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Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
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A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment for a Master's Degree
in Comparative Literature

Title

The Poetics of Space in Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925) and Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* (1968)

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Acknowledgments

The writing of my dissertation was a hard process. At the beginning, it seemed difficult to proceed with the topic. At those moments, encouragement and guidance from my supervisor Dr GUENDOUZI helped me overcome those difficulties. Therefore, I am fortunate in having the opportunity to work under his guidance and I thank him for his patience in correcting my work.

I am also indebted to my co-supervisor Mrs. TABTI Kahina who has willingly accepted to supervise my work notwithstanding the bulk of her task.

I am greatly indebted to my teachers of the English Department and specifically to Mrs AREZKI Dalila.

Finally, I would like to thank all those who helped me from near or far.



Dedication

I dedicate this work to:

- ❖ My endearing parents who guided and are still guiding my steps in this perpetual changing world.
- ❖ My brothers and sisters whose love and encouragement I should never forget.
- ❖ My best friends and university classmates who provide me with moral support and enthusiastic help.
- ❖ All who know me and whose love and good will have made this work possible.

ABSTRACT

*This research work compares two representative examples of modern African and American Literatures which are Scott Fitzgerald's **The Great Gatsby** (1925) and Ayi Kwei Armah's **The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born** (1968). My major interest is to analyze and compare the way the two authors represent space in their novels. One of the main arguments is that the two novels constitute a site for the interplay of space and place. I take my theoretical bearings in this comparative study from Leonard Lutwack's **The Role of Place in Literature**. In the first chapter of my analysis, I contend that **The Great Gatsby** and **The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born** preoccupied with space in relation to the theme of fragmentation and disillusionment. In the second chapter, I develop further the analysis to illustrate how the poetics of space in the two novels participates in their main plot. I have tried to demonstrate that space in the two novels is poetic since it is used on purpose and structured in a manner that could follow the plot of the novel.*

ABSTRACT

*This research work compares two representative examples of modern African and American Literatures which are Scott Fitzgerald's **The Great Gatsby** (1925) and Ayi Kwei Armah's **The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born** (1968). My major interest is to analyze and compare the way the two authors represent space in their novels. One of the main arguments is that the two novels constitute a site for the interplay of space and place. I take my theoretical bearings in this comparative study from Leonard Lutwack's **The Role of Place in Literature**. In the first chapter of my analysis, I contend that **The Great Gatsby** and **The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born** preoccupied with space in relation to the theme of fragmentation and disillusionment. In the second chapter, I develop further the analysis to illustrate how the poetics of space in the two novels participates in their main plot. I have tried to demonstrate that space in the two novels is poetic since it is used on purpose and structured in a manner that could follow the plot of the novel.*

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

In art in general and in literature in particular, we often come across writers and poets whose heed and attention are turned towards spatiality. The latter is considered as the basis in modern humanities including philosophy, art, and literature. Questions of space and geography are recognized as legitimate and significant areas of study in all these fields particularly in literature. Jean-Pierre Goldenstein labeled the literary space as “*sorte d’ornementation accessoire chargé d’apporter la touche de pittoresque nécessaire à la perfection du décor de la fiction*”¹. Indeed, the representation of space in literature is a crucial element in any attempt to analyze or evaluate any literary work. The representation of space in literature aims to show the way in which surroundings appear and affect characters and actions. Moreover, it is an active participant and a vital component of any narrative work.

Each culture and any historical epoch possess a specific context which is proper to it. Thereby, each literary work takes place somewhere and it’s impossible to think literature without any spatial context. Interest on space and its representation enhances in the twentieth century. The resurgence of interest is prompted by the recognition of the significance and the crucially important position which space occupies in narrative works. This led many writers of that time to direct their attentions to spatial representation. In fact, the purpose of the present research is to highlight and compare the representation of space in two prose fictions which are Ayi Kwei Armah’s *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* (1968) and Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* (1925). Both are important masterpieces and hold an honorable place in twentieth century literature.

These novels reflect the issues of the two author’s respective time and space. Indeed, both are characterized by the exposition of political and social realities and the advocacy for change. In addition, both novels give detailed descriptions of the social milieu. These descriptions allow us to better understand the spatial dimensions and to grasp the overriding

importance of space. To say it in another way, descriptions of houses, dwellings, landscapes and other places allow the reader to better appreciate and immerse in the narrative world. Also, they can be considered as important means that help to follow the development of characters in the novels and to see how the surrounding space affects their perceptions and feelings.

Written in two different contexts, that of the jazz age for *The Great Gatsby*, and post-independence disillusionment with Nkrumah's politics for Armah's *The Beautiful Ones are not Yet Born*, the two novels expose the realities and the corrupt climate in two distinct societies. Armah's first novel depicts post-independence Ghana as a period characterized by decay, corruption and moral failure. Correspondingly, Fitzgerald in his novel draws a vivid picture of America during the 1920s. Additionally, he describes the failure of the American Dream, the corruption and the decadence of the Roaring Twenties.

Scott Fitzgerald is a Jazz Age novelist and a short story writer. He is considered to be among the greatest twentieth century writers that produced one of the best literatures of the United States of America. Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* is a remarkable masterpiece and the most frequently read of his novels. It is set in New York City and Long Island, in two areas called 'West egg' and 'East Egg'. Characters also are divided into two groups West-Eggers and East-Eggers. The novel is a satire of the American society during the period of the Jazz age. It illustrates the American society, the beliefs, the values and the dreams of the population during the 1920s. Thus, the novel can be read as a social commentary on a corrupt society affected and governed by materialism, cynicism and hedonism. In general, the novel is a powerful critique and a picturesque representation of the American reality of the post war period. It is an emblem of the corruption of the American Dream which the author experienced during the 1920s.

Ayi Kwei Armah is a Ghanaian writer whose reputation was established by the social and political satire of his novels, namely *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*. He depicts post-independence Ghana as a period characterized by decay, and moral failure. Corruption, materialism and hedonism are the main characteristics of the newly independent nation which Armah describes in his first fiction. The novel chronicles the life of 'the man', the nameless protagonist who struggles against poverty on one side and material greed on the other. Because of his up-right conduct, he cannot stand corruption. Despite the poverty and the pressures around him, the man turns back a bribe and maintains his sense of integrity.

Review of the Literature

Scott Fitzgerald's and Ayi Kwei Armah's works have been the center of interest for many critics. Various studies are carried on the study of the two novels as examples of political and moral corruption. In other words, both writers expose to the reader some moral and political aspects that characterize their societies. Furthermore, the two authors are skilful in portraying their respective communities. Within the framework of my research, I will focus on the most representative critics of Ayi Kwei Armah's and Scott Fitzgerald's works *The Great Gatsby* and *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*.

The significance of Fitzgerald's novel puts it as the subject of various critics. Most of them agreed that *The Great Gatsby* is the greatest achievement of Fitzgerald. T.S Eliot is a case in point. In fact, after reading *The Great Gatsby*, he writes a letter to Fitzgerald. It contains an interesting commentary: "[It] has interested and excited me more than any new novel I have seen, either English or American, for a number of years ... In fact, it seems to me the first step that American fiction has taken since Henry James [...]" ². Actually, Fitzgerald after the publication of *The Great Gatsby* won his reputation as a brilliant writer in America.

Peter B. High is one of the illustrative critics of this novel. In *An Outline of American Literature* (1986) he argues that Fitzgerald in *The Great Gatsby* makes a combination between symbolism and psychological realism³. For him, symbolism is given much importance by the author. He also adds that the use of symbols has a crucial function in describing the psychological state of the characters. Fitzgerald's novel is considered by other critics as a picturesque example of the Jazz Age. In this context, George Mc Michael notes that "In the early 1920s Fitzgerald was the embodiment as well as the chronicler of the Jazz Age"⁴. Indeed, *The Great Gatsby* provides us with a historical overview of the events and the mentality of the period known as "the Jazz Age". This is why Fitzgerald is seen as the historiographer of this era.

In their book entitled *From Puritanism to Post Modernism: A History of American Literature*, Malcolm Bradbury and Richard Ruland refer to the waste and the disillusionment that prevail in the American novels that appear during the 1920s. In this sense, they maintain that "The writings of the 1920s abounds in images of fragmentations, waste, castration and sterility-not just in Pound's *Hugh Selwyn Mauberly* or Eliot's *The Waste Land*, but in the Valley of Ashes that darkens Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*"⁵. Their attention is directed towards the valley of the ashes which they saw as the most representative example of waste.

Harold Bloom opens another angle within his criticism. He sustains that "The Great Gatsby is a companion to T.S Eliot's *The Waste Land*, a desolate vision of a world without faith or order"⁶. This denotes the influence of T.S.Eliot on Fitzgerald. Indeed, the twenties witnessed the emergence of a host of authors such as F.Scott Fitzgerald, Earnest Hemingway, T.S Eliot and Ezra Pound. Those writers establish connections with one another which result in a kind of literary influences.

Like Scott Fitzgerald, criticism on Ayi Kwei Armah's novel has been carried out under multiple angles. Charles Knolim sustains that Armah's first novel "mirrors the sudden

rise and fall of Nkrumah, the birth of Ghana as a new nation, yet old and thoroughly corrupt, a nation corrupt before it was born [...]”⁷. He emphasizes on the failure of this society under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah. Indeed, the novel provides a real texture of postcolonial Ghana and shows Armah’s concern with both the social and political issues of the post-independence Ghanaian society.

Other critics’ attention is directed towards the analysis of the major themes of Armah’s novel. Corruption is seen as the central theme, and a large part of the novel is devoted to the criticizing of the new government’s dishonesty. A prominent critical figure for *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* is Emmanuel Obiechina. In his book entitled *Culture, Tradition and Society in the West African Novel*, he points out that “The central theme of the Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born is social corruption”⁸. This corruption derives from the moral failure of those in power i.e. the government that replaces the white man’s administration.

Ghana is the first country in Africa to gain its independence from colonial powers. Ghanaians hoped that Nkrumah and the new established government would bring about great social and economic changes. However, the reality was awful and the hopes of the people all vanished. Nafeesa T. Nichols in her thesis *An Examination of the Dynamics of power in Ayi Kwei Armah’s The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born and the Healers* she offered an interesting commentary on Armah’s fiction specifically *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*. In fact, she speaks of power against authority in the first chapter of her thesis. She argues that “The political commentary that ensues throughout the novel is full of despair, disappointment, and disillusionment. Armah condemns the government of Nkrumah for the corruption that seems to consume it”⁹. For her, the novel exposes Armah’s disappointment about Nkrumah’s government which became corrupted by the dynamics of power.

