered from frequent psychological breakdowns. Thematically, the novel describes American life between the two World Wars, characterized by glamour, excitement, and a frenetic pursuit of happiness. The protagonist of the novel, Dick Diver, represents more than just a fictional tragic hero of the mid-twentieth century America. He also stands for the complex disintegration of the individual during a precarious epoch in the history of America. In a sense, Dick's fall might conform to Aristotle's concept of the tragic hero, since he is an isolated hero, yet a whole community of individuals relies on him to give necessary help and meaning to their existence, which he has always done. His tragic flaw is that he cannot anticipate the outcome of his actions. He is once told by a classmate, "That is going to be your trouble-judgment about yourself." (6).

In this apparently tragic view of the 'hero', the story of Dick's unusual marriage to Nicole Warren and of his humiliating attachment to her family's fortune is not merely the story of one man's failure to resist the corrupting influence of wealth and privilege, but an allegory, as the narrator of *The Great Gatsby*, Nick Carraway says about Gatsby, the story of America itself, that part of its history, the post-war early modern era. That period Fitzgerald repeatedly portrayed as the period inaugurating America's moral decline as well as an eventual emergence of a military and economic power.

From the opening pages of the novel onwards, the young and promising psychiatrist Dick Diver is perceived as a genuinely open self, with an acute responsiveness towards the others, a unique character endowed with such vitality, self-control, self-discipline and self-confidence. Dick makes of himself the center of the group, and he is perceived as such by his companions. The scene when Dick, Rosemary, the Norths, and two French musicians are in a restaurant

and Dick states that “no American man had repose” except himself, is relevant in this respect. He then, challenges the others to find a rival to confront him, to find a man who is as self-possessed as he is: “Things looked black for them- not a man had come into the restaurant for ten minutes without raising his hand to his face” (126). After several unsuccessful attempts to find someone that would beat Dick’s record and shatter his self-confidence, the group gives up. Finally, Dick rejoices “You see”, Dick said smugly, “I’m the only one” (127). From Rosemary’s angle, Dick is unique, the center of an entire fascinating world, an “all complete” character.

The world in which the writer sets the narrative is a fantastic world of sunshine, colors, glamour, and gaiety, presided over by Dick, the high “priest” of well-mannered social behaviors. The characteristics of that world are fairness, courtesy, chivalry, and self-effacement for the general good. Yet, he is highly vulnerable precisely because his life of pretence and good appearance forces him to suppress his desire (love for Rosemary), postpone his plan (his aspiration to write), and cater to others rather than to be self-serving. He fervently sees an asocial act like homosexuality as a corruption of the will and firmly advises the homosexual Francisco to control his sensuality if he seeks a respectable and decent social image. Always ready to help re-establishing order, he suggests: “If you want to face the world, you’ll have to begin by controlling your sensuality” and “If you are happy in this mess, then I can’t help you and I’m wasting my time” (308). The advice he gave to the homosexual resonates with self-indulgence. Like he had already acknowledged his relationship with Rosemary as self-indulgence, it is as if, in fact, he is directing the blame to himself because he knew that he was inwardly corrupt, did not accept it, but at the same time did not have enough strength to change that situation.

According to some psychoanalytic theorists, we can even consider the significance of extreme perfectionism in Dick Diver as an attempt to satisfy repressed needs, material as well as emotional. By marrying Nicole, and becoming the co-manager of a clinic in Zürich, having a good career as psychiatrist, and leading a luxurious lifestyle, Dick was trying to compensate for a well-concealed need for money, luxury, love, and family as he became one of the Warrens: “There was among many diversions, the car of the Shah of Persia. Where Dick had commandeered this vehicle, what bribery was employed, these were facets of irrelevance.” (16). With such a personality, the individual is dominated by imperatives that he ‘should’ or ‘must’ do, think, or feel in certain ways. Consequently, Dick frequently substitutes mechanistic modes of experience for what he actually experiences. He is driven by his “duty”

towards Nicole as a patient to cure her illness “His work became confused with Nicole’s problem” (213), and keeps aside his emotional relationship. This attitude makes him a character with an ambivalent inner state due to the antagonistic or oppositional impulses, i.e., duty and desire. Outwardly, Dick actually tries to conceal them for a while, but inwardly that process engenders a split between the sense of moral superiority-he thought he had and tried to show- and an uncertain sense of self knowledge. In fact, he is experiencing what he planned, leading the easy life of the leisure class on the Riviera. As a consequence of his subconscious discomfort, Dick reaches a condition in which unstable adjustment becomes almost discernible in every aspect of his life. His attempt in his work to feel accomplished is thwarted with the same lack of enthusiasm that he feels in his relationship with Nicole over time. Because of his repressed ambitions, Dick, like most Americans of the post-war era, is “incomplete”. He is rather eclectic and depends for support on props such as music, money, and material possessions only to seek a wholeness that is never gratuitously reached. Incompleteness nourishes Dick’s assimilation of fragments of other personalities that surround him and depend on him. He needs to be needed, as he incessantly loved to be loved: “He wanted to be brave and wise, but it was all pretty difficult. He wanted to be loved, too if he could fit it in”(26). Yet, this need causes him to experience more weaknesses than strengths.

In fact, it is an essential part of Dick’s personality to feel wanted and this constitutes one of the reasons why he married Nicole. Paradoxically, this is also the agent that leads to his decline. The dual pressures of being Nicole’s husband and her doctor, combined with the lure of Nicole’s inherited fortune, implicitly undermine Dick’s dedication to his work. Thanks to Nicole’s (The Warren’s) money, Dick becomes partner in a psychiatric clinic on the Zürich see in the Swiss Alps. When he was twenty-six years old, he “was already too valuable” (3) but was unable to concentrate fully on his duties. In the meantime, the treatise that he has long planned to realize goes unwritten while he progressively sinks deeper into pointless and frenzied experiences fueled by alcoholism. As his career keeps declining, Dick experiences a complete breakdown, symbolized by a drunken brawl and his arrest in Rome. When Nicole leaves Dick for Tommy Barban, as she no longer needs him after her recovery, he returns to the United States, simply losing himself into obscurity as an unsuccessful doctor, wandering from town “to very small town” (392). Throughout the narrative, the American character is presented as being a limited and possessive one. Rosemary Hoyt is only seeking a successful career in the world’s cinema. There is a sense of something existing beyond Diver’s intellectual and emotional reach that could have proved to be his salvation. He interminably

seems to be looking for something to make him achieve success and satisfy his need for a happiness never fully reached. His strong love for Nicole proves unsatisfying, and as he turns to Rosemary, he realizes that she is an easy sexual conquest and not mature enough for him “There is the fact that I love Nicole...But you seem young to me” (147).

If Dick feels unstable and unable to take a final decision, it is because he takes on different roles, appropriate to the situation of the moment. Actually, in the modern era, the self is increasingly regarded as the main and only source of moral values. Yet, this is hard to achieve for different reasons. Not only does it reduce moral reasoning to a subjective process of emotions, but it also places an impossible burden on an unstable concept. Feelings and emotions are constantly changing value. That is why modernism made one of its most powerful themes the assertion that the modern self cannot bear the weight placed upon it by a fragmented modern life, and that in fact, the multiplicity of our modern world requires us to act on the complex basis of multi-selves. Dick “still had pieces of his own most personal self for everyone”(162). René Descartes inaugurated the concept of modernism with the assertion that the “I” is the most fundamental building block in our apprehension of reality, the still point in a moving world. Then, it appears that the self is the most variable element of all. The modern self is not a unitary, but an ever shifting ensemble of social roles. As such, the modern self can fairly be compared to a disorderly site in which the healthy ego controls the personality in the manner of a skilled air-traffic controller. On these grounds, while Dick assumes different roles in society, he takes on different personalities accordingly. His self-assessment begins in Zürich when he is aged twenty-six “Most of us have a favorite, a heroic period, in our lives and that was Dick Diver’s” (4). At that point Dick is mentally and physically at his peak but already subject to doubt: “his contact with Ed Elkins aroused in him a first faint doubt as to the quality of his mental processes” (5). Although Dick knows, when writing “the fine quiet of the scholar which is nearest of all things to heavenly peace” (4), he also knows that he cheated at Yale college and that he lacks judgment about himself. He has been “luck Dick”, but he understands that “the price of his inactness was incompleteness” (6). He goes to Zürich full of illusions, “the illusions of eternal strength and health, and of the essential goodness of people—they were the illusions of a nation, the lies of generations of frontier mothers who had to croon falsely, that there were no wolves outside the cabin door”(6). Dick’s questioning and deep doubts can be linked, by extrapolation, to Fitzgerald’s comments on the reactions of his patients to the war: “We have some shell-shocks who merely heard an air raid from a distance. We’ve a few who merely read newspapers.”(8).

Fitzgerald employed his art which allows characters, precisely Dick Diver, to play a series of possible roles, none of which has any relation to “reality” but which sustain the idea that people can assume different social roles and operate effectively in societal terms. Dick assumes the roles of a celebrity host, a working scientist, a caring husband, a competent psychiatrist, a failed gigolo, but possesses no coherent self. Unfortunately, Dick could not foresee the danger of that continuous pursuit of completion or wholeness: “But the space between heaven and earth had cooled his mind, destroyed the impulsiveness” (56). The more he is assimilating the lives of the others, the weaker he becomes. In this process of pursuing a virtual wholeness, he does not realize that he is putting his mental equilibrium at risk.

In fact Dick’s decline begins the moment he was involved in the extramarital affair with Rosemary Hoyt. Even if it was a short-lived relationship, he enjoyed being loved by a woman who admired him. Feeling admired is in contrast to the image of the duty-bound provider he had acquired since his marriage with Nicole. His emotional involvement in the affair offers the promise of an energetic responsiveness and an active reaction to a self that already felt deadened. However, the fiercely defended degree of self-cohesion he had managed to secure lasts only for a while. It threatens to come apart, producing the anxiety about disintegration that presages the fragmentation of a vulnerable self. Dick feels guilty and anxious as he becomes attached to the young Rosemary who admired him, thinking that it is threatening his affective relationship with Nicole. That feeling of anxious guilt may have resulted not so much from tasting the forbidden fruit as from feeling the danger of an overstimulated self on the verge of being flooded. Unable to consummate his feelings, Dick brings his affair to an end as Rosemary left for America. Yet, when he meets her accidentally one night in a hotel, he wants to resume their relationship because he was overstimulated and unable to turn away from the possibility of finding himself desired and adored by someone. Dick reaches a state of disrupted self-cohesion resolving slowly but resulting in a crumbling self because according to psychiatrists,

Either mild or severe fragmentation phenomena may produce frantic or hypomanic activity, substance abuse, delinquent actions, sexual acting out, or frank perversion—all of which may represent desperate attempts to subdue perturbations of immobilizing anxiety. Phenomena such as these often represent the patient’s attempts to manage

destabilization of self-cohesion..pronounceddisintegration  
of the self.<sup>12</sup>

Thus, Dick's abuse of alcohol is only an attempt from him to restore his cohesion and a constant effort to fortify and repair the self; that is to "glue" together those aspects of the self that have caused a feeling of being adrift and torn apart. Compulsively and dutifully working hard was his way also of getting on in the world. Fitzgerald was sufficiently immersed in the America of the 1920s to be well aware of the state of disintegration and shattering of his generation which he reflected in *Tender is the Night* through the character of Dick Diver. That is also the shallow state Eugene O'Neill referred to metaphorically in his play "*The Great God Brown*" in which Brown says: "Man is born broken. He lives by mending. The grace of God is glue".<sup>13</sup>

Dick Diver seems to represent Fitzgerald's understanding of his own weaknesses,i.e., his wife Zelda's continuous collapse and relapses. Dick suffers a kind of schizophrenia, for his precarious mental balance comes to depend mostly on Nicole's need for him. By consecrating-to use Fitzgerald's word-himself to their marriage and her illness, she is finally cured, but Dick is ruined. "His work became confused with Nicole's problem."(213). Bearing his dualistic view within himself, Dick sees Nicole with both the psychiatrist's eyes and the husband's. That makes the task of treating her even more difficult for him because Nicole already thought of herself as "I'm a whole lot of different simple people" (364); whereas, "Dick tried to think what to do. The dualism in his views of her-that of the husband, that of the psychiatrist was...paralyzing his faculties" (238). And so, the more Dick strives to cure her, the more Nicole carries him over the line with her as she is feeling stronger than him: "Dick had come away for his soul's sake, he had lost himself" (253). After his morale has cracked, he begins to realize the toll he had paid for his love and dedication to Nicole and to his illusions of a better life: "I'd gone into a process of deterioration. The change came along way back-but at first it didn't show. The manner remains intact for some time after the morale cracks" (350) says Dick assessing his state.

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<sup>12</sup>- Silverstein, Marshall, *Disorders of the Self : A Personality Guided Approach*, American Psychological Association,750 First Street, N. E. Washington DC, 2007, p 116.

<sup>13</sup> - O'Neill, Eugene, « The Great God Brown » in*Nine Plays by Eugene O'Neill*, New York: Modern Library (Original work published 1926), 1941, p 370.

Fitzgerald once wrote in his notebook, "France was a land, England was a people, but America...was willingness of the heart". Dick and Nicole came to the Riviera with her money and his talent, intelligence, and a naive hope that they will find the promising good life which post-war America failed to secure. But willingness of the heart was not enough. As a psychiatrist, Dick succeeded in curing Nicole -"he had stitched her together"- (31) till she felt "I'm almost complete" (360). Nevertheless, he continued to play the role of a confident man. Out of sheer emotional exhaustion-bankruptcy- he fades at last into the "dark night of the soul"<sup>14</sup>, the tender night where he hopes nothing will ever be required of him again: "Dick sat panting and looking at nothing" (355) because when the soul is totally scarified and becomes an illusion, nothing remains. He has also been at the mercy of fate; even his fall is spectacular because he jumps from an elevated position in society into failure and anonymity. More significantly, Dick seems to have a perception of his own tragic decline. He realizes his own importance, but also that he is losing control on his own life. However, even if he recognizes some of the possible consequences of his actions, like when abusing of alcohol in the clinic where he works, he is neither psychologically equipped nor willing to combat or change them. He rather observes the whirlpool of the events in which he has been thrown as if he has just accepted them as the ransom for his success. Yet, the route Dick follows to arrive at this pinnacle of self-knowledge and acceptance is more a meandering process of trial and error than it is a systematic journey with a clearly defined purpose.

On the surface, the only explanation for Dick's deterioration the novel offers is his willful self-sacrifice mingled with his misjudgment in choosing Nicole as a wife. If he gave more generously of himself than any man could afford, he nonetheless lacked self-judgment. That is one of the reasons of Dick's loss of coherence and hopes. The reader is told from the opening pages of the novel when, after the lectures at the university, he used to argue with a young Rumanian intellectual who assured him that modern scientists do not know inner conflicts because -as modernists think- science could explain everything and thus could control everything. In other words, as a psychiatrist -a scientist- Dick should be able to understand, explain and judge others better than anyone else. He is not called to show any romantic sensibility, lest it would lead him to his failure. That is the new order established by modern society which Dick has to fit into if he wants to reach at a better life. As the Rumanian told him:

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<sup>14</sup>- S. Fitzgerald, New York Herald Tribune, December 23th, 1940.

There is no evidence that Goethe ever had a 'conflict' in the modern sense, or a man like Jung, for instance. You are not a romantic philosopher- you are a scientist. Memory, force, character -especially good sense. That's going to be your trouble- judgment about yourself.(6)

In fact, Dick does have a romantic sensibility, so "Dick can't be one of these clever men; he must be less intact, even faintly destroyed. If life won't do it for him it is not a substitute to get a disease, or a broken heart, or it would be nice to build out some broken side till it was better than the original structure"(5) so Dick thinks of his self, as part of a broken structure. And Dick does realize that lately, during their visit to the Somme battlefield, he is 'bombed' by Abe North's stones, he said: "but an old romantic like me can't do anything about it" (137); that is Dick's Achilles' heel. His romantic feeling generates his clinging to a belief in the new life that post-WWI America had promised to offer. Yet, his hopes turn out to be just illusions. Endowed with self-confidence, a charming look, an astonishing capacity to arouse respect and admiration, and a power to conquer all the hearts that surround him, Dick meets all requirements to succeed in 'the promised land'. Dick is marked for a successful career and marriage: he is a graduate of Yale and John Hopkins, "lucky" enough to find himself in the aftermath of the war doing research and practicing at an exclusive Swiss psychiatric clinic, married to a beautiful and rich aristocrat. Yet, he is also troubled by his instinctive distaste for cramped, ascetic and traditional lifestyle. At the same time, he is inevitably seduced by the charming images of the glamorous life generated by the popular culture and the industry bound to it.

Paradoxically, the same society that seduces Dick Diver is a permissive one, and happens to give rise to his anxiety. As described by Slavoj Zizek, it is a society that "does not prohibit enjoyment but, on the contrary, imposes it and punishes social failure in a far more cruel and severe way, through an unbearable and self-destructive anxiety".<sup>15</sup> In other words, those who cannot fully take pleasure in the things a consumer society aggressively offers to them – the new social and economic order-, those who question the moral value behind that offer, do not deserve happiness or love-so goes the unspoken social and cultural logic afflicting Dick Diver.

Dick is also scattered because his beliefs are more and more shaken. He comes to the realization that what once made his real world-his historical reality- becomes less certain now.

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<sup>15</sup>- Zizek, Slavoj, *Looking Awry : An Introduction to Jacques Lacan Through Popular Culture*, Cambridge MIT Press, 1993, p.103.

Eternal strength which guarantees success, the goodness of people, good manners ... were just lies of the glorious past that resonates along with bitter illusions. Dick, "A model of correctness" (179), has been brought up to respect good manners, to be selfless and smart, and to believe in the sacrifices of his ancestors who ensured a land of hope and success. He believed that if one is endowed with a willingness to be happy, then in America-the land of willingness of the heart- he would obviously succeed. However, those beliefs turned out to be just mere mirages: "I think Americans take their manners rather seriously," said the Englishman to Dick. "My father had the kind of manners he inherited from the days you shot first and apologized afterwards," (225) answered Dick proudly. Facing his real world which dictates its new order and beliefs and imposes them upon him, Dick perceives penitently all the fallacy of his willingness: "Dick got up ... with plenty-the illusions of eternal strength and health, and of the essential goodness of people- they were the illusions of a nation, the lies of generations of frontier mothers who had to croon falsely that there were no wolves outside the cabin door." (6)

The accusation of seduction leveled against Dick by a patient's mother constitutes the first one in a series of accusations that compromise his professional and social success and offer external signs of Dick's internal deterioration. Coming from a patient, this accusation could be contested. However, it appears justified if we recall Dick's talent of seduction. He did seduce Rosemary and bears a sexual inclination towards the women he meets. As Dick's failures and accusations against him become more and more important (alcoholism, seduction, death of his favorite patient) he gradually loses his position and role of a charming man. His magic of seduction over the others is no more operational. The death of his patient provokes a crisis that renders him more vulnerable and which his partner Franz exploits professionally. His incapacity to cure the homosexual whom he abandoned only betrays his incapacity to combat his society's corruption. The news of Dick's father and Abe's deaths open wounds that will not close again. It is not only his past and youth that die, but also his faith in an ideal which he wanted to save, and which he has somehow betrayed, and also his creative ambitions and the most authentic feelings he used to have. Those two deaths foretell his destiny since they have some common circumstances. The tragic violence by which Abe is killed -beaten to death in a speakeasy- announces the brawl that Dick will have in Rome. On the opposite side, the reappearance of Tommy Barban, more potent than ever, on the scene and of McKisco, who became famous, offers a clear contrast with Dick's decline and his professional failure. Tommy who stands for his rival -as he would take his place by marrying

Nicole- is always ready to go to war; whereas, Dick only thinks of retreating and goes to pieces: "I'm not like myself anymore." (326) He came out from his struggle hurt and defeated; whereas, McKisco has gained a self-confidence that Dick is losing and his success, though artificial, underlines the failures that Dick accumulates.

Also, Nicole's sudden recovery and strength suggests that money can be a stronger source of power than good manners. After alternating break-ups and periods of quietness, Nicole's sickness reaches a total recovery. She regains her equilibrium and does not need Dick anymore. Neither Rosemary nor Nicole could restore Dick in his lost vitality. He has become the exhausted idealist intellectual; he abandons Nicole to Tommy Barban and seems to have precipitated the rupture: "Nicole felt outguessed, realizing that [...] Dick had anticipated everything". (311) In the dialogue between Dick and Tommy that closes the scene of rupture, Dick has the final word. He gives up Nicole to Tommy without any resistance as if he had deliberately planned everything. On the contrary, Tommy is full of vitality; he is a man of action. The movement of Nicole towards him happens through a process of transference as it was the case with Dick. Nicole is attracted by Tommy who is very active, a hero of modern times, as she was attracted before by Dick's vitality and charm. Having "swallowed" all Dick's vital forces, she now turns towards Tommy, fighting Dick "...with her nascent transference to another man...she fought him with her money and her faith that her sister disliked him and was behind her now" (375). Nicole had also made transference from Warren -her father- to Dick whom she identified to her father. Then, she accomplishes the same emotional transference from Dick-not needed anymore- to Tommy. Thus, a cycle is accomplished since by turning to Tommy Barban, a barbarian, Nicole loses her grace and fragile sense and recovers her true nature: "suppose my grandfather was a crook and I am a crook by heritage" (292). She speaks French with Tommy, thus returning to her origins "half European, half American parentage." (292).

Consequently, she sees Dick the way her sister Baby had always seen him. Nicole Diver has become Nicole Warren again. She has a feeling of gratitude mingled with pity. When Dick appears on the beach for the last time, she wanted to join him, but Tommy pulled her firmly "Let well enough alone" (390). It is Mary who gives Dick the last testimony of sympathy; whereas, Baby tries to convince Nicole that the doctor the Warrens bought has completed his duty. He had cured her sister. "Dick was a good husband to me" said Nicole, but Baby thought "That's what he was educated for" (388) assuming that he only did his duty, and it is time for him to resign now. So, after he has been dismissed by Franz, Dick is also

discharged by the other partner, Baby. He, indeed, has accomplished his duty, but that was done against a great sacrifice and mutilation. To close his narrative, Fitzgerald draws a brief biography about Dick,

He sends his neglected son to London to educate him and comes back to America to be a quack, thus having accomplished both his bourgeois sentimental idea in the case of his wife and his ideals in the case of his children. And now being himself only a shell to which nothing matters but survival as long as possible with the old order.<sup>16</sup>

Symbolically, the series of events are diametrically opposed to the order of events that took place at the beginning of the narrative. The rapid ascent of the brilliant psychiatrist is followed by such a dramatic decline: from “superman in possibilities” to a fragmented soul, losing his idealism, his talent and turning to dissipation and hollowness. The social context in which Dick is situated and his position determine his life. In marrying Nicole, he makes “the personal professional and the professional personal love the condition for continued work and work the condition for continued love”<sup>17</sup>. So, the conflict between work and marriage is made extremely tense by the ethical high-wire he hangs on, because of his dual relationship to Nicole. Profoundly disappointed, Dick comes to the realization that he cannot restore order – he who could re-order Nicole’s spirit- to a world gone so materialistic and corruptive in the wake of the war and in the post-war boom period without acknowledging the shattering split within his self. Dick has gone through an experience of self- acknowledgment that culminated in the break-up of his idealism that had finally proved not as strong as the circumstances against which Dick fights. Even the sick Nicole seems to have foreseen his break-up when she told him “you will walk differently alone, dear, through a thicker atmosphere, forcing your way through the shadows ... through the dripping smoke of the funnels. You will feel your own reflection sliding along the eyes of those who look at you.” (62). The real struggle Dick had to experience is his inner conflict which is the most dehumanizing one. By accepting to be consecrated entirely to Nicole and become hers like any possessions to which she was attached, “I’ve got him, he is mine” (52), Dick loses the most important part of his self; he is dispossessed of his soul: “You ruined me... then we’re both ruined...” (341). By that time, he

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<sup>16</sup>-, Poli, B., Le Vot, A. Fabre, G&M, “General Plan” in “Documents” cited in *Francis Scott Fitzgerald*, Librairie Armand Collin, Paris, 1969, p.350

<sup>17</sup>-Shoening, Mark, “Dr. Lonelyhearts”, *American Literary History* 5:663, p.85.

also loses his intellectual strength that differentiates him from the rest. Then, he becomes like the others, so he has either to reintegrate the established ordinary order of his society, or simply disintegrate, losing his passion, he who used to have “the passion of many men inside him” (192). When Dick feels “numb, tired” (245) and reaches a point of exhaustion and discontent, he stayed listening impotently to time passing. He just accepted his flow as part and parcel of his time in which ‘smart men’ and ‘natural idealists’ like him end up in dissipation and disintegration “so many smart men go to pieces nowadays”, Nicole asserts “And when ... haven’t they? ... Why is it just Americans who dissipate?” (187). This echoes what Fitzgerald has thought of himself when in 1928 he wrote to Perkins from France, “Why shouldn’t I go crazy? My father is a moron and my mother is neurotic ... If I knew anything I’d be the best writer in America.”<sup>18</sup>

Tracing Dick’s fragmented literary career and frustrated research plans show that his aim is consistently to teach and direct, even though his motivations changed over time. “You taught me that work is everything” Nicole recalls his statement and she says: “you say it’s a confession of weakness for a scientist not to write” (63). In attempting creative writing, Dick may be seeking to recapture the joy and contentment that he found in his ‘heroic period’, the winter of 1916-17 spent in Vienna composing pamphlets that became his twenty publications, A Psychology for Psychiatrists. There, he experienced “the fine quiet of the scholar which is nearest of all things to heavenly peace” (4) that is further evidence for Dick Diver’s disillusionment with his profession. When evoking the content and the list of speakers of the Psychiatric Conference in Berlin, Dick decided that he “would not be there to see.” He uses the conference as a pretext for getting away from his wife after the car-crash in the Agiri Fair. Dick’s absence indicates the erasure of his early plans to be a reformer and leader of his profession. A few years before, the event would have constituted a platform for his career aspirations, a prestigious affair involving Bluler and Florel and “some man of Freud’s from Vienna” and “the great Jung” (246). As imagined by Dick, the ground would also be sullied by other delegates, most ominously Americans who “play their trump card, the announcement of colossal gifts and endowments, of great new plants and training schools” (246) which overwhelm the intellectual vitality of the European theorists. Moreover, the meeting would be crawling with

dozens of commercial alienists with hand-dog faces, who would be present partly to increase their standing, and

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<sup>18</sup>- Kirk, Curnutt, A Historical Guide to F. Scott Fitzgerald, Oxford university Press, New-York, 2004, p92.S

hence their reach for the big plums of the criminal practice, partly to master novel sophistries that they could weave into their stock and trade, to the infinite confusion of all values (246).

That is an explicitly severe assertion from Dick -and through him Fitzgerald- on the perverted face of science in the New Era, which fueled even more his disillusionment with his time to the point that he lost all enthusiasm for his career. Throughout the narrative, Dick's bitter disappointment is felt through his representation of Americans: "Americans had reached a position where they could scarcely have been said to belong to any nation at all, at least not to any Great Power ..." (357).