Additionally, Ode Ogede in his book *Intertextuality in Contemporary African Literature: Looking Inward* (2011) discusses issues concerning the social classes. He notes that “the Beautiful Ones pictorially juxtaposes the monstrous contrasts in the living standards of the rich and the poor”¹⁰. In fact, the novel is a picturesque representation of a society split into two contrastive groups. The ‘haves’ symbolize the ruling class and the ‘have-nots’ gather the poor majority.

Issue and Hypothesis:

From the review of the literature about the two writers, I notice that many studies have already dealt with Fitzgerald’s and Armah’s novels. However, little research has been devoted to put them into perspective in studying questions concerning space and its representation. To put it differently, the two novels have been put together for the analysis of issues such as corruption and disillusionment, but no comparative study has yet approached them on the basis of space. Therefore, to go beyond this critical restriction and open new channels or a new perspective for the interpretation of these works, I suggest a comparative study in which I intend to examine the poetics of space.

My aim is to undertake a comparative study about the representation of space in the two novels referring mainly to the shared ways in which Fitzgerald and Armah describe space. By this comparison, I try to show that space is crucial to the understanding of the two fictions. Some critics have already highlighted similarities in the representation of space in the two novels by resorting to modernist aesthetics. A case in point is Dr Guendouzi’s Magister Dissertation entitled *Ayi Kwei Armah’s Individual Talent and the Anglo-American Literary Traditions* (2003). However, his study is not pushed enough to document the influence of T.S Eliot’s *The Waste Land*. Therefore, my first task is to submit the two fictions to the modernist aesthetic of space. This task will be followed by a more ambitious one, which consists in

studying the novels in the light of the poetics of space developed by Leonard Lutwack. Indeed, it is my contention that space participates in the arrangement of the plot in the two novels. I notice that both Fitzgerald and Armah deploy a poetics of space that we could appreciate with each character moving from a spot to another. In addition to plot, space helps also in the portrayal of characters and their movements within the story. In fact, characters, mainly Gatsby and the man, are introduced to readers throughout their surroundings. Not only the physical appearances play a role in determining characters' attitudes, but space has the potential to reveal their identities as well.

METHODOLOGICAL OUTLINE:

My research comprises two chapters. In the first chapter, I explore the role of space in T.S Eliot's poem entitled *The Waste Land*. This chapter will be divided into two main sections. The first will delve into the study of the role of space in T.S Eliot's *The Waste Land*. The second section is devoted to the study of the spirit of the modernist fragmentation in *The Waste Land* and its influence on Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and Armah's *The Beautiful Ones*. In fact, being modernists, the city becomes their centre of attention in order to capture the sense of fragmentation that dominates the modern metropolises of the twentieth century.

In the second chapter of my study, I focus on the representation and organization of space in *The Beautiful Ones* and *The Great Gatsby*. I intend to examine the most recurrent spaces in both novels and to trace the effects these spaces generate on characters. Fitzgerald and Armah communicate not only the history of their countries, but also the moral crisis their societies were subjected to. Through their attention to space and place, both writers address issues of corruption, immorality and disenchantment.

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METHOD AND MATERIALS

Method:

In order to analyze and study the poetics of space, I need to refer to two important critical elements or ingredients: the primary sources which are *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, *The Great Gatsby* and a theory which will be the fundamental reference or the foundation for my analysis. I think that it is relevant to make reference to Leonard Lutwack's theory as it is developed in the work entitled *The Role of Place in Literature* (1984).

I appeal to this theory in order to study the representation of space in the two novels putting emphasis on the influence of space on characters. The relevance or the pertinence of Lutwack's theory is based on various grounds. His ideas and concepts on space seem to be applicable on *The Great Gatsby* and *The Beautiful Ones*. In fact, Lutwack's theory seems to exercise a notable influence on modernist thinkers and writers with his ideas concerning space, place, and their importance in literature.

Leonard Lutwack when speaking of the importance of the representation of space in literature writes:

In addition to a new interest in place as a formal element in literature, the twentieth century evidences a new interest in place as an important issue in general. This is a result of widespread recognition that earth as a place, or, the total environment, is being radically changed and perhaps rendered uninhabitable by more and more pervasive and powerful technologies.¹

Lutwack's theory is based upon the representation of space and place in literature. In his theory, he claims that the concept of space has not been treated or examined at length. He starts by defining the concept of the inhabited space. Further, he moves to the use of space in literature. In the third chapter of his book, he discusses the metaphor of place and body. He makes reference to the way place provides an arena in which he can use metaphors to describe the human body, acts and behavior.

If we define characters and plot in the novel, I can say that characters are people who move and grow within the story and plot as the events that form the whole story. One of Leonard Lutwack's powerful arguments in *The Role of Place in Literature (1984)* is that plot is determined by the movement of characters from one place to another ². Lutwack in this argument makes it clear that plot and characters are in a mutual relationship.

I will try to apply Lutwack's theory and his basic concepts of space to the selected novels in order to see how space is represented. My reading of the two novels articulates the idea that Armah and Fitzgerald deploy a poetics of space that is unique. Furthermore, the inner side of characters is given much importance by both authors. This emphasis on this hidden side of the human being urges us to better understand the significance of space and its representation.

Materials:

1- Short Biographies of the Authors:

A-Ayi Kwei Armah:

Ayi Kwei Armah is one of the leading figures in African literature. He was born in Takoradi, Ghana, in 1939. Armah was educated at Achimota College. In 1959, he left Ghana to attend Groton School in Massachusetts. He later studied at Harvard University and received a degree in sociology. He worked as a teacher in Ghana, Tanzania, Lesotho and the United State of America. He also worked in Algeria as a translator for the magazine *Revolution Africaine*.³

Ayi Kwei Armah is undoubtedly one of the most outstanding writers of English expression. He began his career as a writer in the 1960s. He published poems and short stories in the Ghanaian magazine *Okyeame*, in *Harper's*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, and *New African*. He is mostly known, however, as a novelist. He published seven novels that deal with

postcolonial Ghana, the disillusionment, the corruption and anarchy which were so widespread in Africa.⁴

Armah's first novel *The Beautiful Ones Are not Yet Born* is an allegorical story of the failure of an African ruling class that replaced the white man's administration. The novel, in fact, was written as a reaction to the betrayal of the ideals of Uhuru by the government of Nkrumah, which was toppled in a military coup in 1966⁵. It was followed in 1971 by *Fragments* which narrates the story of the "been-to" Baako. In his third novel entitled *Why Are We So Blest?* (1972), Armah explores some of the experiences and racial insults he had encountered on American campuses. Set largely in an American University, the story focuses on a student named Modin Dofu⁶. Slave trade in the African past is the subject touched by Armah in *Two Thousand Seasons* (1973). Four years later, Armah published his fifth novel *The Healers*. His sixth novel entitled *Osiris Rising* is published in 1995.⁷

We can say that from all the mentioned novels *The Beautiful Ones* to *Fragments*, *Why are We So Blest*, *Two Thousand Seasons*, *The Healers* and *Osiris Rising*, the readers are exposed to a canvas of the trajectory of Ghana's history.

B- Francis Scott Fitzgerald:

The Mid-Westerner Francis Scott Fitzgerald was born in St Paul, Minnesota in 1896. He grew up and spends the first decade of his childhood in New York City. He attended a few private schools, and went to Princeton University⁸. In 1917, he enlisted in the U.S Army and the weeks before reporting for duty, he writes the *Romantic Egotist* recast as *This Side of Paradise*, a semi-autobiographical account of his undergraduate years at Princeton.⁹

On base in Alabama in 1918, he met and fell in love with Zelda Zayre, who refused to marry him unless he could support her. After, he returned to New York to pursue fame and fortune¹⁰. The publication of *This Side of Paradise* in 1920 made Fitzgerald a literary star.

This fact hastened his marriage with Zelda which is achieved one week later ¹¹. Zelda played a pivotal role in the writer's life and literary career. In 1924, the couple moved to Paris where Fitzgerald began work on *The Great Gatsby* ¹². The Fitzgeralds returned to the United States in 1927.

Among Fitzgerald's major works, his novel entitled *This Side of Paradise* (1920) which is a semi autobiographical novel that recounts the romantic social adventures of Amory Blain ¹³. In *The Beautiful and The Damned* (1922), Fitzgerald explores the corruptive influences of money on Americans and this is symbolized by Anthony Patch ¹⁴. In 1925, *The Great Gatsby* was published and acknowledged as one of the valuable works of twentieth century American literature. His later novel *Tender is The Night* (1934) narrates the story of a psychiatrist Dick Diver and his wife ¹⁵. Fitzgerald dies at the age of 44 in 1940 before he could complete his fifth novel *The Last Tycoon* ¹⁶. It was until the next year that the manuscript of the unwritten part of the novel's story was edited by his friend Edmund Wilson.

The majority of his novels are about America and the way of being American. For instance, the ritzy lifestyle he enjoyed with Zelda is portrayed in *The Great Gatsby*. Fitzgerald also wrote over 160 short stories, including "*The Rich Boy* (1926)," "*A Diamond as Big as the Ritz*" (1922), "*Winter Dreams*" (1922), "*Babylon Revisited*" (1931), and "*Crazy Sunday*" (1934)¹⁷. In short, his insight into the American experience present an everlasting portrait of his life and age.

2-The Socio-Historical Backgrounds:

"Art for art's sake" is an expression that we may consider as irrelevant as we read works of critics and novelists such as Ayi Kwei Armah and Scott Fitzgerald. We recognize that there is always a peculiar relationship that relates literature with society and ideology. In fact, we constantly come across literary texts that are tied with their history and milieu. Such texts are written in a specific period of time and history. They are always the products of an

author who has lived that period. Therefore, it is obvious that a writer in his work of art bears some influences from the community he evolves from. In order to best report on the societal, political, and economic phenomena, the writer engages himself in a kind of a pact between his life and the period he is writing about.

From what I said above, I see that the writer can be a mirror of his age and his literary work is the fruit of its context. Hence, I cannot start studying Armah's and Fitzgerald's novels without relating them to their contexts. Undoubtedly, there is a relationship between the writer and the political and social milieu in which he grows up. This chapter delves into the socio-historical backgrounds of both Fitzgerald and Armah. In what follows, I will analyse the context in which the two novels are produced and the extent to which the two authors have reflected the issues of their age.