## **B-Fitzgerald's Discourse of the Dislocation of the Mind: Order in a Dis-ordered World**

After its publication in 1934, *Tender is the Night* attracted no “tender” criticism, and it is only a few decades ago that it became highly appreciated. Among the difficulties critics attributed to the novel, is its ambiguity. Indeed while in *The Great Gatsby* Gatsby's disaster is clearly described, resulting from his idealized dream of love for Daisy, it remains a hard task to trace Dick Diver's flaw in characterization. Malcolm Cowley says: “One fault of the earlier version was its uncertainty of focus”<sup>19</sup>. I think that even if Dick's failure is neither easily traceable nor describable, the novel's ambiguity only adds a significant quality to the work. 1960s critic Arthur Mizener says:

Perhaps [Fitzgerald] did not manage to give Dick all the cohesion he might have, but the real difficulty is that the source of Dick's disaster is indescribable. It can be shown and felt, but it can no more be analyzed than Hamlet's disaster can<sup>20</sup>

The major difficulty that one encounters when analyzing the narrative is its structure, or rather its fragmented structure. *Tender is the Night* is conceived in a way that allows Fitzgerald to explore a human life with all its complexity. As fragmentation of the personality is one of the main thematic points that the novel focuses on, with its images spread all over the narrative, it is more than probable that the thematic fragmentation is intermingled with structural fragmentation in the novel.

Through Dick Diver the psychiatrist, Fitzgerald explores human complex behaviors and personality traits, but he changed the way we tell stories about ourselves and the worlds within our memories “It was as though an incalculable story was telling itself inside him” (334). He adopted those structures and techniques which constitute his diagnosis via the sign system of symptoms, repetition, and broken chronology. To Fitzgerald, S. Freud provides a plot template that explains character motivation and, on an even deeper level, creates a thematic architecture of loss and destruction that holds up the novel as a whole. It is also one of the main modernist elements that Fitzgerald much relied on, the duality of contrasts.

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<sup>19</sup> -Malcolm, Cowley, *Introduction to the Revised edition in Three Novels of Scott Fitzgerald*, New-York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953, pv. Cowley published a revised edition of the novel in which he rearranged the events in chronological order to give, according to him, consistency to the work. However, that did not really solve the problem.

<sup>20</sup> - Arthur, Mizener, *Twelve Great American Novels*, New- York American Library, New- York, 1967, p115.

Though appearing fragmented and lacking a clear plot, the novel constructs a complete story of a complex personality. As the fiction reflects the confusion of the life of expatriate Americans in Europe in quest of a dream nourished by illusion with its conflicting middle-class, aristocratic values, and the moral principles of the 1920s, it is scattered with confusion and dissipation. However, the crucial point is that in the narrative, the contradictions are structural and not simply repeated. With a talented modernist sensibility, Fitzgerald's ideas are skillfully arranged to make a whole of opposed contraries and still keep the balance. Like most great modernist artists of his time, Fitzgerald could move from the unresolved fragmented contradictions of life to their ordered dualities. He could artistically disorder ideas bearing contradictory meanings so that he would re-order the fragments together to form a meaningful whole. At the beginning, we discover Nicole as a fragile patient who needs psychological assistance. Then, after marrying Dick Diver, she completes herself and becomes a complete lady: "...a saint, a Viking Madonna" (104). Yet, when she learns of Dick's love affair with Rosemary, she loses her serenity again and we witness one of her acute breakdowns as she becomes hysterical at the Agiri Fair, causing a car crash. Still, Nicole knows that she is gaining strength over Dick, telling him "my business is to hold things together" (167) till she could have hold on Dick and ruin him. She is even described as "Nicole seemed well-knit again" (217). She is first to collapse mentally, yet her transference to Dick restores her balance as Dick's personality undergoes a dramatic decline.

If Dick seeks an outer world where he is his real self, the ecstasy he feels is ephemeral and only lasts for a dim night. William E. Doherty argues that Dick degenerates because he is dragged by his own romantic infatuation like drug-taking, the spell of the night, and neglecting his professional and domestic life.<sup>21</sup> Even though Dick's decline results from his disconnection from reality, it is very unlikely that the ecstatic feeling created by his night parties makes of Dick an impaired individual. On the contrary, the parties he offers symbolize the extent of Dick's power and his capacity of charm that engulfs everyone around him. Actually, when we trace Dick Diver's downfall, we see that the less powerful he becomes, the more rarely the ecstatic feeling is provoked. The rapture in Dick's performance vanishes when the night stops its spell and the magical world disappears. When daylight returns, Dick resumes his actual world where things seem to appear in confusion; he seems surrounded by symptoms of schizophrenia, Nicole's sickness. But even so, he is not sure of the nature of his state: "Well,

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<sup>21</sup> - William E. Doherty, *Tender is the Night and Ode to a Nightingale*, in Harold Bloom, Scott Fitzgerald, Chelsea House Publishers, New-York, 1985, p 118.

how can anyone tell what's eccentric and what's crazy?"(48). Besides, he has become so clumsy that the charm he used to exert on people has no more effect. Then, he realizes that he has to stop performing a role which he cannot stand anymore: "Dick switched off the light"... "I must go", he said (390).

Like other Fitzgerald's protagonists, Dick seems most American in his inhibiting self-centered character, and in his naïve but necessary participation in the optimistic myths lurking in the wasteland of the modern world. In Dick, there is a deliberate balancing of two facets of the hero of the western twentieth century man who is vacillating between energy and sensibility. Actually, with Dick as with Gatsby, Fitzgerald created what seems to be a classic American type, rooted and emerging from the classical conception of what a typically American hero is. He appeals to us because Fitzgerald managed to give him all the characteristics that make of him a representative figure of the 1920s. But more importantly, he appeals to our sympathy, understanding and even curiosity because Fitzgerald deliberately undertakes the task of diagnosing and commenting upon the process by which culture contributes to the 'making of' the hero in America.

Fitzgerald's diagnosis is made implicit in his account of Dick's development from a romantic egoist with an admirable idealism to a despondent drunkard, implying that he has only been made a product of a planned process. This product, Fitzgerald seems to suggest, only surges from necessity, wholly formed by his received culture. Once put on track, Dick loses control-or he originally does not have any- on his life because his actions and aspirations are determined by those of his forefathers, remote in his culture. Even by saying farewell to all his fathers at the churchyard "Good-bye, my father-good-bye, all my fathers." (258) Dick could not really sever the ties with the dream of his ancestors rooted in American culture, the American Dream. Through this dissection, Fitzgerald suggests that the myth of the self-made man is the greatest of American illusions. Moreover, it is the resulting illusion created by his ancestors' dream in a safe land of free will and goodness "Dick got up on fewer Achilles' heels than would be required to equip a centipede, but with plenty-the illusion of eternal strengths and health, and the essential goodness of people" (6). However, the reality Dick had to face-like Fitzgerald and his generation- was bitter than 'the good sense' could bear. It is the inherited past of values which somehow mechanically fixed the life of Dick and determined his present and consequently his future: "These dead, he knew them all...the souls made of new earth in the spare heavy darkness of the seventeenth century" (258), Dick

was muttering at the cemetery. Thus, it eliminates all possibility for Dick to form a moral and clear judgment of behavior.

An important element Fitzgerald has used symbolically to structure his narrative is the representation of time by numbers. One of the aspects that the novel explores is the love, marriage and divorce of the Divers. At first glance, the Divers' marriage looks more like a fantasy about love in which the characters Dick and Nicole fuse into "Dicole". However, soon the reality, their different personalities, and the narrative drive rupture that romance. Book I called "Historical Case" could be considered as covering a historical background. Book II spans six years (1919-25); Book III embraces casual events around twelve days of June 1925. Book IV tells about four years (1925-29) of the Divers' life till their departure to the Swiss Alps for Christian holidays in December. Finally, Book V focuses on the twelve months from the Divers' departure from Franz's clinic to Nicole's affair with Tommy Barban (June 1930). It is worth noticing that the central chapter is delimited by thirty chapters on each side. The first Book and a half treat everything happening before August 1925; whereas, the second one and half treat everything that happened after that date. Actually, each Book has an even number of chapters; thus, a mathematical center. Thus, we notice the use of the number twelve or its multiples to represent those twelve years. Also of great significance is Rosemary's entry into the world of the Divers when "Noon dominated sea and sky"(66) which is linked to Dick's departure on the noon train at the novel's close.

When twelve is associated with the hours of the day, it suggests a turning point that marks the end of a period and the start of another. Hence, Rosemary is metamorphosed from girl to woman and Dick's downfall from a high social profile to a "not serious man"; as it can also suggest the end of youth, of the hope for a rosy life. It may also suggest the end of a period of illumination (dream) and the beginning of obscurity, illusions and decline. However, in the language of duality, twelve –being a multiple of two, an even number- can be read as a symbol of togetherness, of 'twoness' when Fitzgerald associated Dick and Nicole to name them "Dicole", the word with which they used to sign their "communications". As it is also a symbol of harmony and order, values that Fitzgerald incessantly calls forth to subvert a novel made as rich of ironic dislocations as Fitzgerald's time and world.

That Fitzgerald considered Dick as his more important character is attested by the writer's plotting of events around Dick's life in a way that relates personal crisis at

thematically and mathematically well calculated points of emphasis. Indeed, the novel opens at a point -June 1925- that is precisely the middle of Nicole and Dick's twelve years of marriage, and the mathematical center of the novel's sixty one chapters is Chapter IX in Book 2 which marks the effective beginning of their relationship with Dick's announcement in May 1919 that he loves and has thought of marrying Nicole. That relationship is going to alter wholly Dick's life as it opens up to one world (Divers' marriage), and the marriage for Dick marks the beginning of a decline. Structurally, his crises form an inverted pyramid the bottom of which is reached in his total impotence (in chapter XII) and out of which he was only ascending in terms of self-discovery and self-knowledge. At a different level, Fitzgerald prepares the reader to the unique experience his protagonist-hero is about to live "... without the satisfaction of knowing that the hero is ready to be called to an intricate destiny. Best to be reassuring, Dick Diver's moment now began." (6). So, each Book has its central chapter which constitutes the principal turning point of the Book. For instance, Book 3 has center in Chapter XIII, and the thematic center in the scene at the battlefield and graveyard at Beaumont Hamel, with Dick's statement of the explicit relationship that exists between warfare and sentimental love, and the scene of the woman who has been given the wrong number for her brother's grave. The duel is a symbolic acting out of the trench warfare described by Dick as the result of 'middle-class love', "There was a century of middle-class love spent here" (36) and a sentimental culture. It is seen as a ritual by which two people suppress and govern violent passions. For Fitzgerald, the duel prefigures a theme of a close relationship between love and violence. The novel moves incessantly toward a conclusion that the passionate instinct of love and the passionate basis of hate and aggression are inherent parts of one aspect of the individual. And either one in excess can be condemned and sanctioned by society unless practiced through rituals and institutions which, through time, have gained some social acceptability. Warfare -like traditional duels- have been interpreted as the acceptable issue for the release of the inclination to destroy. Likewise, marriage is the traditional graveyard for free expression of sexual desire and love. If practiced outside the limits that social circle or away from the established order, love, like war, becomes as unacceptable as treason.

By his specific characterization, Fitzgerald's emphasis is on the arbitrariness and absurdity of all the nurturing process that produces the American character, and the futility of all efforts to form absolute moral judgments in the modern world where free will has become an unintelligible term. In Book I, chapter 7, Fitzgerald gives a description of the parties Dick organizes for his friends. The chapter begins with a passage treating the "really bad party" at

Villa Diana which ends with Nicole's first reported breakdown. Nicole is at her garden "the garden was bounded on one side by the house...on two sides by the old village and on the last by the cliff falling by ledges to the sea" (94). Nicole takes care of her garden, spending much time in it. We can detect in Nicole's behavior a profound and undercurrent distaste for Dick's sense of fun and for his guests. Dick's "amusing world" is one of meaningless chatter and superficiality, and Nicole is reluctantly obliged to enter the party world(hisworld) created for their evening's "entertainment". In a sense, Nicole is placed under strain by the necessity to conform to Dick's world; whereas, in her garden, she seems to be relaxed and wholly in touch with the real world, unlike Dick who prefers his fantastic world. "She liked to be active. In the world she was rather silent, she knew few words and she believed in none."(95). As she seems more realistic, it is then, not surprising that Nicole becomes the dominant figure at the end of the novel while Dick goes through a chasm of uncertainty and imbalance: "Nicole's world had fallen to pieces, but it was only a flimsy and scarcely created world, beneath it, her emotions and instincts fought on...wearing her hope like a corsage at her belt." (38).

Fitzgerald has purposefully placed and circumscribed Dick and Nicole in their symbolically appropriate environments from the start. Nicole's world is the green garden bounded by domestic and familiar routine (the house) on one side, by a general socio-cultural heritage (the village) on two other sides, and finally by the precipitous and hazardous nature of her psyches,"the cliff falling by ledges to the sea" (94). When she has to make a critical choice in Book V, chapter 7, we are reminded of that cliff and the trauma of dislocation from the familiar by describing her feeling "the imminence of a leap from which she must alight changed in the very chemistry of blood and muscle" (349). In an impressionistic way, Fitzgerald writes from Nicole's viewpoint to imply that her "leap" in Book V is a breaking away from an artificial, imposed order. For their close friends, doctor Franz Gregorovius and his wife Kaethe, Nicole was only acting illness; she "is less sick than anyone thinks- she only cherishes her illness as an instrument of power. She ought to be in the cinema" (302); whereas, Dick turned a man of "debauch". And Dick realized that she has become stronger than him, "Did you expect her to be dead b'coz I was tight? Nicole is now made of Georgia pine, which is the hardest wood known"(344). From a psychoanalytic perspective, the ascent of Nicole and descent of Dick in the final Book of the narrative has been considered as the result of "transference of vitality"<sup>22</sup> between Dick and Nicole. Though Nicole's case

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<sup>22</sup>- Sergio, Perosa, *The Art of F.Scott Fitzgerald*, trans. by Charles Matz and the author, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1965, pp. 118-119.

constitutes the precipitating element in the descent of Dick as Fitzgerald intended: “Only her transference to him saves her”(18). Her cure and his dislocation, like their *selves*, are diametrically opposed. Fitzgerald is on record at saying that the “dying fall” pattern was “absolutely deliberate”. Once stronger, she deliberately acknowledges to Dick that “I think it’s my fault –I’ve ruined you” (334).