More specifically, I intend to supply the socio-historical background of *The Great Gatsby* and *The Beautiful ones Are Not Yet Born* in order to best underline the context or the situation during which the two novels were produced. First, I will investigate the Roaring Twenties which is an influential period in American history. Second, I will consider the post-independence period in Ghana, its tensions, and the impacts it generates on the writing of the *The Beautiful ones Are Not Yet Born*.

A- Fitzgerald and *The Great Gatsby*'s Socio-Historical Background:

The Roaring Twenties:

The Roaring Twenties is one of the significant decades in American History. It begins soon after World War I and end with the 1929 stock market crash. The Jazz Age is well known as a decade of glamour, beauty, success, glorious profit and prosperity. America during this period witnesses economic prosperity and goes under great change and social reforms.

The nation comes out of World War I which is a violent episode in this nation's history. After widespread human suffering caused by this tragic war, the Americans felt the need for a little fun and on finding pleasure and comfort for themselves in order to forget about the deep scars and their pain. In other words, in order to suppress the dismay and the horror caused by the war, Americans turned to the life of pleasure, amusement, fun, and dance. In this sense, Addison Wisely defines the twenties as follows:

As the wounds of war healed, often painfully, America entered the new decade like the explosive sound of Jazz, the years were full of change and unexpected turns. They became known as the Roaring Twenties.¹⁸

The twenties as defined by Addison Wisely are years that produced change at the level of culture with the emergence of Jazz music. However, in my view, change is noticeable in almost all levels including society, economy, and politics.

In *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald reflects this prosperity by focusing on the description of the society and the wild parties New Yorkers organize every night:

There was music from my neighbor's house through the summer nights. In his blue gardens men and girls came and went like moths among the whisperings and the champagne and the stars [...] there was a machine in the kitchen which extracts the juice of two hundred oranges in half an hour if a little button was pressed two hundred times by a butler's thumb.¹⁹

The passage illustrates the prosperity at the level of society. Jazz music emerges during this period and soon becomes the chief of the orchestra in all parties. It is worth saying that leisure is the result of the increasing prosperous economy. The extravagant parties held by the Buchanans, Jordan Backer, and Gatsby are typical examples of the spirit of the age and the behavior of the aristocratic social groups.

When the novel was published, capitalism reaches its climax in the United States of America. Wealth is handled by the big business men corporations. This contributes to the emergence of social classes. Indeed, the latter is one among the topics discussed in the novel.

Fitzgerald as a witness of the 1920s has a tendency for social commitment and his novel depicts events concerning the social milieu he comes from.

Capitalism is only one reason why the society is split into two groups. The 1920s society is torn to pieces as a result of the confrontation of old and new values. The split between the classes, the materialistic greed and ambition are the factors that lead to the clash between the new and the traditional ideals of society. This clash results in the decline of the American Dream of happiness, justice and equality. Examples of how this dream is going away are plenty in *The Great Gatsby*. For instance, the society is cut into two opposing poles or social groups. Furthermore, we notice that Fitzgerald refers to the activities of bootlegging and to the organized crimes. Meyer Wolfsheim is one of the characters that Fitzgerald makes use of in order to describe the presence of such activities in this land of hope.

Urbanism:

New York during the 1920s was the centre of industry, fashion, entertainment and mainly wealth. A massive dynamism characterized New York as a result of the end of the war and the beginning of the years of prosperity. The prosperity New Yorkers enjoyed stimulates people from the western states to move eastward. In fact, according to the 1920s census, 54 percent of the American population was urban.²⁰

The movement from the West to the East is best reported in *The Great Gatsby (1925)*. The novel also depicts the way America enters in a period of urbanization and industrialization. For instance, early in the novel, the author refers to the time of pleasure which people like Tom and Daisy are seeking for. Nick, at the beginning, wonders the reason why the couple left the East, but soon recognizes that they prefer places “wherever people played polo and were rich together”²¹. Both Daisy and Tom could be seen as epitomes of the new age. In the city of New York and specifically in the West Egg, they find the life of

entertainment and pleasure they are longing to. One can notice how the city or the urban living stimulates individuals.

Another illustrative example is Nick Carraway. Like many Americans during the twenties, Nick finds in the city of New York great satisfaction and the following passage illustrate this idea:

I began to like New York, the racy, adventurous feel of it at night, and the satisfaction that the constant flicker of men and women and machines gives to the restless eye. I liked to walk up Fifth Avenue and pick out romantic women from the crowd²²

Fitzgerald reveals a society obsessed with the pursuit of pleasure and material comfort. Obviously, Fitzgerald mirrors the way people are lured by the rhythms of the city life. It is may be, because Fitzgerald really knows the world of wealth that he successfully reports with greater prose the appearances, the gestures with a witty ease.²³

One should admit that the developments in industrialization and the materialism offered by the city contributed a great deal in introducing changes in terms of morality and behavior. The world of excess and indulgence causes decay in moral values amidst the American society. People adopted new values that fit with city living, the Jazz music, and the life of pleasure and entertainment.

The Flappers:

The twenties is a period in which the term “Flapper” comes into existence in the American soil. It designates the women who enjoyed freedom that is not known for the generation of their mothers and grandmothers. To be more attractive and to represent the new urban metropolis, they cut their hair and wear short skirts. Changes in terms of morality and behavior appear in particular with this category of women. Indeed, the flappers contributes a great deal in changing the traditional image of women²⁴. They also attain and secure a valuable political position with the passing of the 19th amendment that guaranteed for them the right to vote.

In *The Great Gatsby* we are struck with a good example which is Jordan Backer. The latter is a representative of the liberated women of the age. She is, in fact, a sportswoman with a noticeable celebrity. The new social freedom is reported also through the host of women that attend Gatsby's parties as the passage suggests:

The last swimmers have come in from the beach now and are dressing upstairs; the cars from New York are packed five deep in the drive, and already the halls and salons and verandas are gaudy with primary colours, and hair bobbed in strange new ways, and shawls beyond the dreams of Castile [...] already there are wanderers, confident girls who weave here and there among the stouter and more stable [...] ²⁵

Women characters in the novel serve to report on the position of women during the 1920s. In addition to the political freedom, they secured for themselves a status equal with males. Because they are emancipated, they drift and drink alcohol in an extravagant manner.

One can say that what makes Fitzgerald's novel a favorite piece is the way he depicted the tensions of the American society of which he is also a part. Through his characters, he photographs the snapshots of American life in the 1920s. Also, he tries to convey his criticism as well. By his classic novel *The Great Gatsby*, F. Scott Fitzgerald succeeds to sketch the 1920s and its intricacies. However, in my view, what is seen in the novel is the adherence and devotion to false values, inclination towards materialism, and eventual disillusionment of America during the Jazz Age. Thus, one can see that *The Great Gatsby* is not written to praise the opulence and prosperity of the era, but rather to stress on the darker side of the Roaring Twenties, its undercurrent of corruption and its desperate, empty decadence.

B- Postcolonial Ghana:

The 1960s is a significant decade in the history of Africa in general and of Ghana in particular. During these years, the majority of African nations get rid of the colonial dominance. Africans wait the dawn of independence like a mother who waits the birth of her child or like a baby waiting for the bosom of his mother. African nations' dreams of

independence come true by the beginning of the second half of the twentieth century. It is within this context that I shall fix Ayi kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* (1968). Tellingly, I intend to supply the socio-political background of the novel in order to examine Armah's position concerning the context from which he drew his subject matter.

On March 6, 1957, Ghana gains its independence from Britain and becomes the first sub-Saharan African nation to get independence. Indeed, this independence comes as a result of a process of decolonization that took place in what was called the Gold Coast under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah. In fact, Ghana achieved internal self government since 1951 and became fully an independent nation in 1957. Armah's opinion about Nkrumah and his surrounding ministers is made clear in the novel. The new leading group abuses the resources of the state in striving to imitate their former European masters by accumulating their possessions, imitating their accents and anglicizing their names. They appear Africans with white souls. Critics such as Roland Olivier and Anthony Atmore in their book entitled *Africa Since 1800*, discussed the way African leaders inherited and adopted the working systems of the former white colonizer. Without contemplation for the limitation of such systems, the new government leaders put into effect the laws established by the white man administration without respect of the nation's interests.²⁶

In 1957, Kwame Nkrumah became the first president of independent Ghana. His years of presidency are characterized by deterioration, decline, poverty and corruption. These years were not prosperous because of the bad management of the corrupt leaders of Ghana. The miserable situation of the Ghanian society reached its climax in 1965. This led to the military Coup against Nkrumah's regime.

Early in the novel, Armah pinpoints to the ineffectiveness of the new appointed government and its ministers. Despite the fact that he is the leader of the independence

movement in the 1950s, Nkrumah does not bring genuine progress to the post colonial Ghanaian society:

The sons of the nation were now in charge, after all. How completely the new thing took after the old [...] Behind the firms the dim mass of Yensua Hill rose from the ground. Where its form ended, it was now possible to see the sky, still dark but not so dark as the earth beneath.²⁷

We see that Armah's focal attention to the history of his country is suggestive of his ideology. He not only witnesses the societal and political climate of his society, but tries to reveal and bring into the surface its ills and shortcomings.

The shortcomings that characterize the new independent nation of Ghana lead to an incident that changes the course of the history of Ghana. "A Coup d'Etat" takes place in during the Presidency of Nkrumah. In fact, this historical event is discussed in the *The Beautiful Ones* and articulated clearly in the following passage:

At the bus stop people were talking, but in truth nobody knew anything except that there had been change, and the words merely repeated the talkers' first astonishment, then endlessly questions about who the new men were, what they were going to do, what they had been doing all along. There were no answers to any of these questions, though one man who reeked of drink and vomit claimed that this was all a plan of the devilish Nkrumah, [...] ²⁸

One can notice from the passage the extent to which Nkrumah's government has failed. In other words, Nkrumah's false promises make things getting worse. In fact, it seems that they fail to accomplish the mission they promised their people to accomplish. On the contrary, none of the plans they trace succeed to enhance the life of Ghanaians. This is good evidence that illustrates Armah's focus on the upheavals of his society.

The military coup in Ghana reduced the status of the ruling class into the status of thieves and criminals. Therefore, the coup helps to take off the masks from the faces of the ruling class and allows the reader to see the hidden faces of those corrupt leaders. In fact, it is

through Joseph Koomson that Armah shows the post independence disillusionment through the way in which the African leaders betray their people.