Fitzgerald has used motifs to plan the fall of Dick. The fall is reflected in the reversing or negation of motifs previously associated with him in positive terms: the balancing motif is negated as Dick fails to balance on the tow-board while attempting to lift the boy on his shoulders on the beach scene; whereas, “once he could stand on his hands on a chair at the end of a board” (352). Another relevant motif is the circus; the negation is made through allusions to Dick’s present inability to do the flying ring tricks. Dick is, then, described as cast down, “exhausted” and “floating” on the sea which symbolizes his being on uncertain moving grounds. He is dislocated from one environment to be impotently cast into another one. While watching Dick, Nicole reflects how he could do stunts well two summers ago and had then “lifted a two-hundred pound man from the board onto his shoulders and stood up” (352). Inwardly, Nicole knew that Dick’s strength was fading away, “that he was somewhat tired.” (352) Dick makes two unsuccessful attempts to lift one youth on his shoulders, and at the final effort with the Mexican driver of the boat, he lifts him only two inches off the board. Nicole is no longer impressed by Dick as she used to be “-but now she was unexpectedly free” (342). The transformed woman wanted to fly with her own wings and flee from the erected ones for her; she has become ‘complete’, and “she had come to hate his world with its delicate politeness forgetting that for many years it was the only world open to her” (350).

Certainly, the manner in which Fitzgerald uses Rosemary as a narrative viewpoint is ironically controlled to entrap the reader. We are forced to follow her and see through her eyes. We even share her superficial understanding of the Divers. In Book I -“Case History”- we come later at “Rosemary’s angle” and detect her limitations. As in *The Great Gatsby* where Nick Carraway tells the narrative from his only view, in *Tender is the Night* Rosemary also constitutes an unreliable or semi-reliable narrator. Her unreliability stems from her age and position. Indeed, Fitzgerald has provided copious hints that Rosemary was not to be considered an adequate observer and teller. Her age, lack of experience, and an instant infatuation with Dick Diver are obvious signals: “she’s an infant” and he added “she’s not as intelligent as I thought. “she’s quite smart”, said Nicole. “Not very, though- there is a

persistent aroma of the nursery” Dick offered (208). Thus, in addition to being our eyes into the world of the Divers, she is also someone we have to interpret because we rely entirely on her. The reader is engaged in an interesting but complex game with the narrator Rosemary. We rely on her to guide us through the narrative, yet we also have to make judgments about the validity of her story. In spite of her disarming freshness and charm of youth, her innocence and sometimes naivety are manifested as she ignores the intriguing ‘gallery’ which surrounds the Divers. Young as she is, Rosemary has a limited experience of life; thus, she might miss or misinterpret effective events, “she was almost eighteen, nearly complete, but the dew was still on her” (66).

The shift in narrative voice is also made effective through Fitzgerald’s use of Nicole’s perspectives. In that way, characters are seen inwardly through their subconscious reflections and streams of consciousness, but also outwardly from the other characters’ eyes. At a given point, when Dick evokes the Psychiatrists’ Conference in Berlin, we are told that he would not attend it. Yet, we know about the participants, the content and the atmosphere of the conference as imagined by Dick. The narrative device of presenting the scene through Dick’s imagination is doubly effective because it distances Dick from his colleagues’ unorthodox activities and also declares that he already knows that the profession has been perverted. For Dick, it has been affected by the corrupting forces of money and, thus, has declined into commercialism and rivalries. Hence, his decision not to participate in it is meant to isolate himself from a corrupt world.

All the characters follow the pattern of the dislocation from a familiar -so secure- and entry in unfamiliar environment. Rosemary and the Divers’ guests who enter the “world of amusement” had set out on a complex adventure, however much they are unconscious of the deep meaning of their experiences. After the party at Villa Diana, Tommy Barban, whose name rhymes with barbarian as he called himself “natural”, and McKisco embark on a duel. That duel has in fact a dual meaning. Seen as a ritual by which two people display violent passions, it is also a microcosmic picture of ways in which “old” and “new” world values are mixed in absurd but tragic ways. Through this symbolic image, Fitzgerald is caricaturing his society at that time in which old moral values were being swept away by new ideas of civilization brought by a culture of power over love. “This land here cost twenty lives a foot that summer...There are lots of people dead since and we’ll be dead soon” (135). When Fitzgerald shifts to the battlegrounds and graveyards of Thiepval, he makes Dick describe The

First World War style of combat as an outgrowth of “middle class love” and of romantic and social conventions implicitly believed in by preceding generations but not anymore by the new ones. At that time, people had a preparation of “religion and years of plenty and tremendous sureties and the exact relation that existed between classes” (136). That is, in those times people had a romantic idealism combined with faith and the worship of rules which gave stability to their society. Western man who is divorced from faith and sentimental illusions has made of himself a victim and an agent of violence. In the modern era, life had lost its mysteries since, in the absence of God, Man could rule the world. Hence, the duel takes on a metaphorical meaning through which Fitzgerald hints at standards of morality and immorality virtually throughout the narrative. Tommy and McKisco become representatives of an era to which they belong, actors in the world stage.

Like in Ngugi’s writings, we sense in Fitzgerald’s criticism of his time and his eulogy of the ‘old’ values, an implicit call for the old civilization and a necessary return to the traditional culture. The other characters who witness their performance either faint like Campion or undergo uncontrollable resentment like Rosemary’s hysterical excitement. Thus, the audience is inert because their thoughts became paralyzed. It is significant that Nicole (like Fitzgerald at a given point of his life) realizes that “either you think-or else others have to think for you and take power from you, pervert and discipline your natural taste, civilize and sterilize you” (361) because inaction necessarily leads to destruction. Here, Fitzgerald sounds a clear warning against the pitfalls of modern civilization.

With consummate skill, Fitzgerald manages to bring forward his theme of love and violence whenever he is given the opportunity. For each of his major characters he has gone below their surface consciousness to expose their passionate dark inner selves. The simple tortures of the relationship between Dick and Rosemary are supplanted by the intimation of Abe North’s complex “heavy belly-frightened love for Nicole for years” (167). Hence, love is partly the cause for Abe’s alcoholic self-poisoning. Abe North does not go to America to become a great musician as he intended, but stays on to become involved in an unclear business that ends with the murder of “the negro”, Peterson. The “echoes of violence” follow the Divers and Rosemary out of the station where they heard two porters remarking that the blood spilled recalls war “Assez de sang pour se croire à la guerre” (172) which suggests that love is ultimately related to violence.

The world the characters entered was one of sunshine and gaiety, controlled and governed by Dick, “the high priest” of mannered social behavior, at a moment of triumphal splendor at the middle of the twelve years of marriage. That fantastic world was supported by assumptions of rightness, the good taste of self-control, courtesy, chivalry, and self-effacement for the general good. Nevertheless, it tolerated some degree of dramatic displays of bad behavior, a polished decadence at times, or even courteous flirtations. Likewise, it prohibited physical violence, outrageous selfishness or rudeness. The illusion of harmony and mutual loyalty created by the magicians of that fantastic world should be kept intact in the Divers’ party. We come to see the “bad party” Dick Diver gave us to fit the bill: “I want to give a really bad party... a party where there’s a brawl and seductions and people going home with their feelings hurt”(96). That was the “remarkable experience” that Rosemary lived and through her eyes and the mediation of the stream of consciousness, the reader comes to sense her utter disappointment as she entered through the doorway of fantasy into the “older” world of Dick as the heroic romantic male half of “the two Divers”, of “Dicole”, the ideal couple. Because Rosemary is an outsider to that world, she is the keen observer through whom the reader passes from a world of illusions and fantasy to a world of harsh realities, a world below appearances and the masks of ornament. Fitzgerald makes clever shifts of point of view from Dick to Rosemary and then to Nicole to interrelate love, suppressed passion to violence (the visit to the old battlefield, Abe, Dick’s and Rosemary’s behavior), themes Fitzgerald excellently interweaves with corruption, mental diseases and immorality in society, which stands in contradiction with the colorful world created by Dick.

Fitzgerald dramatically sets the incest motif by making it part of the background to Nicole’s schizophrenia as presented through Franz Gregory (Gregorovius) and Dr. Dohmler. As a metaphor, the incest helps to keep the story line since Nicole’s marital relationship and life evolve around her schizophrenia. And it is in Dr. Dohmler’s clinic that Dick met her, and she was seduced by his “uniform”. A very important fact in the report of Nicole’s illness is that she had felt complicity, and invited or shared in the incest with her father. Yet, she didn’t realize her guilt till she decided to quit Dick and venture on an affair with Tommy. Then she recognized that she has “ruined [Dick]” (334). Through Nicole’s case, Fitzgerald has given the reader enough material about her split personality to illuminate him on Dick subsequent Dick’s bursts of temper. Moreover, the incest motif may also stand as an allusion to the perverted modern time where human relationships have been awfully deprived of their due meaning. Implicitly, Nicole is encouraged to re-enter into ‘normal’ life and to put aside all

conscious confrontations with her troubled past, of the memory of incest, she is expected to develop a normal sexual maturation in accordance with what is socially prescribed as normal. Through her husband and doctor Dick, she is seen to have made a “transference” to Dick; that is a substitution of a pure male-authority (father figure) for the real but tarnished one of her imperfect father. Dick continues to shelter Nicole from the “ugly” truths of the world and of “self”, without allowing her to be strong enough to understand and accept her “darker” impulses as psychologically natural aspects of human perversion.

Dick does not consider these interpretations of human sexual impulses as normal. Because if he does, he would admit that humankind is predisposed to subvert the “norms” of society and civilization which keep man from barbarism. Incest is used by Fitzgerald as a metaphorical image of the human condition seduced to disorder by a perverted consciousness. It is a human condition set free in the twentieth century in the name of individual freedom. Similarly, schizophrenia is only a metaphor bearing a dual meaning. It is a radical splitting apart- a divide into two parts, (another significance to the use of number two by Fitzgerald). In Nicole’s case, schizophrenia was born of complicity in incest. In other words, it is a splitting apart resulting from a drawing together. Underneath the lines of the narrative, runs one movement towards violence and perversion (dis-harmony or disorder) against another towards love and altruism (harmony or order). For Fitzgerald, they are equally rooted in a self, in the ambivalent interplay of man’s social and asocial, romantic and egoistic drives. Throughout the novel, Fitzgerald seems to denounce the modern world and its civilization in that they have severed man from his morality and turned him into a barbaric, self-seeking, and self-serving creature. And only powerful traditional educations and taboos and an unquestionable faith in society and civilization can check and prevent his drift towards a naked libertinism, violence, and anarchy, facts that would lead him to self-destruction and fragmentariness.

On another scale, the theme of incest and schizophrenia is also closely linked to “two” as schizophrenia is divided within through a severe dislocation of personality, a split personality into “two”. This number haunts the narrative and indicates separate human impulses of love and hate, altruism and egoism. Incest is associated with the number “two” as it abnormally assembles together two persons of one family of opposite sex, here Nicole and her father, that is a moral relationship with an immoral one. In this way, Fitzgerald tries to mirror the modern world in which traditional moral values co-exist with corruption and perversion.

As a modernist writer, Fitzgerald uses several patterns of duality. In this way of 'doubleness', characteristic of most twentieth century writers, the units linked together are usually in a relation of disharmony, unnaturally bonded to form an odd association. Rosemary, for example, is introduced as an innocent "little girl", yet at other times she becomes the witty woman, able to seduce Dick with "her fineness of character, her courage and steadfastness intrude upon by the vulgarity of the world" (152). Dick is seen by most people surrounding him as the provider of happiness "...The technique of moving many varied types, each as immobile,...appeared so effortless that he still had pieces of his own most personal self for everyone"(162). However, at the same time, Dick was sinking in uncertainty, unable to make good appreciations: "He had lost himself" (253).

On another level, Dick also functions as a corner stone in Fitzgerald's narrative as a pivotal character. The hero's gradual downfall provides the reader with necessary time and material to observe Dick's actions and their consequences. In the first three chapters of the novel we are informed, through Nicole's case, about the importance and efficiency of psychological analysis to isolate the precipitating element, Nicole, in Dick's development, and then to appreciate that factor's influence on his subsequent actions. As said before, Dick is first driven by a need 'to be needed' which leads him increasingly into a whirlpool of dramatic circumstances. Moreover, those circumstances, his love affair with Rosemary, his instability at work, all cause him almost willingly to let his energy be sapped without any attempt from him to regain his power and inner harmony.

Fitzgerald emphasizes the eclectic and incomplete nature of the American individual during that era by interweaving elements of the romantic and the realistic when describing the motivations and actions of his characters. That results in an acute realistic emotional conflict that ultimately leads the character Dick unexpectedly to explode into a psychological chaos. Persistently, throughout the text, Fitzgerald employs a romantic imagery to express his recognition of the conflict between illusions and reality tightly connected within the American individual. The fantastic, emotional, mysterious and unfamiliar picture that Fitzgerald paints of Dick precisely is meant to reflect the duality in his personality. Nicole is well assuming her "sickness" and does not show any resistance to this state of mind. Dick, however, is driven by his ambitions to the point that he misses the truth- the reality of the illusions that lies before his eyes: "God, am I like the rest after all?"(25).

*Tender is the Night* is a psychological novel also partly because of Fitzgerald's manipulation of chronology. Indeed, time has horizontal - linear and "vertical" dimensions in the architecture of the novel. Considering the linear aspect, the reader collects information and facts that Dick does not figure out. The reader knows that Dick grows older, that Rosemary matures and finds other interests, and that Nicole recovers from her illness. But from the "vertical" point of view, time is used by Fitzgerald to make the device of thematic photography efficient, shedding light on important happenings to foreground Dick's downfall. Yet, Dick is ignorant of the passing of time until he suffers a total collapse. As he gradually acknowledges time and the large gap between his "heroic period" and his eventual anonymity, his character goes from that of the complete person to that of the flawed individual who accepts his deteriorating situation because unable to change it. To clarify Fitzgerald's notion of time, it is necessary to trace his perception and perspective of historical time.

One of Fitzgerald's distinctions from other American writers of his generation is his penchant for taking history personally. He establishes an intimacy between what happens to him and what happens in general both in his autobiographical writings and his fiction. He connects his own career to the course of American history in his time to the effect that it seems he used the one to understand the other. A good example of that is his essay "Echoes of the Jazz Age", written in 1931 when he was in his sixth year of work on *Tender is the Night*. In that essay, he gave a number of details to portray the process of inflation and the chaotic situation in which Americans

...were content to discuss each other in the bar...  
Americans were getting soft...By 1927 a widespread  
neurosis began to be evident, faintly signaled...By this  
time contemporaries had begun to disappear into the dark  
maw of violence...One was beaten to death in a speak-  
easy in New- York<sup>23</sup>

Those details, fragments of social history provided later the main material for *Tender is the Night* where Fitzgerald describes his society as it was in his time and foresees the future how it would be. In other words, he lifts "his experience to the society of the dead, and the as yet

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<sup>23</sup> - F. Scott Fitzgerald, « *The Crack up* », ed. Edmund Wilson, New-York: New Direction, 1962, pp. 13-20.

unborn”<sup>24</sup>. Civilizations die because they become old, like organisms, the immediate cause of death does not really matter. Historical time is deeply relative, and the state of a culture depends only on how many years it has existed. Drawing his view from that, Fitzgerald had two familiar types of historical time which he applied to his writing. Historical time, first, presents itself as a straight line where events are chained and linked by causality. In this type, the individual responsibility is stressed, choices are consequential, and one’s faith is in one’s own hands. Thus, things in the linear time might happen otherwise. The second type of time is the cycle. This model overlooks both choice and accident. It is like fate, or a literary composition where things that happen had to, and characters have no choice but to accept their fate.

Consequently, when approaching *Tender is the Night*, the reader, like Fitzgerald, is to bear both ideas in mind at once. In the novel, these two views of time are implicit and concurrent. The linear view is limited by chaos, the cyclic by helplessness. Fitzgerald assigns his leading characters Dick and Nicole these two perspectives. The difference that separates the couple lies in their ideas of time. For Dick time expresses his fate, the fate for which he stands and against which he can do nothing. For Nicole time is just a marker of events; it lacks psychological relativity. It is as a physical reality as the wrinkles it will cause: “For [Dick] time stood still and then every few years accelerated in a rush...but for Nicole the years slipped away by clock and calendar and birthday”(228). On the contrary, Dick’s idealistic impulsiveness drives him to escape time, so he turns to Rosemary who represents youth, charm and with whom he aspires to a romantic relationship to recover his lost innocence, i.e., his past. Yet, that relation conflicts with the striking pressures of the time by which Nicole lives. Rosemary told him once “I must go, youngster” (198) and “you are the youngest person in the world”(213). Romantic as he is, time for him takes on even a romantic sense: “He stayed...in the big room a long time... listening to time” (180). For Dick time has also a subjective and emotional perception. Time also spreads through space where Dick can move as he wants: “Dick travelled intellectually and emotionally at such rate of speed that the

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<sup>24</sup> -Philip, Rahv, “*Writing the Cult of Experience in American Writing*», In *Image and Idea*, New-York: New Directions, 1949, p. 21.

vibrations jarred him” (305). That recalls what in Tennessee Williams’s “*The Glass Menagerie*”, Tom says: “Time is the longest distance between two places” (Scene 7).<sup>25</sup>

For Oswald Spengler, historical time is deeply relative as civilizations depend only on how long they have been in existence and once old, they simply die whatever the reason.<sup>26</sup>Spengler’s influence on Fitzgerald’s reflections about time affected his writings. In *Tender is the Night*, he portrays the failure of Dick Diver more as that of the dying ‘culture’ than the death of a Western ‘civilization’ which will collapse someday. Like Dick’s memories and the values he inherited from his father-symbolizing the ancestors’ culture - which seem to become antedated, his fate, “intricate destiny” (6) also may seem like the last survivor of a defeated line, of a sclerotic culture. “From his father Dick had learned the conscious good manners of the young Southerner coming North after the Civil War” (204). It is as if Dick existed beyond his actual time. He says that it was his world which blew itself up in the War.

When sitting in a Paris restaurant with Rosemary and Nicole, Dick notices a group of “Gold-Star mothers” across the room. In them he “perceived all the maturity of an older America.” (188). Certainly, this maturity of the ‘old’ America is set against the immaturity of the new America represented by Rosemary Hoyt, “Miss Television,” as well as “the vicious sentimentality” (152) of her cultural contribution. Dick describes the party as representing no particular social class, but it was more of a unit “...yet the party gave the impression of a unit, held more closely together”(188). Looking at them again, Dick

Momentarily, he set again on his father’s knee, riding with Mosby while the old loyalties and devotions fought on around him. Almost with an effort he turned back to his two women at the table and faced the whole new world in which he believed. (188).

This passage exemplifies Fitzgerald’s shifts of time and illustrates his cyclic view of time. The old cultural order of moral values, which Dick inherited from his ancestors, has been a cause lost as Mosby’s sacrificed in the war; it has become just incredible and delusive. It is only when Dick ends his poetic trance and re-enters the flow of linear time that he comes back to a historical reality in which he is caught. Mosby’s Raiders are not his real world because

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<sup>25</sup>- Williams, Tennessee, *TennesseeWilliamsPlays: 1937-1955*, Eds.MellGussow and Kenneth Holdich,Library of America, New York, 2000.

<sup>26</sup>- Erik Heller, “Oswald Spengler” in *Disinherited Mind*, New York: Meridian, 1959,pp. 193-196.

InSpenglerian terms, a ‘culture’ reaches its destiny in ‘civilization’ the same way senility follows youth, and theWest already reached this state of civilization.

they are not the historical reality so much as Paris is. That is one aspect of how Dick felt about the old order and the new one.

The effect of Fitzgerald's perception of time is also felt in *Tender is the Night* in the places where the writer explicitly evokes historical images like the General Grant, The Somme battlefield, or the decadence of the Parisian world-city. There is also an implicit reference to aspects that seem inevitable, causeless, and beyond individual choice. In Book III of the novel, Chapter I-which describes the visit of Rosemary Hoyt, Abe North and Dick Diver to The Somme battlefield- opens in a "dingy sky was Beaumont-Hamlet ... tragic hill of Thiepval" (135). In historical terms, Fitzgerald is not merely making analogies between past types and contemporary characters, but he is also shedding light on the forms and "psychological insights of history."<sup>27</sup> If the novel explicitly foreshadows the decline of Western Civilization, it underlies the idea that decline is more a place to begin, a mood of the modern man "There are lots of people dead since and we'll all be dead soon," said Dick (135) and adds:

See that little stream- we could walk to it in two minutes.  
It took the British a month to walk to it- a whole empire  
walking very slowly dying in front and pushing behind ...  
leaving the dead like a million bloody rugs. No European  
will ever do that again in this generation. (136)

Thus, according to his historical view, the past cannot be repeated because civilization has simply grown old and died. The new generation is not one capable of the same deeds "That's different. The western-front business couldn't be done again"(136). That is how Fitzgerald perceives the decline of the West. Thus, the decline of Dick Diver is paralleled to the decline of the West (as Spengler envisioned it).

A cyclic view of time is also what can be found in *Tender is the Night*. As an example, Fitzgerald implied that by accepting his wife's fortune, Dick submitted to the forces of unscrupulous capitalism as represented by the Warrens -Nicole and her sister Baby Warren. Dick repeats in the Jazz Age a career similar to that of Ulysses Grant in the Gilded Age. In fact, we can argue that Fitzgerald is setting a context in which Dick Diver's deterioration and decline can be historically universalized. Yet, the particular content and reasons of that decline originated within himself. We see Dick trapped by necessity, caught in the coils of an

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<sup>27</sup>- Robert Sklar, *F.Scott Fitzgerald : The Last Tycoon*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1967, p.225.

inevitable circle: “We’re beginning to turn in a circle” (227) and “In the same circle. Round, round and round. On this scale, there are series of strains”. (230) Far from historical bounds, it is Fitzgerald’s artistic task to balance necessity and freedom, or free choice. The perverted individual can only be accepted by a hopelessly perverted age. He who sees perversion as lamentable and immoral cannot be accepted in modern times where “spiritual bankruptcy” – so close to what Fitzgerald later called “emotional bankruptcy”- is dominant, “... With Spengler ... spiritual bankruptcy itself is our history, our Absolute, our guiding principle.”<sup>28</sup>

It is worth noting that chapter I of Book II is called “Causalities” and was part of Book I before Fitzgerald revised the novel and changed it afterwards. By doing so, he emphasized the relationship between the war and the ensuing events, in particular to clarify the scattered references to Dick as a kind of war “casualty”: “non-combatant’s shell-shock, service-connected disability.” (228) Fitzgerald seems to assert that Dick’s decline is a casualty of WWI which is the key historical event overshadowing the novel. In fact, we witness Dick’s decline in the chapters that follow. And Nicole objects at one point that “so many smart men go to pieces nowadays”, and Dick answers: “And when haven’t they? Smart men play close to the line because they have to -some of them can’t stand it, so they quit.” (187). Dick’s monologue is repeatedly interrupted by Abe North. “General Grant invented this kind of battle at Petersburg in sixty - five.” (136). Here, it is worth mentioning that in considering the American Civil War and the tremendous increase of barbarism it had produced, Fitzgerald relates it to the World War also. So, the linking together of the fates of Dick Diver and General Grant stems from Fitzgerald’s projection of the devastating effects of war, any war, on the individual and particularly the 1920’s individual. Grant can be widely considered as a historical analogue for Dick with whom his story opens and closes. General Grant is the inventor and organizer of battles; likewise, Dick is the organizer of magical parties: “He had the power of arousing a fascinating and uncritical love” ... “he won everyone quickly with an exquisite consideration and a politeness ... that it could be examined only its effect.” (97) His parties are compared to Grant’s achievements “He sometimes looked back with awe at the carnivals of affection he had given, as a general might gaze upon a massacre he had ordered to satisfy an impersonal blood lust.” (97) The significance of this cyclical time that repeats itself is even more intensified if we know that Abe North had been called Abe Grant in earlier drafts of the novel, if we see Abe as a fatal precursor of Dick in drink and decay. With this

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<sup>28</sup>-op.cit.

implicit reference to Grant and mass butchery, Fitzgerald is making a parallel with the war's 'bloody lust' whose effect on the individual are like Dick's parties; they move so fast and intuitively that only their effect can be examined and remembered.

Fitzgerald was so preoccupied by his time that he made Dick confused by his circumstances, and when he went to bury his father, he reflected about the emptiness of his time, deciding that he would not go back there as he no longer had ties "in a country that is no longer here and not yet there." He then evokes the "clump of trunks" linking his present to the past and necessarily to the unknown future: "...even though there's time; the past, the continent, is behind; the future is the glowing mouth ... the dim, too confusedly the present." (259) Fitzgerald structures his time following his cyclic patterns by making sometimes abrupt shifts or by alluding to the significance to link past, present, and future time "The drink made past happy things contemporary with the present, as if they were still going on, contemporary even with the future, as if they were to happen again" (191). The same preoccupation is shared by Ngugi who broke with linear time repeatedly in *Petals of Blood* by using multiple narrative voices and flashbacks. Likewise, Fitzgerald makes use of flashbacks profusely to let the reader learn about past happenings in the character's life before bringing him back to the present so that past, present and future seem to belong to the same knot of time. Here again, as a modernist writer, Fitzgerald shares the notion of time with his contemporary playwright Tennessee Williams who made his character Amanda tell her son Tom in "*The Glass Menagerie*": "...the future becomes the present, the present becomes the past, and the past turns into everlasting regret if you don't plan for it." (scene 5). One of Ngugi's main concerns in his novel is a pressing return to the traditional African culture in order to re-read the past and learn from history. On this issue he says: "The present is heavy with the past and also pregnant with the future; that is the notion I was trying to capture in *A Grain of Wheat* and *Petals of Blood*." <sup>29</sup>

In fact, a great deal of *Tender is the Night* is devoted to the nature of the post-war world. The book is giving this new state of civilization a rather shadowy character. The abounding sexual abnormalities, the unscrupulous incest itself, the repeated contrasts of outer beauty with inner corruption, the blurred purposes, and "confusion of all values" are images which

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<sup>29</sup> - Reinhard W. Sander and Bernth Lindfors, Eds, *Ngugi Wa Thiong'o Speaks*, James Currey Ltd, Britain, 2006, p.268.

help create a sense of that “World’s Fair” that was once meant to be the title of the novel, as an inspiration from “Thackeray’s *Vanity Fair*”. The new cardinal force is “That abstract which represents the power of Civilization-money”<sup>30</sup>. Evidently, Fitzgerald had already written of a diamond as big as the Ritz and Gatsby says in his famous remark that Daisy’s voice sounds like money. For Fitzgerald, too much money in America is always supposed to be a sign of vulgarity, corruption and wickedness. The displacement of the older cultural values by the money values of civilization is one of the narrative’s implicit assumptions. The novel is rich with imagery of financial power and of the corruption which signifies not so much the money as the power it represents. For instance, when Mrs. Speers tells her daughter that “Whatever happens it can’t spoil you, because economically you’re a boy, not a girl” (112), she assumes that money would protect and secure her as much as a man would. When Dick realized that he was cracking up, he had a sudden view of himself as “swallowed up like a gigolo” (254), or when he met Nicole’s sister Baby Warren, she worried about Nicole’s state and suggested that “she could be better in love with some good doctor”. Dick thought “The Warrens were going to buy Nicole a doctor” (49). I can associate these images to what may be the most grotesque demonstration of the power of money in the new civilized world. In a number of ways Dick’s progressive “lesions of vitality” and Nicole’s strengthening, her growing hardness, are made to correlate with the piling up of money. Baby Warren said: “We own you, and you’ll admit it sooner or later. It is absurd to keep up the pretence of independence.”(224). Dick tried to absorb the insult, “resenting her cold rich insolence”(224).