As a conclusion to this part, one can say that Armah is conscious of the socio-political situation of his country. He draws upon the most important historical events that have a shaping influence on his life and that of Ghanaians in general. These historical events are given in detail in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* to reveal the importance of historical issues in shaping the plot and mainly to offer a social criticism of Ghana. Thus, Armah mixes political issues to society and composes a piece of literature that stimulates and offers subjects of criticism for a wide range of critics.

Throughout this analysis, I discovered the socio-historical aspects which are largely explored by both Scott Fitzgerald and Ayi Kwei Armah. The changing political, social, and economic climate of the twentieth century has a great impact on the literature of this period. This is mainly evident in both *The Great Gatsby* and *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*. It is clear from this analysis of the context of the two novels that the two authors are deeply affected by important historical events and by the socio-political environment.

We have seen that *The Great Gatsby* reflects the socio-historical situation of the 1920s in America. Being a direct witness of this period, Fitzgerald describes the changes that accompanies this decade. We have said that capitalism, urbanization, and the emergence of flappers are all referred to in Fitzgerald's novel. Similarly, Armah transposes in his novel the political and social uprisings of the post-independence period. The Coup that causes the fall of Nkrumah's government is one of the historical events on which Armah puts much emphasis.

From all what is said above, I come to the conclusion that both *The Great Gatsby* and *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* are thoroughly related to the historical context of the 1920s America for Fitzgerald and to the 1950s Ghana for Armah. Accordingly, I can say that

the two novels could be considered as important pieces of history. I should admit that both novels are dramatic panoramas written on a background of history.

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RESULTS:

The problematic I have raised in this research centers around analyzing and comparing the shared ways in which Fitzgerald and Armah represent space in their novels. To put it another way, I have attempted to study the representation of space in Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* for the purpose of detecting the similarities between the two authors and their novels.

The method I relied upon to reinforce my arguments is borrowed from Leonard Lutwack's *The Role of Place in Literature* (1984). I have seen that this theoretical paradigm is the most reliable and suitable for my analysis. In his work, Lutwack discusses questions of space and place and their importance in the field of literature. He examines more than one aspect of space: space and imagery, motion, and verticality. Such issues have been of paramount importance to my analysis of the poetics of space in *The Great Gatsby* and *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*.

The present study is divided into two main chapters. In the first, I have studied the role of space in T.S Eliot's *The Waste Land* and its influence on the representation of space in the *The Great Gatsby* and *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*. For a better understanding of the issue of space, in the first section, I have studied the role of space in the poem by focusing on the representation of the urban city. In the second section, I have examined the way Armah and Fitzgerald captured the sense of modernist fragmentation through the focus on space. I have also seen that through their incarnation of the representation of the urban city, they both reproduced the sense of fragmentation, gloom and waste which is captured by T.S Eliot in *The Waste Land*.

As for the second discussion, I have focused on the analysis of the poetics of space in Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not*

Yet Born. By studying the way space is structured in the two novels, I discovered that Fitzgerald portrays the space of the modern American society by dividing this space into attractive and repulsive spaces. As for Armah, I have studied the space of the modern Ghanaian society by following Armah's focus on public and private spaces.

Throughout my comparison of Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, I came to the conclusion that space plays a crucial role in both novels. The two writers with their modernist conceptions of space have proved that they have been influenced by T.S Eliot. In the case of *The Great Gatsby*, I noticed that New York is meant to duplicate London which is the waste land of Eliot. This is also apparent in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* where Armah gives detailed description of the city of Takoradi which is also analogous to London in the sense that they represent decay and fragmentation.

I have also seen that narrative space not only contributes in the understanding of the situation or the background in which the two novels are set, but it is also endowed with a particular poetics that renders our understanding of the two novels more intelligible. Space in the two narratives plays a revealing function and can be considered more than a setting for an action. Arrangement of events in the two works shows that space is inseparable from action and characters. In *The Great Gatsby* and *The Beautiful Ones*, nearly every action is situated in a specific space which contributes to bring meaning or convey information about characters.

In addition to its participation in the plot, space gives an idea of the identity of characters. In my analysis, I have shown that there is a reciprocal and mutual relationship between space and identity. The modern metropolises including New York and Takoradi contribute a great deal in defining the identity of characters such as Gatsby, Nick, the man, and Koomson.

DISCUSSION

Chapter One: *The Great Gatsby*, *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* and the Modernist Representation of Space

The present discussion centres on the influence of T.S Eliot “*The Waste Land*” on Armah’s and Fitzgerald’s representations of space by exploring the urban space which furnishes the spatial setting of the poem. My intention is to show how the poem’s urban setting inspires and stimulates Ayi Kwei Armah and Scott Fitzgerald in their respective novels. Thus, I will illustrate how the descriptions of New York and Takoradi are influenced by Eliot’s description of London, called “the unreal city” in “*The Waste Land*”.

Various critics have studied and made explicit arguments about the influence of T.S Eliot’s modernist imagery on Scott Fitzgerald and Ayi Kwei Armah. However, no complete analysis has been conducted on the study of the way the poet influenced Fitzgerald and Armah in their descriptions of space. Being modernist writers, the city become the centre of attention for both Scott Fitzgerald and Ayi Kwei Armah. One of my major assumptions is that descriptions of the urban space are means by which the two authors express their disillusionment. This sense of disillusionment and fragmentation comes, in fact, from T.S Eliot’s influence on the two authors. Accordingly, my aim in this chapter is to show the influence of T.S Eliot on the representation of the urban city in both *The Great Gatsby* and *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*.

I divide this discussion into two main sections. In the first, I shall examine the urban city as it is represented in “*The Waste Land*”. As for the second section, I will show how Fitzgerald and Armah have been influenced by T.S Eliot’s vision of the modern metropolis. I focus on the modern urban space which is New York City for *The Great Gatsby* and Takoradi for *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*.

The Role of the City in “*The Waste Land*”:

One of the characteristics of Modernism is the focus on the city. For this reason, it is said to be an art of the cities. Writers who advocate modernism are fascinated with descriptions of space, specifically, the city. When we place Eliot’s poem in the context of modernism, we see how the poem is representative of the physical properties of space. In other words, in order to see Eliot’s influential power, we have to situate him in the context of Modernism. In short, Eliot’s representation of the City of London strengthens his position and allows him to anchor his poem a valuable place among twentieth century literary works.

“*The Waste Land*” was published in 1922 and is considered by critics to be among the most influential works of Modernism. Eliot doesn’t seek to draw a mere description of London after the post war period, but specifically London as a modern city. He is rather vigilant in his representation of the physical world. The poet gives us a manifest picture of the world transformed into a waste land by the end of the war. The chaos and the disorder caused by the war, the moral state of the city inhabitants and their dreadful mischief are described in detail in Eliot’s City.

The Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory defines Modernism as “a breaking away from established rules, traditions and conventions, fresh ways of looking at man’s position and function in the universe and(in some cases remarkable) experiments in form and style.”¹. Being one of the modernist literary works, “*The Waste Land*” reflects this breaking away and expresses change in both style and form. At the level of style, the poem relies on techniques that represent a divergence from and challenge to previous poetic and aesthetic traditions. The poem is characterized by a fragmented structure which employs multiple voices and different points of view. Eliot’s use of these new aesthetic techniques made his work unique and paved the way for other experimental works that would

characterize the modernist movement. At the level of content, Eliot brings a new modernist theme that reflected life in the city.

London is the modern metropolitan area described in "*The Waste Land*". The poem's main concern is to offer a view of the contemporary world and the effects it has on the modern man. Vivid and detailed descriptions of the city of London are used as a background to transpose the theme of disillusionment. Indeed, the city of London, as described in the poem, is dominated by an atmosphere of death, drought and barrenness. The urban modern world represented in such a way reflects the author's vision of cynicism.

To understand the idea of the urban city, we have to rely on Eliot's description of London which is the main setting. The poem is set in London after the end of World War I. Eliot engaged in the description of the modern life in this modern metropolis. In the first section of the poem, the poet gives us some cues of the waste land of the modern society. Leonard Lutwack affirms that "Lack of vegetation is generally associated with sterility in the many literary wastelands of the twentieth century"². This too could be applied to the poem since there is a lack of vegetation and the following lines illustrate this idea:

April is the cruelest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain³

The lines suggest that there is a lack of vegetation. Even in spring the land is dead. To my view, the poem begins with such lines in order to give an early insight of the setting.

Eliot moves forward in his description by focusing on another season which is summer:

A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,
And the dead trees give no shelter, the cricket no relief,
And the dry stone no sound of water. Only

There is shadow under this red rock,⁴

It is clear from the first section of the poem that Eliot describes London in almost all the seasons of the year. I can notice that the poet's intention is to offer a panoramic vision of the city.

Eliot's description of the city scenes and urban environments is connected or linked to a sense of emotional and social loss. "*The Waste Land*" is full of specific references to London. For instance, in the last stanza of the first section, "The Burial of the Dead," the narrator offers a noticeable description of London which is a place that he calls:

Unreal City,
Under the brown fog of winter dawn,
A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many
I had not thought death had undone so many.
Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled,
And each man fixed his eyes before his feet
Flowed up the hill and down King William Street,
To where Saint Mary Woolnoth kept the hours⁵

Accordingly, Eliot expresses his view about the modern metropolis which he calls "Unreal city". Much of the poem is devoted to the description of the modern metropolis. Eliot wonders why and:

What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow
Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,
You cannot say, or guess, for you know only⁶

From this description of the physical surrounding, we perceive a description of the abstract world. From a glimpse of the concrete world, we may observe elements of the emotional and moral one. That is to say, the representation of the physical world encapsulates what lies inside the characters' inner side. The dead land may refer to the dead life in London,

the stony rubbish to the modern man's materialistic greed, and the handful dust to say that life became unbearable and the world is moving more intensely to a state of despair.

At the final section, Eliot gives more details about the urban city under the destruction of war:

Who are those hooded hordes swarming
Over endless plains, stumbling in cracked earth
Ringed by the flat horizon only
What is the city over the mountains
Cracks and reforms and bursts in the violet air
Falling towers
Jerusalem Athens Alexandria
Vienna London
Unreal ⁷

In the above passage, Eliot gives a list of decayed cities: Jerusalem, Athens and Alexandria. These cities, in fact, are the capitals of empires that have now fallen: Athens is the capital of classical Athenian empire, Alexandria is a jewel city in the crown of the Ptolemaic Empire, and Vienna the capital of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. These three cities share a rich and powerful past. They are cities that have been for many years important cities with a valuable past. Unfortunately, these characteristics and their status vanish in the modern era.