When Fitzgerald wrote about his age, the Jazz Age, he had already denounced the corrupting influence of wealth which dazzles and destroys. It was a time characterized by unlimited pleasure, and one of *Tender is the Night*’s concerns is people whose life was empty and whose only ambition was to find ways of having fun “A nation that for a decade had wanted only to be entertained”(268). Indeed, it was a time dominated by the futilities of life as Mary told Dick at the close of the novel, “All people want is to have a good time and if you make them unhappy, you cut yourself off from nourishment”(389). Samples of these people are the Diver’s friends like TommyBarban, a cynical realist and aman of action, a paid warrior. He expresses bluntly the arrogance of the self-sufficient and self-made aristocrat in the new era. He is contrasted to Dick, the gentleman-hero of tradition- and says with repelling words: “What war. Any war suppose there is a war-there always is”; “Don’t you care

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<sup>30</sup> - Erik, Heller, “Oswald Spengler” in *Disinherited*, Vol1, New York: Meridian p.34.

what you fight for?”, “Not at all”. Also the McKisco whose vulgarity is stunning, or those who simply turn to vicarious pleasures like Mary North’s lesbian adventure with Lady Caroline while the Divers enjoy their time more tastefully. Like Mary told him, the moment Dick stopped making people happy, he has cut himself off from society.

Fitzgerald’s description is impressionistic. From brief sketches, he makes startlingly evocative images. For instance, Dick’s disillusionment in Rome: “They inspected the tart at the bar...bitter servility peculiar to night servants” (231) shows his observance of details in a negative way, which marks his self-destructive mood hinting at his subsequent decline. As in his previous novels, *The Great Gatsby* and *This Side of Paradise*, Fitzgerald’s protagonists’ identity and destiny are determined by actions and aspirations remote in the history of one’s forefathers. Their present life is a product that springs out of the necessity imposed by their received culture. How could Dick then have a different identity or destiny from the one produced by his ancestors’ culture in which he strongly believed? Dick Diver is like Anthony Patch, the protagonist of *The Beautiful and Damned*, who begins his life with the belief that he will “accomplish some quiet subtle thing “but such youthful aspiration is short-lived and Anthony comes to acknowledge his misgiving. He explains, “One minute it’s my world, and the next I’m the world’s fool”(34). Dick and Anthony, in the absence of true, lasting happiness seek solace in shallow pleasure. Dick reaches finally a degree of self-knowledge which leads to something positive or negative, depending on where one stands. Indeed, Fitzgerald seems to imply that Dick Diver became aware that the myth of the self-made man was the greatest of American illusions; however, this awareness does not make of him a better individual, nor does it prevent his disintegration and decay.

After the symbolic death of Dick’s father, “his moral guide”, who might symbolize the old civilization and culture, the ‘bad’ instincts surface in Rome in the forms of adultery, drunkenness, brawling and the implied admission that he had raped a five-year old girl. It is also in Rome that he stumbles on Rosemary who informs him of the new movie they are making: “The ruined forum of an undetermined period of the decadence” 269). There, Dick feels the hopelessness, again, of trying to teach “The ABC’s of human decency”(254) to the rich or the openly corrupt and asocial symbolized by the corrupt homosexual patient Francisco to whom Dick was advising to begin anew, decent social life. Fitzgerald was certainly aware that good narratives are not made only of climaxes and crises. However, his consciousness of the need to reflect illusions in fiction often has priority over the events of the

narrative. That is why evident concerns and themes such as ‘time’, ‘dream’ and ‘illusion’ in *Tender is the Night*, are relevant not only to Dick’s dream of success, but also to Fitzgerald’s own procedure of making fiction in which he builds up his character only to prepare for his downfall.

Indeed, Dick like Fitzgerald seems pervaded by a tension between his desire to project an effective illusion and the wish to call attention not only to that illusion as such, but also to the illusion-making process itself. The writer is pointing to the illusionary effect of a dream and the ineffectiveness of the process that is no more working in so wounded a society. Consequently, Fitzgerald presented a multi-plotted or a de-plotted narrative where many stories interweave to fuse in a well-knit fiction. If *Tender is the Night* appears as a complex and fragmented piece of work, it also reflects the ultimate mystery of the individual as well as of life. It also manages to reveal a great deal about

The rich, who might once have been the creators of civilization, have degenerated into ruthless exploiters, middle-class professionals. Life, once a creative moral force, is now venal and self-seeking, above all the War has destroyed order and sanity, bringing a chaos of violence, madness and vulgarity to take their place.<sup>31</sup>

The use of the flashback technique successfully serves the purpose. Fitzgerald moves from one part of the narrative to a new chapter without mentioning facts that would have occurred in the interim. This technique induces the reader to free his imagination. He is made almost a participant in the creation of the novel and the characters. As in a drama, Fitzgerald successfully follows a non-linear structure with flashbacks and flash forwards while he tells two stories or more at once- a split-stage. In fact this technique of split-stage reflects the state of fragmentation of the protagonist. Dick Diver is viewed as an actor performing his role on his own stage, “his world” of excitement. Indeed, he is explicitly compared to an actor in the narrative, and Rosemary Hoyt, his admirer, is a movie actress; she remarked: “Oh, we are such actors you and I”(194). All Dick’s parties take place in the night an important prop in Dick’s world. Indeed, night contributes to create that ecstatic and ephemeral atmosphere that cannot be created during daylight. As in Tennessee William’s “*The Night of the Iguana*”

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<sup>31</sup> - Brian Way, *F.S. Fitzgerald and the Art of Social Fiction*, St. Martin’s Press, New-York, 1980, pxi.

where “Morning can always be counted on to bring us back to a more realistic level”, he succeeds in hiding his scattered self and only shows to others his most charming side.

Symbolically, the title *Tender is the Night*, is suggestive. Taken from John Keats’s “*Ode to a Nightingale*”, it foreshadows the significance of ‘night’ as ‘darkness’ in the narrative contrasted with ‘day’ and ‘light’. In the poem, the narrator dreams of escaping from the real world filled with agonies and preferring the nightingale’s company in the dark shade of trees at night:

...and leave the world unseen  
And with thee fade away into the forest dim  
Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget  
What thou among the leaves hast never known<sup>32</sup>

Fitzgerald also uses the symmetry to underline oppositions and stresses the reversal of situations. Dick, once a protector and guide, becomes guided and needs protection. He becomes an infant who cannot control his actions; the once prestigious man becomes a clown, “a stuffed figure” (131). The characters’ roles are reversed. Nicole was a burden for Dick and Dick becomes a burden for Nicole. Rosemary was a child for Dick and Dick behaves like a child with Rosemary. Dick has married Nicole out of a desire for order; Nicole leaves him for Tommy, the god of disorder and destruction: “My business is to kill people”(106). This reversal of roles foreshadows Dick’s “dying fall”.

We also find some narratives within the narrative used to slow down the story’s rhythm and reduce its dramatic effect. Yet, they contribute in giving the narrative a harmonious composition. Those narratives, that Fitzgerald called ‘side-shows’ serve also to give the story a symbolic and thematic function as they place the story in a social and historical perspective. The thematic function imposes on Fitzgerald the use of some techniques which he borrowed either from Hemingway (emotional pitch) or Conrad (dying fall). The emotional pitch constitutes an emotional state lived by Dick and the other protagonists and transmitted to the reader through different procedures like a mysterious atmosphere. After reaching a certain paroxysm, Dick’s emotion releases as his action loosens, untangles and fades away, thus constituting the dying fall. Such development of the narrative does not need a strict chronology; it rather integrates confusion as reflection of Dick’s confused mind, hence

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<sup>32</sup> - John, Keats, « *Ode to a Nightingale in Keats: The Complete Poems*”, MilliamAllot, Longman Group Ltd, London, 1970, 11 pp. 19-22.

the “chronological muddlement” also used by Conrad. Thus, after creating an intense atmosphere, the narrative moves through leaps forwards and backwards where the past evolves in front of our eyes as a present time either through retrospectives or the characters’ memories, which recalls Ngugi’s style in *Petals of Blood*.

Another Fitzgerald’s strength is his handling of language. It is a mixture of purified vernacular with American classics. He purified the style so that it sounds the way his people talked at that time. Yet, it is sprinkled with poetic imagery. Kenneth Millar comments on this: “He was my master. He writes what appears to be a vernacular style, and influenced by poetry.”<sup>33</sup> His description of characters and location, through its symbolism and lyrical quality, successfully deploys his narrative of America’s new age. Like the plot and structure, Fitzgerald’s language is also a vehicle of meaning. His dynamic way of handling language creates sentences which are ornamental, in imagery and ideas describing even the subconscious thoughts of his characters. Thus, we come to know about what goes on in their minds like when Rosemary is described in the company of some friends and Dick “intermittently she caught the gist of his sentences and supplied the rest from her subconscious, as one picks up the striking of a clock in the middle with only the rhythm of the first uncounted strokes lingering in the mind” (101) which shows her state of mind when talking to Dick whom she venerates. In fact, he draws the reader’s attention to his characters’ actions and reactions which are never paused or just contemplated, but instead strung together like the complexity of the sentence.

As Fitzgerald’s study of the human condition becomes more invested in the mind, much like Dick Diver’s efforts to become a renowned psychologist, so do the sentences become more intricate. In this way, Fitzgerald manipulates sentence structure to imitate the process of emotional-thought because Fitzgerald’s technique focuses on the progressions of thought in a Conradian way. When his colleague and friend Franz wants to break their partnership after he is convinced by his wife’s idea that “Dick was not a serious person,” he does not know how to announce this to Dick. So “Franz let himself believe with ever increasing conviction that Dick travelled intellectually and emotionally at such rate of speed that the vibrations jarred him, this was a contrast that had previously been considered a virtue”(305). Both the thoughts and

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<sup>33</sup> Jerry, Tutunjian, “A Conversation with Ross Macdonald”, *Tamarak Review*, 62, 1974, pp. 81-82.

feelings of the character are being described. With his skill of manipulating words, Fitzgerald makes Dick 'travel' intellectually and emotionally, which is hardly imaginable.

When Fitzgerald tells us about the magic and "excitement and a chance of breath of fresh air" (161) in the Diver's parties, he makes the reader partake in the magic: "The table seemed to have risen a little toward the sky like a mechanical dancing platform, giving the people around it a sense of being alone with each other in the dark universe"(104). In the novel, Fitzgerald examines not only the complex emotional issues of fragile or shady personalities, but also how difficult those emotions are to relate, specifically love. After Rosemary and Dick have had a conversation about their love relationship with Dick refusing to carry further their relationship as he just found it an impossible one, Fitzgerald writes: "She looked up at him as he took a step toward the door, she looked at him without the slightest idea as to what was in his head ... Then she gave up and sank back on the bed." (148). We can see Fitzgerald enacting the blooming desire of Rosemary's young love clinging obstinately to Dick. The sentence begins with a complete thought and ends with a complete thought, but in the middle, as Rosemary's desire for Dick escalates, the pause marks the moment of expectation, and the idea becomes abrupt leaving us rhythmically ready to reach a climax; however, by ending with Dick's hand on the doorknob before leaving, our expectations are completely dissolved. We are surprised by the simplicity of the following sentences and Rosemary's quick resolution to give up.

Consistent with his sophisticated characterization, Fitzgerald's skill in manipulating language is undeniable. Edmund Wilson writes about his style, "every word, every cadence, every detail performs a definite function."<sup>34</sup> That definite function is Fitzgerald's artistic way to reflect the duality inherent in the American character that is pulled by luring for idealism with its enticing yet elusive promise. "One writes of scars healed, a loose parallel to the pathology of the skin, but there is no such thing in the life of an individual. There are open wounds, shrunk ... to the size of a pin-pick, the marks of suffering are comparable to the loss of a finger ... there is nothing to be done about it."(210). What Dick expresses in these words is, in fact, what Fitzgerald thinks of his art, his career, and the age in which he lives. They both know the wounds left by past scars to a whole generation and against which they can do nothing but accept it like an incurable pathology.

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<sup>34</sup>- Pendleton Thomas, *I'm Sorry About the Clock: Chronology, Composition, and Narrative Technique in The Great Gatsby*. New Jersey: Associated University Press, 1993.

Dick Diver represents the individual endowed with a capacity to understand human behavior. Being a psychiatrist, he is supposed to comprehend and explain human motivations better than the layman. Nevertheless, ever since Nicole's case "drifted in his hands" he has been at the mercy of fate that rode him towards his fall. Dick is the type of tragic hero that the America of the 1920's would conceive, and that is precisely this aspect of the character that Fitzgerald knew how to explore to ponder the dislocation of the American individual in the post world war era. Dick's character might be individualized to represent what an American cherishing success could become in certain circumstances, especially in the 1920's. Dick Diver, like many Americans-including Fitzgerald and his generation- has a tendency to perceive the American dream as a promise of freedom, not only from unjust hostility but also the freedom to advance and achieve success. The spirit nourishing that dream is that all Americans, not just the privileged few, share in the promise of equality, fairness, unity and - ultimately- financial and material success. However, for Dick and his friends, the dream is as beautiful as distorted. Like Fitzgerald, they recognize that America has a great potential and displays promises, but with no guarantee of success. Although it is the land founded upon the pursuit of liberty and happiness, the means for the embodiment of that happiness are mostly corrupt and flawed. Because Dick places all his hope for completion in Nicole-representing wealth- he is ruined partly by his romantic idealism. Dick and his friends hide from the realities of another world that is thrown into a war that causes much human sufferings. Yet, it seems that their fantastic world which they filled with their frenetic rites surrounded them with a confusion that grew larger than Dick Diver or his compatriots could comprehend.

Dick's parties constitute a miniature world of the American expatriates in Europe. They are described as senseless, purposeless, made up of people leading chaotic lives and living a daily carnival -an image of human decadence, of life that is unplanned, void and loose "they were risen to a position of prominence in a nation that for a decade had wanted only to be entertained"(268). However, Fitzgerald indicates, through the narrator's language that this ideology is ruined to the point that even if people are united, they are quite separate and emotionally disconnected from each other -sometimes from their own selves. Though Americans hold unity in the highest esteem, they are divided by their ambitions and sometimes prepared to oppress others to achieve their individual goals: "I don't like Americans. They are selfish, *selfish!*" (302) Kaethe tells her husband Franz. Thus, the American individual is presented as a limited, self-centered and possessive one. The narrative

suggests that Dick Diver's intellectual and emotional power are insufficient to complete him and his wholeness is unreachd; he ends up as fragmented as his life, socially and professionally.

What Dick reaps at the close is not a tragic end but a fragmented self emptied from its original hopes and eagerness to be filled with ironic laughter and feelings towards the absurdity of the promise and triviality of life sustained by illusions. That was "the price of his inactness ... incompleteness"(5). Before leaving the fantastic world of the expatriates and returning to America, he realizes the grotesque of the situation and interiorly laughs at it. When Mary tries to console him, Dick was despondent and so downhearted that "the old interior laughter had begun inside him and knew he couldn't keep it much longer" (390); a laughter mingled with "an expression of torment and despair." (374) Dick felt so disenchantd by the frivolous modern world that he only could laugh penitently at its stupidity.

# **CONCLUSION**

It seems that the function of the early twentieth major concerns -here represented in Ngugi's *Petals of Blood* and S. Fitzgerald *Tender is the Night* -rest highly on the individual's potential in holding the center of a society in continual quest of its equilibrium. In both novels, the protagonists, each in his own way, are men concerned with setting a code of conduct which tends to loosen the restraints of a social and cultural heritage, be it traditional for Munira or Puritan for Dick Diver.

In fact, in Fitzgerald as in Ngugi, we cannot dissociate between the artist and the writer as he attempts to express a positive feeling even in the most chaotic of the situations. Both writers present their characters as social beings whose situation is universalized. These characters strive to transcend their dreadful conditions and try to rise even when they fall: "For me it is more human to refuse to be downtrodden, to rise even when you rare down,"<sup>1</sup> says Ngugi. In other words, what matters to Ngugi and Fitzgerald is not only to reflect the weaknesses of their societies, but more importantly to stress the strongest aspect of an individual's personality. Their purpose is to highlight the human factor, those who may go down because of their society's coercive forces. Yet, they never accept to be defeated; on the contrary, they refuse and aspire to change a subversive order imposed on them.

As seen, *Petals of Blood* portrays a community struggling against a hostile political set up and unethical values in new Kenya. Different factors contributed in rendering it harsh and sterile by preventing the country and its culture from an organic development. Added to those factors that can be natural like drought and desertification, others are linked to humans as colonial exploitation and post-colonial mismanagement. Ngugi sees that his people's problems stem from a betrayal at two levels. Firstly, the betrayal at a personal level that concerns the protagonists who become victims of an exile within their own society. On another level, there is a political betrayal of the parasitical national leaders. Through their exploitative and abusive governance, they have betrayed the very ones whom they were supposed to assist. However, the message which Ngugi is sending throughout the novel is the possibility to change the existing conditions through popular agency. Indeed, Ngugi focuses upon a meaningful social change that will certainly come as long as the downtrodden class of society is conscious of its power and confident in its hopes: "The peasants, aided by the workers, small landowners...have mapped out the path" ( 344) for themselves to follow. Throughout the novel, Ngugi's voice calls for a class struggle between an indigenous

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<sup>1</sup>- Reinhard W. Sander and Bernth Lindfors, Eds, *Ngugi wa Thiong'o Speaks*, James Currey Ltd, Britain, 2006,p254.

bourgeoisie (national bourgeoisie as called by Ngugi) sustained by and representing foreign capitalism on the one hand, and the peasants and workers on the other. By foregrounding that class struggle, Ngugi is only addressing the failures of postcolonial governance in Kenya. That is why people, all people, workers, peasants and even intellectuals should unite and ally against their common enemy, imperialism.

The idea of redemption has already been used in Ngugi's novels. Several of his characters use messianic narratives to claim a social role for themselves, like Mumbi or Mugo in *A Grain of Wheat*. They consider themselves redeemers and saviors of their society. Likewise, Munira turns to Christianity whereby he thinks he has a religious and social duty, to save Karega -and through him the rest of the village-from the evils, personified in Wanja. Though the prophetic discourse is not explicitly used in the novel, it is largely drawn from a religious canvas. Apparently, the decayed chaotic situation in society calls for a savior whose main concern is to put an end to the prevailing rottenness that becomes more and more discernible in all the aspects of people's life, socially, economically, and culturally. If Jung stated that the individual's self needs that "third thing" which is the beginning of the new way, then that third thing may be religion. The individual's discord lies in the duality of person and condition where there is "a disposition to the divine carried by humans within them."<sup>2</sup>For psychoanalysts, God is identified with the ego. That is, for some individuals, the highest value is the abstraction and conservation of the ego. The way to this divinity lies through the senses. Thus, the task of mankind is that one should externalize all that is within and give form to all that is outside. Jung even makes the objection that "somewhere or other the human individual must be related, must be *subject* to something, otherwise he or she would be really god-like"<sup>3</sup>. Indeed, this feeling of non-belonging leads Munira and Dick Diver to cut all links with their families and their societies whom they reject and to which they do not feel they belong anymore. Hence, they place themselves above all those *objects*, becoming more god-like *subjects*; Munira in fact thinks of himself as "A man of God"(44). However, their unfulfilled externalization of what is within themselves, or their lack of self-expression give rise to an act of violence to Munira and self-effacement to Dick.

*Petals of Blood* is also one of Ngugi's consistent understatements on life where religion is placed in the historical, political and sociological context. He knows that religion can be

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<sup>2</sup>- Gerhard Adler, Michael Fordham, *The Collected Works of C. G Jung*, Routledge, London, 1973, p 137.

<sup>3</sup>-Ibid, p149.

meaningful to people only if it enriches their daily life, but it can be so only if it grows out of their own deep concern, and not imposed upon them from above. In his *The River Between*, Ngugi stresses the idea that “Salvation shall come from the hills. A son shall rise. And his duty shall be to lead and save his people”<sup>4</sup>. More implicitly expressed in *Petals of Blood*, Munira’s self-proclaimed mission is felt at the same time as a fantasy of empty delusion of an alienated and spurned individual and as a fulfillment of his role as a redeemer, a prophet of modern times, “Munira was right. This system needed moral purity if it was going to survive”(334). At the close of his investigation, Inspector Godfrey acknowledges that “he had never before come across a Munira who was prepared to murder in the name of moral purity” (334). The means he used is ‘fire’, a symbol of destruction as it burns everything, but also of regeneration since the ashes it leaves give birth to a new kind of life. The inspector, another educated person, wandered: “What else could a man want? ... It was religious fanaticism!”(334). In a way the inspector could even understand Munira’s motif for his deed; he thought: “...Munira was right. This system of capitalism and capitalistic democracy needed moral purity if it was going to survive.”(334). Thus, in this context, even a violent act of murder is seen as a moral act. Once more, Ngugi’s use of the duality of images is made effective. Murder and moral become inseparable parts of the same coin.

The character of Munira is so endowed with a redeeming sensibility that when he confronts his family and Rev. Jerrod Brown, he partly reveals his motivation for starting the fire at Wanja’s brothel. Munira overtly condemns their hypocritical, self-serving and institutionalized Christianity. Knowing the influence of the Christian education Ngugi had and also of Marxism on his thinking and writing, we can see that Ngugi has entrusted Munira with a redeeming and a cleansing mission. Like Jesus Christ who was raised in a poor family, and who led a mass movement of poor people against Roman imperialism, Munira came to the village to redeem society of its spoiled soul. By setting fire on Wanja’s house, he purifies Wanja -the symbol of mother earth or Kenya-from the rottenness it was victim of and liberates his soul and his society from its paralyzing forces. Munira is convinced that out of a religious duty, he had to purify the place from Wanja who was “making them deviate from the path” (42). When fire consumes the house and the flames form petals of blood, Munira is one with God because he simply has obeyed the higher Law, “the law of God”(45) through breaking men’s law: “ There was a time I used to think that I was saving [Karega], might have saved [Wanja] and Abdulla too.”(45). He reaches his complete and stable self which makes

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<sup>4</sup>-Ngugi, Wa Thiong’o, *The River Between*, London, Heinemann, 1965, p20.

him relieved. From this perspective, Munira turns from a guilty to an innocent social victim, a savior of society. Emerging in the flames, Wanja is saved. The emotive power of the symbol of fire is transferred to the image of the baby that she bears. She survives the ordeal which shows the regenerative potential of the African land whereas her baby is a symbol of freedom regained and of a better future.

A close reading of Ngugi's novel reveals that Munira is a victim of the education he has received and also of the feeling of his restrained potentials. He is one of the many disillusioned people in post-independence Kenya who lost faith in the promises of the new leaders who turned corrupt exploiters and false nationalists. However, settling in Ilmorog, the far off and isolated village, is for Munira a refuge but also part of his duty. He enters a twilight state, avoids all political engagement, preferring to take refuge in a religious reverie to find peace and security. Munira preferred to shelter himself in silence that guarantees security. Because he was unable to adapt to that situation, nor to change it, Munira can no longer wear a mask to keep up his social role. Consequently, he loses his personality and principles, a fact which renders his soul fragile and frail. Then, his fractured soul needs that "third thing", the new way for him. Completely fragmented, he reaches a religious fantasy leading him to set fire in the brothel where the three directors of the brewery are meeting. In that way Ngugi symbolizes what Frantz Fanon called the nationalist bourgeoisie, self-serving or "new drinkers of honey from human skull"<sup>5</sup>-were meeting. Though Munira is sanctioned for his violent action by going to jail, he has, in fact, paid long before his society by losing his primal beliefs and depth of spirit. To quote Fitzgerald, using Dick Diver mouthpiece, "when people are taken out of their depths, they lose their heads, no matter how charming a bluff they put up" (*Tender is the Night*) (388).

Likewise, in Fitzgerald's novels, there is always some skeptical and ironic view mingled with seriousness. In fact, it is one of the characteristics of the Lost Generation of which he could be considered one of its representative figures. In *Tender is the Night*, Dick Diver is being swallowed up by his own spirit of irony. His romantic feeling, symbolized by the title, is totally lost as the enthusiasm that was nourishing it fades away. When the enthusiasm grows out of a dream, it only lasts the time of that dream. The old American dream is one linked to a romantic feeling. It was cultivated as a paramount value in the heart of America. However, to the generation of the jazz age, with a wider perspective on the world that

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<sup>5</sup> -Ngugi, Wa Thiong'o and Micère, Githae Mugo, *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*, London, Heinemann, 1977, p.47.

surrounds them, it proved to be a mere show, as ephemeral as the rapture it creates. Fitzgerald tends to treat it lightly as an old fashioned idea. In modern times, he seems to suggest, there should be no place for that dream because the harsh reality leaves no place for it. In such an era, the hero of modern times, Dick Diver, tries to embody the belief in the dream and sustain it; however, the illusions are bigger than what he can endure. That is why it is safer for the individual to fence his space from the turbulent outside and live in an excellent fantasy. In his secure fantastic world, Dick and his guests become oblivious of what is real and unreal. They seek ecstatic excitement and pretend to cut all links with the outer world.

Even when he gave a cosmopolitan sense to his narrative, Fitzgerald was deeply American and as such, he wrote about the malaises of the lost generation. Just as Nick Carraway in *The Great Gatsby* had discovered at the end of his moral adventure that it had been “a story of the West, after all”, so *Tender is the Night* seems finally a story about America. Fitzgerald felt that America’s history, unlike any other nation’s, was “the history of an idea” rather than of the people<sup>6</sup>. An idea can take place both in and out of time; an idea can endure a man’s fate and delusory ideal. *Tender is the Night* encompasses both these universal movements, a decadence of the soul and a decay of the nation, the exaltation of a fairy moment and the desperate disillusionment that follows it.