The author adds London to this list and chooses to locate it at the end. For him, this modern city is also falling into decay and ruin. This implies that the modern city is declining not only physically, but also morally. This is further stressed in the last stanza of the last section in which the poet declares: "London Bridge is falling down falling down falling down" ⁸. The line consists of words repeated three times. This shows Eliot's focus on the decayed status of the city of London

In what precedes, we have seen Eliot's representation of the city in his poem "*The Waste Land*". In order to express his sense of disillusionment relied on descriptive passage of the urban environment. The latter, indeed, reflects the chaos that dominates Europe after the end of World War I. The chaos contributes in shaping the urban man's mentality and identity.

The Vision of the Urban City in *The Great Gatsby* and the *Beautiful Ones* Are Not Yet Born:

After studying the representation of the city in T.S Eliot's poem, I deduced that his visions about the modern metropolis specifically London has influenced Scott Fitzgerald. I perceive that in both Eliot's poem and Fitzgerald's novel the modern metropolis is a setting and an issue. The description of the city of London is analogous to Fitzgerald's portrayal of New York City. In what follows, I shall see how Fitzgerald reproduces by his novel *The Great Gatsby* the modernist perception of space and how Eliot's vision contributes in shaping the sense of fragmentation and waste.

The Urban City and *The Great Gatsby*:

Fitzgerald is one among the writers of the lost generation who has been familiar with city life and modernist poetry. In this regard, William E.Cain writes:

Modernist artists often inhabited cities and their art responded to the conditions of their urban habitat. Modernism is a metropolitan art, a product of the same forces that produced the modern metropolis: industrialization, global capitalism, advances in technology, imperialism, to name a few⁹

Fitzgerald through his novel gives an account of the modern man. In fact, we can consider him as a byproduct of the modern metropolis. In our view, New York seems to be an epitome of the modern world and Fitzgerald's novel responds to the conditions of this urban space.

On the importance of the representation of the city in modernist literature, Desmond Harding says "To all intents and purposes it has become impossible to ignore the presence of

the city when we speak about avant-garde movements in the early decades of the twentieth century”¹⁰. It must be noted that in *The Great Gatsby*, the city is not neglected. Fitzgerald succeeds to present us the characteristics of the American identity via the urban city of New York.

The city, as I have said, is of focal importance for modernist writers. It is considered as the place where writers transpose their sense of disenchantment. The modern heroes of John Dos Passos’s *Manhattan Transfer* (1925), Earnest Hemingway’s *The Sun Also Rises* (1927), and Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* are all placed in the midst of the city in order to best convey to the reader the urban life and its impact on individual’s life and mainly his identity.

Critic Radu Ciobotea in his work *Le mot vécu* makes an interesting argument about space-character relationship. He notes that:

Toutes les conceptions classiques de la relation espace-personnage partent du principe que c’est l’espace qui porte le personnage, qui est le symbole de sa manière de vivre le monde qui l’entourne, qui est aussi son protagoniste.¹¹

It is clear from this passage that space is separable from characters. The character of the novel for Ciobotea is always related to the space he occupies. The space-character relationship is best seen in the novel. This is the case in *The Great Gatsby* in which space defines the identity of the character.

The 1920s bring in new changes not only in terms of morality and social life but also in terms of identity. Fitzgerald structures his narrative in a way that permits him to describe the modern metropolis. In fact, the identity of this new urban life is depicted through the focus on four important settings which are New York City, East Egg, West Egg, and the Valley of Ashes. These four locations are interrelated and what is common to them is the fact that they are products and archetypes of the modern society.

In their book entitled *From Puritanism to Post Modernism: A History of American Literature*, Richard Ruland and Malcolm Bradbury maintain that “the writing of the 1920s abounds in images of fragmentation, waste, castration and sterility- not just in Pound’s “Hugh Selwyn Mauberly” or Eliot’s *The Waste Land*, but in the Valley of Ashes that darkens Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* ¹². The two critics refer to an important period in American literature. They consider the 1920s as a period in which the majority of writings make an exceptional focus on fragmentation and disorder. Additionally, the glamour of the Jazz age is seen as a façade of despair and disillusionment.

Decay is a theme that constantly comes up in *The Great Gatsby*. It is appropriate in a novel which centers on the death of the American Dream. Decay is most evident in the Valley of Ashes which is a decadent and desolate space which serves to comment on the downfall of the American society. This decay, in fact, comes from the influence of Eliot. Like the Valley of Ashes, the land of Eliot reflects the decay in social life. Chapter two of *The Great Gatsby* begins with Nick describing a waste land known as ‘the valley of ashes’, an area between West Egg and New York which totally lacks color and distinguished by ‘grey’, bleak dust. The following passage is descriptive of the Valley of Ashes:

This is a valley of ashes-a fantastic farm where ashes grow like wheat into ridges and hills and grotesque gardens; where ashes take the forms of houses and chimneys and rising smoke and, finally, with a transcendent effort, of ash-grey men, who move dimly and already crumbling through the powdery air. Occasionally a line of grey cars crawls along an invisible track, gives out a ghastly creak and comes to rest, and immediately the ash-grey men swarm up with leaden spades and stir up an impenetrable cloud which screens their obscure operations from your sight ¹³

From the description of this desolate land, one can easily see how this area is symbolical. It is one of the powerful symbols in the novel. One cannot miss the influence of T.S Eliot on Fitzgerald. In fact, the Valley of Ashes embodies a modern waste land just as Eliot’s waste land. It is obvious that Eliot through his description of the city has influenced Fitzgerald.

Practically, Fitzgerald devotes much of the novel to the description of the modern urban city. In fact, in his description he bears some similarities with T.S Eliot's poem. First, both of them focus on urban settings that belong to the twentieth century. In addition to the setting, one can realize that the two referred and attributed to the modern metropolis they describe by the name of "unreal city". While Eliot says it deliberately in the last stanza of "The Burial of the Dead", Fitzgerald prefers to give a true name to his unreal city. New York can be considered unreal because of the colossal prosperity of the Jazz Age that invaded the American soil. In fact, ethics, morals and principles are replaced by the modern morality; carelessness, materialism and the pursuit of pleasure became the most dominant values.

From the analysis of the representation of the urban space in T.S Eliot's "*The Waste Land*" and Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, I notice that by way of his description of the modern city of 1920s America, Fitzgerald seems to be influenced by Eliot's poem. In other words, Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and Eliot's poem are two stories that similarly express the modernist post-war disillusionment. They belong, in fact, to the same literary movement. Thus, the shared ways in which Eliot and Fitzgerald focus on space and description urge us to think about the resemblances between these works.

Takoradi an Archetype of a Modern Metropolis:

When we read Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, we observe that he shares some opinions with T.S Eliot. For instance, in both Eliot's poem "*The Waste Land*" and Armah's novel there are descriptions of a similar chaotic and scatological world. Also, we notice that Armah formulates and elaborates descriptions of the setting that resemble the setting of Eliot's poem. Furthermore, the same disillusionment is noticeable in the two works. In fact, they both question the meaninglessness of the modern life and display the despair that spread in modern societies.

A lot of critics and articles refer to the analogies between *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet born* and *The Waste Land*. Riche Bouteldja points to such an analogy in his study of *Templates of Intertextuality in the Modern African Novel*:

In the Takoradi sleepy commuters, streaming out of the decrepit bus in the Miltonian “visible darkness” of the African national winter dawn, we recognise the Eliotian somnambulistic crowd of commuters, who “Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,/ [...] flowed over London bridge”¹⁴

In fact, from line 60 to 68, Eliot introduces the “Unreal City” in which people seem physically alive but spiritually dead:

A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many
I had not thought death had undone so many.¹⁵

In London, as in the Valley of Ashes, people move aimlessly. Also, these lines suggest a similar description of the Takoradi city by Armah.

Armah’s Takoradi with its decrepit buildings and the upper class residential area can be considered as unreal just as Eliot’s London since they become places where disillusioned commuters move. By way of example, the author comments on Ghanaians as follows:

These were the men who had finally, and so early, so surprisingly early, seen enough of something in their own lives and in the lives around them [...] But perhaps the living dead could take some solace in the half- thought that there were so many others dead in life with them. So many, so frighteningly many, resulted only in another, more frustrating kind of living death¹⁶

For Ode Ogede, Armah’s novel “builds up with extraordinary attention to detail the specificity of individual characters’ experience as they go about as flesh-and-blood humans, running the daily rounds of the business of living”¹⁷. Armah does not situate his characters haphazardly, but he is careful in the choice of the setting in which he situates them. Here too, we see that Armah is describing the identity of Ghanaians through his focus on their daily experiences and the space in which they are performed.

Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* is set in Takoradi which we can consider as a waste land. Takoradi is transformed from a hopeful land into a land of corruption and decadence. While Eliot engages in the description of the modern life in London, Armah describes the modern life in Ghana. In fact, Armah starts by giving an account of the moral decadence of people through the example of the bus conductor. In addition to the bus scene, the Railway administration banister is described in detail. In fact, it is a mass of filth and a representative example of moral decadence.

Through the description of his setting, Armah views Ghana, its roads, its buildings and its people as a waste land. People are described as sleepers who are spiritually dead "[...] all around decaying things push inward and mix all the body's juices with the taste of rot" ¹⁸. Armah's description of Ghana and its inhabitants remind us of Eliot's crowd of people over the London Bridge "walking round in a ring" ¹⁹. Indeed, in both texts, there is description of walking people who are actually experiencing death in life.

The perspective offered by Eliot in his description of the woman in the room is analogous in many points to Armah's description of Koomson's household.

Te chair she sat in, like a burnished throne,
Glowed on the marble, where the glass
Held up by standards wrought with fruited vines
From which a golden Cupidon peeped out
(another hid his eyes behind his wing)
Doubled the flames of seven branched candelabra
Reflecting light upon the table as
The glitter of her jewels rose to meet it,
From satin cases poured in rich profusion.
In vials of ivory and coloured glass²⁰

Like Eliot, Armah focuses on the luxurious possessions of Koomson. There are a lot of shiny things to be desired in the house:

It was amazing how much light there was in a place like this. It glinted off every object in the room. Next to each ashtray there were two shiny things: a silver box and a small toy-like pistol [...] The sitting room was cut off by a long, high frame, beautifully polished, also with shelves all covered with small, intricate objects that must have come from foreign lands [...] ²¹

This could be another analogy to Eliot's poem. Armah seems to draw from Eliot the way he describes the space which is linked to the aristocratic group.

Like Eliot, Armah places emphasis on Takoradi as an urban centre in order to express his cynicism towards the moral state his society is subjected to. The settings are similar in the sense that in both there is reference to decay, filth and death. The surrounding environment is dreadful and bears only frustration to the characters that move there. In Lutwack's words:

An often repeated central setting, a place where the destinies of the characters periodically converge, may become so dominant that it takes on the force of an image representing the whole book in the mind of the reader ²²

This statement is very evocative because it shows that the setting is more than just the place where actions take place. Setting is crucial to the understanding of the work as a whole. It is through the filthy decayed setting of Armah's novel and Eliot's poem that we detect the main themes of the two works. Also, it is thanks to the description of Takoradi, its buildings, and roads that we succeed to follow Eliot and Armah in the portrayal of their respective contemporary societies.

The conclusion resulting from my analysis of Eliot's representation of space in his poem "*The Waste Land*" can be summed up as follows; first, we have seen that Eliot is classified as one of the pioneers of the modernist movement in literature and his poem "*The Waste Land*" brings about a new focus on the description of urban city life. The poet in order to express effectively the rapid changes in social life after World War I, resorts to the description of an urban setting. Likewise, Armah's and Fitzgerald's novels retrace the rapid decay in social life and reproduce the same vision of decay and desolation.

From my analysis, it seems that both Armah and Fitzgerald have been influenced by T.S Eliot in his portrayal of the urban metropolis. The two novels have created common visions from Eliot's "*The Waste Land*". The Valley of Ashes in New York is the waste land of Fitzgerald and Takoradi is the waste land of Armah situated in an African context.

We have also seen in this analysis that Eliot influenced Fitzgerald and Armah through his modernist disillusioned vision of the modern world. Accordingly, because of the immoral life and the obsession of people to gather money regardless the means, Armah paints a picture of life in Ghana. Fitzgerald in his turn with his critical eye expresses his sense of disenchantment through the portrayal of the Jazz Age morality. Though written in two separate contexts, *The Great Gatsby* and *The Beautiful Ones* share some similarities and deal with the same issues. These similitudes derive mainly from Eliot's impact on these modernist writers.

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Chapter Two: The Poetics of Space in *The Great Gatsby* and *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*

The first section of this analysis aims to study the representation of space by comparing Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* and Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. It is in this stage of my study that the representation of space is most obvious. In fact, the twentieth century witnesses a new interest in the study of space and its representation. In Fitzgerald's and Armah's novels, I will scrutinize this renewed focus on space. I argue that there is a common focus on the way they organize space in their works. Also, they have a tendency to produce meaning beyond the story that exists on the surface.

This study focuses on the content of the two works. In particular, I will compare Armah's and Fitzgerald's organization of space in their novels. I intend to examine the most recurrent spaces in both novels and to trace the effects these spaces generate on characters. Fitzgerald and Armah communicate not only the history of their countries, but also the moral crisis their societies were subjected to. Through their focal attention to space and place, both writers address issues of corruption, immorality and disenchantment. I shall give much importance on the unsaid and the visions of both authors. In fact, the unsaid in the two novels is reflected through the focus on space.

To achieve my task, I will first try to speak of the representation of space in literature and specifically in the novel. I will show that attention to space raises in the twentieth century which is characterized by change and innovation. The first part of my analysis is devoted to the analysis of the representation of space in *The Great Gatsby*. the second part is concerned with the study of space in Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*. The examination and the comparison of the authors' representation of space will be done following the perspective of Leonard Lutwack.

Literature functions as a rich site for the analysis of space and place. It is, as we have said, a crucial and decisive element in narratology. Literary space is not the background of the story or the arena of events. It is an active participant which contributes in the production of meaning. Therefore, in order to better understand the importance of space in the novel, it is vital to consider it first as the setting of the actions and second, as a key element that helps to understand the other components of the narrative text and discourse.

Space in the twentieth century became an important preoccupation for writers. Representations of cities, architecture, regions, the spaces of the home and the landscapes became tropes through which authors tackled the societal, cultural and political issues of their era. Description became a useful tool for the portrayal of the conditions of any given society or community. These specificities which preoccupies writers and critics contribute to what to be known as the spatial turn ¹

1. Space, Society and Identity

Detailed studies of the work of authors such as Ayi Kwei Armah and Scott Fitzgerald help to form a more understanding of the ways in which the two writers experience and represent space and place. In fact, my study of their novels in the basis that they show a great concern for space. To put it differently, both Fitzgerald and Armah are interested in the representation of space. It is worth saying that each of them chooses his own specific topography. In this context, Jean-Pierre Goldenstein writes that the representation of space “varie selon les procédés descriptifs choisis par le romancier” ². Thus, the writer is free to choose the appropriate space in which he could situate his characters and their actions.

American literature produces one of the influential and significant literatures of the world. Many critics state that Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* is the best known of his novels. Also, It is a novel holds a valuable position among the masterpieces of twentieth

century American literature. It is a satirical novel that attempts to explore questions concerning America and what it means to be American. At first sight, the novel seems to be about love and idealism. However, we soon recognize its main theme. Viewed from more distant perspectives we can see it as a representative example of a chaotic and a hostile world.

Narrated through the eyes of Nick Carraway, the novel reports on the American society of the 1920s. It is the story of Jay Gatsby and a host of characters that surround him. Fitzgerald is considered as “the embodiment as well as the chronicler of the Jazz Age”³. He depicts through the eyes of Nick the corruption and the materialism that dominate this society. Like many writers, Fitzgerald uses the setting in order to convey information concerning their characters and the society in which the novel takes place. In *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald do not only use the setting to allow readers appreciate key ideas but also to get across the psychological attitudes of his characters.

Fitzgerald’s preoccupation in the novel is the representation of space in order to search for an answer for the ills of the booming 1920s. In fact, he possesses the appropriate skills to portray the darker side of the Jazz Age and this positioned him as one of the talented writers in American literature. To achieve his goals, he journeys readers through series of events whose main function is to create and shape a vivid picture of America. Therefore, we notice that beneath the presence of romance, *The Great Gatsby* is a severe criticism of the Roaring Twenties. Gatsby’s love story with Daisy and Tom’s meetings with Myrtle are part of this romance and at the same time symbols of the immorality that dominates the Roaring Twenties. The portrayal of this period is certainly the result of the writer’s personal experience. Indeed, much of the novel’s events are part of his ritzy life with Zelda.

The jazz age is the term used to refer to the decade of both decadence and prosperity that America enjoyed during the 1920s. To portray this decadence, Fitzgerald relies on

descriptions such as the summer twilight in New York, the Long Island night and the valley of Ashes. Ronald Berman is one of the major critics of Fitzgerald's novel. In his work entitled *The Great Gatsby and Modern Times (1994)*, he considers time and space as important aspects of perception. To this, he adds: "there is a powerful disposition to see the book as a photographic record of the Jazz Age"⁴. This implies that time and space are means through which the Jazz Age is depicted.

To speak of characters in any novel we have to situate them in a specific space. The latter, in fact, exists by the presence of the character. So, we can say that space exists from the moment it is occupied by the human being. This is relevant to Fitzgerald's novel, in the sense that most of his characters are only reflections of the space they occupy. On one side, we find George and Myrtle Wilson who are products of the wasteland between the suburban world of wealth and New York City. On the other, there is Tom, Daisy and Gatsby as representatives of the attractive space.

a. The Attractive and the Repulsive Spaces:

Fitzgerald is one of the modernist writers who formulates a completely new approach to the treatment of the notion of space. In *The Great Gatsby*, he focuses on space as a means to express his disappointment towards the 1920s morality. The hollowness that defines this period is depicted through the division between three different social classes: "old money, new money and no money"⁵. Old money families are those who are at the top of the social ladder. They possess big fortunes and establish powerful connections in society. The new money are those who made their fortunes from the boom that fuelled America during the 1920s. The last class which is the no money is the deprived families in society.

In the novel, we are given an early insight into the space of the haves. Fitzgerald gives detailed description of Gatsby's mansion. He is, in fact, one of the "nouveau riche" of West

egg who is known for his luxurious possessions. Similarly, the Buchanans live in the wealthy area called East egg. Here, we notice that behind the description of these spaces there lies a symbolical meaning. On the one hand, we see that space evokes something about the characters. On the other, it reflects their attitudes, behavior, and to a certain extent their emotions.

Through my study of the location of the two Eggs, I notice that they play major roles in shaping the novel's view on values, money and the disparity between the classes. These two social classes share the same moral values and the spaces in which they are described reveal the type of characters they are. Geographically, the two Eggs are nearly identical as it is described in the novel: "Twenty miles from the city a pair of enormous eggs, identical in contour and separated only by a courtesy bay [...]"⁶. It is, in fact, the characters who inhabit these spaces that differentiate them. East eggers, as we said are the old money and West eggers are members of the new money families. Despite this difference, the two groups share some similarities. They are typical representatives of the corruption that materialism can bring. Correspondingly, the space they inhabit reflects this materialism and creates a tragedy of destruction, dishonesty, and corruption. No values exist in such an environment. In reality, behind the glittering façade of the rich, we are struck with an ugly truth.

When they appear in parties or dinners, members of the aristocracy reflect the beauty and glamour of the time. Their homes, specifically Gatsby's, represent one of France's most aristocratic homes. The description of the mansion doesn't only give an insight of Gatsby's character, but also of the society which the rich class represents. In other words, Gatsby's enormous mansion, his fancy clothes and wild parties are meant to symbolize his wealth and the legitimacy of his social standing to the rest of New York's elite society. Such descriptions are pervasive in the novel. The aristocracy is known for the lavish parties they organize. Gatsby is also famous with his parties.

The writer's description of space in the novel further improves our understanding of parties:

The bar is in full swing, and floating rounds of cocktails permeate the garden outside, until the air is alive with chatter and laughter, and casual innuendo and introductions forgotten on the spot, and enthusiastic meetings between women who never knew each other's names⁷

The passage describes one of Gatsby's free parties. It puts into scene a society that likes to enjoy itself with alcohol forgetting about the laws of prohibition. The focus on the bar in this passage serves to put into evidence the immorality of the guests as well as the person who organized the party. It further proves the superficiality of individuals. Thus, such descriptions are very symbolic since they provide a real image of the society in which the novel takes place.