One important issue raised in *Petals of Blood* and, which is also treated in *Matigari*, is the liberation of the individual from all kinds of repressive forces. For Ngugi, independence would not take its full meaning without true liberation of people in Africa and particularly in Kenya. And people cannot possibly feel free if neo-colonialism continues to control their lives. So, the liberation of the individual is not only political, economic and cultural, but also psychological. Because when the individual is victim of repression, unable to express himself, to control what he produces, he will simply be alienated from his society which he sees as stifling and repressive. Ngugi often repeated that, “If there is any one theme in my works it is one of the liberation of the collective human spirit”<sup>7</sup>. Furthermore, Ngugi’s works seek to draw attention to what he considers the most dangerous threat to man nowadays, that is the colonization of the mind.

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<sup>6</sup>- « France was a land, England was a people, but America having about it still that quality of the idea, was harder to utter... » (« Notebooks », *The Crack Up*, p. 197)

<sup>7</sup>- Reinhard W. Sander and Bernth Lindfors Eds, *Ngugi Wa Thiong’o Speaks*, James Currey Ltd, Britain, 2006, p.266.

Through the story of Dick Diver, Fitzgerald meant to convey a very complex set of themes with universal implications. He attempted to diagnose not only the underlying tensions, the individual torments, the interpersonal conflicts of the Divers' love relationship, but also to generalize their private drama into a case history of the twentieth century. Simultaneously, Fitzgerald intimates that nations as well as individuals suffer breakdowns. He has weaved his narrative with a multitude of symbols, a crew of minor characters, the whole spiced with irony and stylistic innovations to confirm his reputation as a master of ever-changing prose. With his structural manipulations and impositions, he complements his themes through building a labyrinth not clearly perceptible but skillfully captivating.

In a way, most of Fitzgerald's protagonists share more or less similar states of mind and beliefs somehow; they convey Fitzgerald's own feelings. Anthony Patch, the protagonist, begins *The Beautiful and Damned* with the belief that he will "accomplish some quiet subtle thing"<sup>8</sup>. Puzzled, Anthony asserts: "One minute it's my world, and the next I'm the world's fool."<sup>9</sup> It is because when individual disillusion runs rampant, draining all hopes for change or the possibility of regeneration, the self is shattered. In the absence of true lasting happiness, Anthony, Gatsby, and Dick seek solace in shallow pleasures. Dick is reduced to a crawling drunkard as he frequents many French restaurants and hotels. For him, very little seems possible, and he believes that even his initial success in work has lost value, thus, leading to a personal disintegration that is indissoluble from the social one which he witnesses.

Fitzgerald is stating an acerbic critique on the modern world which had brought freedom especially in America, the land of opportunity and equality where its people constitute a nation of material promise and social mobility. However, those who won it, who believed in and clung to that dream, became unable to stand its disillusionments. He seems to suggest that the postwar generation was no more guided by virtues and morals but by new consumer habits where the pursuit of happiness is ultimately linked to that of money. In the world Fitzgerald created, people with a "youth culture" have lost all connection with past heritage of morals and old standards. Having cut all links with his ancestors, Dick Diver belongs to a time of uncertainty that characterizes "the Lost Generation". That generation also lost its religiosity, community and social authority. The abrupt change of cultural, social and political context in the first quarter of the twentieth century brought about a change in the new view writers approached their characters. In modern works, the character is also perceived as a social

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<sup>8</sup>- Fitzgerald, F. Scott, *The Beautiful and Damned*, New York, Scribner's, 1922, p 12.

<sup>9</sup>-Ibid, p34.

being, weak, dependent, and in perpetual search of an elusive prosperity. That pursuit, nonetheless, often results in a loss of one's self. The most disastrous after-effects of the war are certainly the scars and the trauma left on the individual's personality when he is disillusioned.

If the individual is a product of his society and his identity the outcome of his environment, then Dick can be considered a victim of the circumstances he went through. He ended up feeling guilty, "As if I were guilty" (357) for the state of 'inactness' he has reached losing himself and letting things go out of his control. Escape, then, became the only alternative left to him; that is why he left for his America, roaming around small villages like an anonymous doctor. Nonetheless, while he lost his self, Dick contributed on a large scale to helping people around him, especially Nicole, in acquiring 'completeness' of the self. Jung wrote of the self in *The Relations Between the Ego and the Unconscious* that "something is strange to us and yet so near, wholly ourselves and yet unknowable, a virtual center of so mysterious a constitution that it can claim anything...kinship with beasts and gods, with crystals and with stars -without moving us to wonder, without even exciting our disapprobation. So, this is the 'god within us' that constitutes the self."<sup>10</sup> For a while, Dick sensed that "something" within him; it is the god within him that came to redeem his society, represented by the wealthy but sick Nicole who "was aware of the sin she committed" (348) by accomplishing a transference "of the most fortuitous kind" to Dick and perverted him.

As if doomed to save his community, Dick came -reminding in a way Jesus- to accomplish his duty towards his community and resumes his refuge "Dick's sanctuary" (374). In the last chapter, before Dick leaves the Riviera, Nicole, starting out on the beach, saw him on the terrace looking towards the people on the beach and "he raised his right hand and with a papal cross he blessed the beach from the high terrace" (390). Here Fitzgerald joins the thinking of the American transcendentalists who portrayed the image of man in Bronson Alcott's sentence "Man is a god in Ruins".

The common denominator of *Petals of Blood* and *Tender is the Night* is the fact that they are post war novels. In that respect, the two novels explore the idea that peace-time does not reflect a complete break with wartime experience. It often is the continuum of war by other means, in other forms. I consider the time in which the novels have been written an illusory

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<sup>10</sup>- Bishop, Paul, *Analytical Psychology and German Classical Aesthetics, Goethe, Schiller and Jung*, Vol.1, *The Development of the Personality*, Routledge, London, 2008. p.98.

peacetime during which war was still inscribed in the institutions, in the social life, in the individual and in the literature. Even when war is an ostensible subject of art, it is present in certain forms of after-effects. Its trauma is neither fully healed nor overcome. On the contrary, it recurs so that the traumatic experience becomes the new self in the consciousness as fragments. Therefore, the trauma of the war organizes the senses of fragmentation and wholeness in the individual's identity and his consciousness. Accordingly, many become unable to form significant selves because unable or unwilling to come to satisfactory terms with the controlling and diminishing power of society's coercive forces which render hope illusory and shatter their coherence. Though the two novels are set in completely different cultures and contexts, the psychological effects of war on the individual's personality remain the same. Because war has a logic of destruction, and man, as a social being, is the one who pays the war's toll with his most sensitive part, his soul.

However, the characters as presented by Fitzgerald and Ngugi, struggle to preserve hope through their dream for a better world. This hope provides happiness out of the chaotic situation that came after the war with a promise of a new form of unity. This would mean that traditional values are still to be retained in the modern era. Consequently, one should consider such characters as universal, although they are our evolving within a limited historical environment. Indeed, the struggles of the oppressed against their oppressor, in Ngugi's writing or modern man's responses to the dehumanizing requirements of modern society in Fitzgerald's works remain universal issues perpetually raised.

As readers we are tempted to show little sympathy for Munira's and Dick's final acts; yet, these deeds bring forth a sense of hope since both characters succeed in overcoming their 'inactness' and inner struggle, hence finding a purpose in life made of hope and solace, though they are ephemeral. Through their actions Munira and Dick Diver sacrifice their 'selves', in Christ-like fashion, to redeem an ill-directed society and heal it from its alleged sins. This same society that condemned them was in many ways the source of their disillusionment and psychic rupture. This modernist concept of duality found in Ngugi's and Fitzgerald's narratives, represented by these two antithetic images is well rendered in one of Fitzgerald's pronouncements: "the test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>- Fitzgerald, F.S, « *The Crack Up* » in "The Esquire", New Directions, New York, March 1936, P.13.

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## انفصام الروح و الأعراف الاجتماعية في روايتي

### بتل الدم ل نقوقي و ثيونقو و حنينه هي الليلة ل فرانسيس سكوت فترزجارد

إن الشخصية الإنسانية عادة ما تعتبر كل متكامل و متجانس، إلا أن الدراسات الحديثة في علم النفس تظهر أنها مكونة من عناصر و سمات تكاد تكون متناقضة. هذه الوضعية ناتجة عن كون نفسية الإنسان متعددة الأطياف و تتجلى لنا في صور و وضعيات مختلفة. هذا ما أدى بعدة كتاب لتناول النماذج المختلفة للشخصية في أعمالهم. و أعطت هذه الدراسات أبعادا لأعمالهم ساهمت في بلورة الأوضاع المتناولة بدرامية فائقة

إن تعقد شخصية الإنسان و الفعاليات المختلفة في تبصره يشكلان جانب من أهم و أقوى الجوانب في الأدب الحديث. و قد يعاين هذا التعقد في الشخصية من جوانب مختلفة أهمها: الاستلاب و الشعور بالغربة تجاه النفس و المجتمع، عدم التبصر في الحدود ما بين الاستقرار و الدفعية في الشخصية و التفتت و عدم الانصياع في صراع الفرد مع القوى الخارجية. و السبب الرئيسي لكل هذه التدايعيات هو الإحساس بعدم الانتماء إلى المجتمع و رفض كل القوانين المفروضة.

تخوض هذه الرسالة في دراسة نموذج له صلة بتعقد شخصية الفرد و هو ما يمكن الإشارة إليه بانفصام و انقسام الشخصية. و قد تداولت هذه الدراسة في الأدب الحديث سواء في العالم الغربي أو من طرف أدباء ما بعد الحداثة في إفريقيا كون العصر الحديث يتميز بسمة عدم الانتماء و التذبذب و ذلك بسبب عنف المستعمر و ارث الحروب المتتالية.

و من بين الأعمال الذي تناولت هذا الجانب من هوية الإنسان في الأدب الإفريقي رواية بتل الدم للروائي الكيني نقوقي و ثيونقو أين يقدم الكاتب ظاهرة مهمة و معقدة عند الشخصيات. تتسم الرواية بازواجية المقام أين تظهر في أمامية الصورة قوتان متناقضتان: الفرد بأحلامه و تطلعاته و المجتمع و مكوناته الاجتماعية و السياسية. و من خلال هذه الوجهة نتمكن من استيعاب كيف تجد شخصية منيرا- معلم البلدة- نفسه حبيب خلوة إرادية تؤدي به إلى الانفصال عن مجتمعه. و قد يؤدي بنا هذا إلى القول أن في أي مجتمع تسيطر فيه القوى الجماعية يصنف المثقف على أنه خارج السرب بيد أنه مقصى و غير مرغوب فيه في المجتمع و حتى في العائلة التي ينتمي إليها. و النتيجة لهذه الوضعية هي حتما الإحساس بالجزلة و عدم الانتماء الذين يؤديان إلى انفصام في الشخصية.

الوضعية نفسها نجدها – و لو لأسباب و تدايعيات مختلفة – في رواية الكاتب الأمريكي فرانسيس سكوت فترزجارد حنينه هي الليلة. و يظهر في هذه الرواية تلاشي نفسية الشخصية الأساسية ديك دايفر - طبيب

الأمراض العقلية – بسبب تصادم طموحاته مع أهداف مجتمعه. تؤدي هذه الوضعية إلى فجوة بين ديك و متطلبات مجتمعه المادي الذي يفتقر إلى أدنى القيم الأخلاقية. و ينتج عن ذلك فقدان الصلة بين ديك و مجتمعه و من ثم عزله.

في الفقرة الأولى أخوض في السياق الاجتماعي و الثقافي و السياسي الذي تعيش فيه شخصيات الرواية و أظهر مدى تأثير الحرب على نفسية أفراد المجتمع.

تتناول الفقرة الثانية انفصام الفكر عند شخصيات رواية نقوقي بتل الدم و تركز على خيبة أمل الشعب الكيني في كينيا ما بعد الاستقلال. يغوص الكاتب في رؤية الفرد لمسائل عدة أهمها التربية والدين و التقاليد المسيحية، و استلاب الأرض كونه – أي نقوقي – معروف عنه تناول الجانب السياسي في رواياته.

أتناول في الفقرة الثالثة رواية فتزجرالد حينه هي الليلة. أهمية هذه الرواية تكمن في تاريخ صدورها – سنة 1929- و كذا تناولها الجانب النفسي للأفراد و التي كانت سمة من سمات الأدب الأمريكي الحديث في الربع الأول من القرن العشرين. و تظهر الرواية تصادم مذهب "التعالی" الذي ساد الساحة الأدبية الأمريكية في القرن التاسع عشر و المتميز بتركيزه على مبدأ الانسجام و التناسق في المجتمع، مع فكرة الانفصام السائدة في أعمال الحداثة.

من الأساسيات المتداولة في هذه الرسالة، التركيز على أن هموم و اهتمامات الأدباء و اهتمامهم بالفرد هي هموم و اهتمامات كونية و سائدة في كل المجتمعات بغض النظر عن المكان أو الزمان. و رغم اختلاف الأسباب و الأفراد و المجتمع و السياق إلا أن النتيجة تكون نفسها لأن كل ما له علاقة مع نفسية الإنسان – أي إنسان – يتعلق بجانب يشترك فيه كل بني البشر و هي 'إنسانية الإنسان'.

بتل الدم لنقوقي واثيونغو : *Petals of Blood* by Ngugi wa Thiong o.

حينه هي الليلة لفرانسيس سكوت فتزجرالد : *Tender is the Night* by Francis Scott Fitzgerald.

مذهب "التعالی" : Transcendentalism.