Fitzgerald's symbolic use of location is not limited to just East and West Egg rather he uses other locations to symbolize how he views different aspects of American society. The space where the poor live is totally different from the splendor of aristocratic mansions. The world of the poor is symbolized by the depressing area dubbed the "Valley of Ashes" between Long Island and New York City:

This is a valley of ashes- a fantastic farm where ashes grow like wheat into ridges and hills and grotesque gardens; where ashes take the forms of houses and chimneys and rising smoke and, finally, with a transcendent effort, of ash-grey men, who move dimly and already crumbling through the powdery air.⁸

The valley of ashes is depicted as a true product of the wasteland between the suburban world of wealth and New York City. It is an impoverished area where the poor live. The housing is poor and they have not even access to electricity. Those who live in the valley of ashes, including the Wilsons, are stuck in poverty. This is the only geographical location in the book that suffers from poverty and it is the result of those living in the Eggs and New York City. This filthy place represents the moral decay the American society has been subjected to. The

writer describes an area that is less attractive in order to sharpen the reader's appreciation of the massive division between the haves and the have-nots.

In the first section of this chapter, I have examined Fitzgerald's representation of space in *The Great Gatsby*. I have seen that Fitzgerald in order to best report the values of the modern American society relies on the representation of space. Throughout my analysis of the novel, I have noticed that the author emphasizes on four distinct settings: West Egg, East Egg, New York and the Valley of Ashes. I have said that the aim of Fitzgerald is the description of the American society during the 1920s. I have deduced that the differences that exist between the space of the haves and the have-nots give us a true understanding of the identity of certain characters including Gatsby, Tom and Daisy.

In the second section, I will shed light on Armah's depiction and representation of space in *The Beautiful Ones*. I shall focus on that relationship between characters and the space they move in. I will also see how space and characters are interconnected. I will highlight the importance of space in determining characters' emotional states. I have seen that Fitzgerald in order to achieve his target chooses to focus on four locations. Though Armah journeys readers through various settings and spaces, I will focus on two representative locations which are the private and public spaces.

The Beautiful Ones is Armah's first novel which emerged in the literary scene in 1968. It is set in Ghana shortly before the 1965 "Coup d'état". The novel is about the life of a railway worker whom Armah chooses to call "the man". The modest life of this ordinary man is limited to the comings and goings between his office and his home. During his walking and movements in the city of Takoradi, the man roams in different spaces and places. Furthermore, he notices that the independent nation of Ghana is trapped in a miserable condition. For that reason many characters in this novel seem to be confused itinerants engaged in a quest for a beautiful world.

Certain issues have been of paramount interest to Postcolonial African writers. One of these issues is corruption. The scarcity of human dignity and integrity became the major themes of the novels that emerged during the postcolonial period. To be more explicit, these novels are seen as echoes of the reality that most African societies have endured. Also, they could be seen as panoramic visions of a society in which wealth is in the hands of the privileged minority. This minority elevates and places materialism above morality. Armah took his pen in order to report on the bleak and fraud that dominate the Ghanaian society. He reports it through the eyes of an individual who has retained his sense of integrity despite the temptations he is exposed to.

Like Scott Fitzgerald, Armah shapes his novel by concentrating on public, social and political issues that prevail in Ghana. This is why Ode Ogede said that Armah is a radical iconoclast “By bringing the ugliest human experiences from the dark corners into the bright light”⁹. What makes him an iconoclast is the way he attacks the abuses of the new appointed government leaders. Indeed, with his novel, he clearly assaults and brings into light the ugly facets of life in Ghana and manages to create vivid scenes of filth and vileness through his focus on symbolism and description of the physical environment. Through his focus on such issues, he tries to expose the experiences of Ghanaians.

Leonard Lutwack writes that “all places in literature are used for symbolical purposes”¹⁰. Just as Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*, meaning in Armah’s *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* lies behind the description of space and place. The same thing can be noticed in Armah’s novel. The focus on space is done on purpose and Armah’s intentions could be grasped from his use of descriptive passages of the surrounding environment. To put this into evidence, we will try to analyze the most recurrent spaces in the novel.

b. Public and Private Spaces:

In order to describe the public space, we have to follow the movements of characters in the course of the novel. We have to rely on the kind of influence these spaces generate and on the sensory effects generated from moving from one space to another. Leonard Lutwack considers the atmospheric conditions such as light and weather as important elements in the description of out of door spaces. He assumes that rain and fog have a great impact on our perception and emotion in face of place or space¹¹. In *The Beautiful Ones*, the first encounter with the protagonist was in the street:

The light from the bus moved uncertainly down the road until finally the two vague circles caught some indistinct object on the side of the road where it curved out in front. The bus had come to a stop.¹³

The light in the bus has a symbolical function in this passage. It gives an insight of the setting of the action and at the same time it stimulates the reader to perceive the uncertainty in the movement of the bus. Indeed, light in this passage is evocative in the sense that it contributes in the description of out of door space.

Narration in the novel focuses on the public or popular milieu. The protagonist of the novel has a double function. We can consider him as both a witness and a representative of the space of the have-nots. The space which is related to this character is described in details. The purpose is to focus on the onerous life of this ordinary man. In the opening chapter of the book, the man is described in the bus station. Then, we follow him to his office and later to his home. The absence of material comfort in the space which surrounds the man is described or evident in the use of words such as rot, garbage and filth. In fact, Armah's focus on filthy surroundings resembles Fitzgerald's depiction of the valley of Ashes. In a similar way, Armah presents a situation of a society filled with stench, rot, filth, and decay. In order to put into evidence the aspects of this space, Armah makes use of three senses. He exploits the reader's

sense of “sight”, “touch” and “taste”. For instance, in describing the man in the bus, Armah said:

It is possible, after so much time up down the same way, it is possible to close the eyes and lay back the head and yet to know very clearly that one is at this moment passing by that particular place or the other one, because the air brings these places to the open nose.¹⁴

Early in the book, the man comes upon a white waste container which bears the legend “KEEP YOUR COUNTRY CLEAN BY KEEPING YOUR CITY CLEAN”¹⁵. Instead of being a symbol of cleanness, the container overflows with the rotting garbage:

The few provided, however, had not been ignored. People used them well, so that it took no time at all for them to get full. People still used them, and the overflowed with banana peels and mango seeds and thoroughly sucked-out oranges and the chaff of sugarcane and most all the thick brown wrapping from a hundred balls of kenkey. People did not have to go up to the boxes any more. From a distance they aimed their rubbish at the growing heap, and a good amount of juicy offal hit the face and sides of the box before finding a final resting place upon the heap. As yet, the box was still visible above it all, though the writing upon it could no longer be read.¹⁶

The presence of such description is a parabolic critic of the newly independent nation. It is obvious therefore that this descriptive passage demonstrates the carelessness and the failure of those in power. It also signifies, as M.Keith Booker said “the rather feeble and inconsequential efforts of government to “clean up” postcolonial Ghana”¹⁷

In the bus station, description focuses on details of dirtiness, coats of paint and drawings on the walls. Similarly, at the work place, the author describes the wooden banister of the staircase leading to the office where the man works. The wood is very old, with deep cracks and it is not in good shape:

The wood underneath would win and win till the end of time. Of that there was no doubt possible, only the pain of hope perennially doomed to disappointment. It was so clear. Of course it was in the nature of the wood to rot with age. The polish, it was supposed, would catch the rot. But of course in the end it was the rot which imprisoned everything in its effortless embrace¹⁸

Again, through the focus on space, Armah provides a detailed description of the banister. The above extract is one of the symbolic descriptions of the novel. Indeed, the banister is a metaphor for the negligence of the railway administrators. The reader will soon recognize that Armah condemns and blames the leaders because of Ghana's awful conditions after independence.

In the course of the novel, we have noticed that the man, several times, tries to escape from the decayed atmosphere or the climate of his society. In addition, we see that he man finds no comfort both in his office and his home. He is constantly described in isolation. It seems that he looks for freedom. Leonard Lutwack makes reference to the peripheral space which we can define as a marginal specific place where characters find shelter. He says: "The peripheral place may be a refuge to which the hero repairs out of the workaday world to heal his wound and renew his heroic dedication"¹⁹. This, of course, can be applied to the man in the novel. The only one who understands him is "the teacher". The latter's house is a kind of refuge for the man. Accordingly, the man finds in the teacher's home consolation and relief for his inner conflict

Like *The Great Gatsby*, *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* sets on stage two worlds which are opposed by the living standards of their representatives. On the one hand, we have an attractive space and on the other we are exposed to a repulsive one. While the first refers to the bourgeoisie, the second includes the deprived and the poor class of society. An enormous gap exists between the few people with all the money and power i.e. the bourgeoisie, and the masses without anything at all. Armah is one of the best writers who depicts the differences and the gap that exists in these worlds. He focuses on the binary opposition between those who hold power and those who are tormented.

To best describe the private or the domestic space of the Ghanaians, Armah juxtaposes two distinct social classes: the poor and the rich. He relies on the issue of social classes in

order to illustrate the wide gap that exists between the rich and the poor. This is not, of course, his sole intention; he also intends to compare the two universes by focusing on the symbolic function of the spaces occupied by the representatives of each class. This idea is sustained by the critic Ode Ogede who claims that: “chronicling the ravages of environmental devastation becomes an effective means through which the *Beautiful Ones* pictorially juxtaposes the monstrous contrasts in the living standards of the rich and the poor”²⁰. The spaces of the rich and that of the poor are described as two disconnect poles. In fact, the same stratification could be noticed in Fitzgerald’s novel. However, Armah puts much emphasis than Fitzgerald on the gap that separates the two groups. The poor space is occupied by the majority and the rich one encompasses the minority of the country’s ruling class.

The presence of material comfort is what characterizes the lifestyle and the space of the rich. Koomson’s household is situated in the “upper residential area”. The house is big; the gate and the sitting room are designed in a refined style:

[...] the ironwork of the gate, tubes framed in the design of a rising sun, painted blue and gold [...] It was amazing how much light there was in a place like this [...] light came off the marble tops of the little side tables. People had wondered what use a State Marble Works Corporation could be. They need not have wondered there were uses here [...] The room itself was only half of a larger space.²¹

The display and exhibition of the comfort and the luxurious objects indicate the life of opulence, pleasure and not of labor. It is more evocative of the decline in the moral values of the new rich. In fact, Koomson is one of the aristocratic ministers of Takoradi, but before he occupies this position, he was a mediocre student, a docker and later a railway man. He represents well the new rich of Ghana that Armah sees as: “[...] fat, perfumed, soft with the ancestral softness of chiefs who had sold their people and are celestially happy with the fruits of the trade.”²²

As opposed to Koomson's household, the man's domestic space is in a depressed condition. Armah insists on depressing descriptions of the environment, sights and smells of human excrement, spittle, filth, and graffiti. These descriptions, in fact, characterize the space of the poor. This class is represented by the man and his family. Contrary to the residential area which is situated in the hills, the man's residence is located in one of the low areas of the city. Inside his house, we find disgusting latrines as the author writes:

When the man had switched on the light within the bathroom and shut the door, he could not for a time take his eyes off the door where it is rotten at the bottom, and the smell of dead wood filled his nostrils and caressed the cavity of his mouth.²³

Of course, this illustrates the absence of hygiene and sanitation in the domestic surroundings of the deprived class of the Ghanaian society.

Through the analysis of the two opposed spaces, I can say that Armah succeeds to display into the barrier that separates the two social classes. As it is situated in the top of hills, the valorized space, i.e. that of the elite, acquires all the characteristics of the dominant space. The space of the rejected or "les laissés-pour-compte" exposes the low rank of its representatives as Si Arab Abderrahmane puts it in his *Politics and the Novel in Africa (1981)*: "The coup has revealed the extreme vulnerability of people, such as Koomson, the minister and party man, who have thrived on the post- independence spoils[...]"²⁴

After the Coup, things are upturned for people such as Koomson. In fact, he passes from a space of light into a space of gloom and darkness. Koomson the minister is reduced to to the lowest levels of the social scale since he escapes from the disgusting lavatory of one of the poorest men of the city. Thus, the humiliating and shameful process of his escape through the lavatory underscores to a certain extent the failure of the vanity of irresponsible power. It is worth pointing out that Armah by concentrating on description manages to push his readers to follow the movement of the characters in the course of the narrative. By doing so, he

expresses his disappointment with the so called independent Ghanaian Nation. Like Fitzgerald, he relates his space to the theme of disillusionment.

c. The Interplay Between Space and Identity:

We have seen from what precedes that Fitzgerald and Armah by contrasting public with private and attractive with repulsive space outline the social splitting up and portray the gap that results from this split. It is clear that the source of Fitzgerald and Armah's disillusionment derive from the failure of Americans and Ghanaians to maintain their identities amidst the new urban life. New York turns to be the urban city through which Fitzgerald communicated his dystopian vision about a society which losses its identity. Similarly, Takoradi reflects the new adopted identity of postcolonial Ghana.

Identity, in the broad sense, is first a set of characteristics that allow us to define expressly an individual or a group of people. Religion, language, social class, profession are the basic foundations of identity. Whether it is a group or an individual, the definition of their identity always appeals to a set of elements such as possessions, name, and territory. In *The Great Gatsby*, we discover these elements of identity through Fitzgerald's representation of space. The novel is published during the twenties, a period in which urbanization reached its climax. Life in the modern urban environment influences and alters the identity of Americans. Fitzgerald epitomizes the extent to which the new urban living standards affected Americans. Like Fitzgerald, Armah mirrors in *The Beautiful Ones* the postcolonial identity. In my view, Ghanaians are forced to adopt a new identity as a result of the changing social, economic, and political facts.

The description of Gatsby's parties in West Egg with East Eggers and his big mansion are means by which the identity of Gatsby is reported. It is important to note that Gatsby does not identify himself as a member of either East Egg or West Egg. Therefore, this illustrates

that he suffers from a crisis of identity. All the descriptive passages of the surrounding environment of the protagonist are symbolic in the sense that they give us insights into the identity of this character.

Behind the description of Gatsby's and the Buchanans's baronial mansions, we recognize the identity of the American elite class. We can say, in fact, that they have an identity crisis. This could be applied to both Gatsby who tries to impress Daisy and the guests who attend his parties. In addition to Gatsby, we find that Daisy and Tom are identical with Gatsby since they are careless people who "[...] smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness, or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess they had made."²⁵. Thus, space here reveals the true identity of certain characters. New York and West Egg with its mansions seem to be beautiful from outside, but corrupt from the inside.

Similarly to Gatsby's big mansion, Koomson's household in the residential area is a good example that Armah uses in order to describe the identity of Ghana's elite Class. The gate, the garden, and the furniture seem to be white man's possessions. Ghana's Elite members replace their colonizer and enjoy living in such a space. Furthermore, instead of promoting and praising their language, they used to teach their children foreign languages. Koomson's daughter, in fact, symbolizes the failure of Ghanaians to maintain their identity after the period of colonization. Like Fitzgerald, Armah figures out identity through his attention to detailed descriptions of character's movements, speeches and behavior in their households.

Scott Fitzgerald's hero named Jay Gatsby is one among the characters who suffer from a crisis of identity. This is mainly the result of the intensity of his dream. I have stated previously that name, properties, and profession are among the foundations of identity.

Fitzgerald through his representation of space portrays with illustrative and powerful examples the way the modern world alters the American identity during the 1920s.

Gatsby's origins are from the Middle West. Dreaming of a better life and a good future with his beloved Daisy, he moves to the East. To make his dream come true, he changes his name into Gatsby, moves to the eastern side of the United States, and builds a big fortune from bootlegging. By doing so, Gatsby shows that Americans transgress two of the main ideals of the American dream which are freedom and equality. This could be seen also as a shift of identity. Therefore, one can deduce that space defines the identity of Gatsby and moving to the East requires change in one's behavior, conduct and identity.

2. Spatial Imagery in *The Great Gatsby* and *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*:

*“Modernism changed the way we know and feel. Modernist literary works, and the intellectual and cultural currents from which they drew force, not only chronicled but also fostered changes”*²⁶

This opening statement is made four years ago, but its meaning and validity are perceptible to the present day. It was stated by Jonathan Greenberg to refer to the modernist movement that emerged as a reaction to the changes in the spheres of life. These changes which are carried by the modernist literary works do not only articulate the way life is altered, but bring about a new conception of how we live, how we feel and how we are affected by our surroundings.

In the present section, I shall analyze the changes brought up by modernists. My focus will be on their representation of space through the use of imagery. I argue that both Armah and Fitzgerald are modernist writers and their works seem to follow the same perspective. More specifically, what this part addresses is the significance of the use of symbolism and

imagery in the modernist novel. Through the comparison of *The Beautiful Ones* and *The Great Gatsby*, I intend to go further to demonstrate what lies behind the use of imagery.

In their description and focus on space, *The Beautiful Ones* and *The Great Gatsby* reveal their distinguishing modernist features. Leonard Lutwack in order to explain the power place holds and the way it helps the writer to describe all what comes about the human mind writes:

Place offers to the writer a vast store of potential metaphors to describe the human mind, body and behavior. Body metaphor is a natural and primitive form. More sophisticated is the transcendental impulse that has enriched literature with imagery drawing analogies between places and ideas in mind [...] ²⁷

From this quotation we can understand that Lutwack rejects the traditional use of metaphors and suggests the use of symbols which has more power to describe the relationship between place and ideas of mind. One can understand that literature has to follow innovation. Hence, writers should get rid of the traditional paradigm and shift to the use of more sophisticated modern style appropriate for the description of human consciousness.

By space imagery, I refer to the images that describe characters either in a state of immobility or as they move from one spot to another. In the course of *The Great Gatsby*, I notice that there is a frequent reference to imagery which is used in order to describe space and the person present in that place. In the first chapter, for instance, through an image of the moonlight, we experience with Gatsby moments of solitude as the following passage implies:

The silhouette of a moving cat wavered across the moonlight, and, turning my head to watch it, I saw that I was not alone – fifty feet away a figure had emerged from the shadow of my neighbor's mansion and was standing with his hands in his pockets regarding the silver pepper of the stars [...] he gave a sudden intimation that he was content to be alone ²⁸

The above passage describes Gatsby in a state of loneliness and isolation. This isolation linked to the moonlight is suggestive of the emotional state of the protagonist. The image of

the moonlight here describes Gatsby not only as an isolated man, but also suggests that he is content and is absolutely at ease.

The same experience of solitude is seen when Nick describes Gatsby at the end of the party he organized:

A wafer of a moon was shining over Gatsby's house, making the night fine as before, and surviving the laughter and the sound of his still glowing garden. A sudden emptiness seemed to flow now from the windows and the great doors, endowing with complete isolation the figure of the host, who stood on the porch, his hand up in a formal gesture of farewell²⁹

Again, in this passage there is reference to moonlight. I can say that imagery of moonlight that describes Gatsby conveys particular emotions about this man. In fact, this focus on spatial imagery aims to show to what extent the protagonist suffers from loneliness. This shows that space is represented by way of images which in their turn come to suggest peculiar states of mind.

In my opinion, Fitzgerald has followed what Leonard Lutwack called 'sophisticated style'³⁰. This is because he uses space not to describe a human body, but mainly to refer to his psychology. We have seen in the above passages taken from *The Great Gatsby* that the moonlight images are always associated with space and serve to reflect the concealed side of the human being. More specifically, they help to understand the unattainable dreams of Gatsby. In what follows, we will see that Armah is also attentive in the use of imagery and his text proves that space and image are interrelated elements.

In commenting on Armah's use of imagery, the critic Ogede Ode says: "It took Armah nearly two hundred pages to make his case strongly with the three final dazzling images which signals his central interest"³¹. According to the critic, Armah's focus on imagery appears at the final chapters of the novel. However, we totally disagree with this critic because Armah is meticulous at the use of imagery right from the two first chapters of the

novel. For instance, description is perceptible from the beginning of the novel as the descriptive passage focusing on a bus which is coming to a stop at dawn:

The light from the bus moved uncertainly down the road until finally the two vague circles caught some indistinct objects on the side of the road where it curved out in front. The bus had come to a stop.³²

The opening chapter of the novel starts with an attractive description of the road. The author makes use of light from the very beginning. In fact, like in *The Great Gatsby* light is meaningful and at the same time symbolic. The image of the bus as a whole provides readers with a detailed description of the road from which we understand the absence of security or moral ideals. Reference to uncertainty here symbolizes and gives an image of the decadent nation. The image of the bus gives us an idea of the nation as a whole and not of one specific individual. Therefore, I notice that Armah's use of spatial imagery differs from Fitzgerald's. The former through space imagery gives a certain idea about a character and then he injects and generalizes on a group of people. However, the latter makes use of space to give only one precise attitude about a specific character.

Chapter two of *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* starts with an image of dimness which later transforms into an image of light:

The dimness of the morning made all colors inside the office itself look very strange [...] From the office floor the light came dully [...] At the control desk the night clerk was still in his seat, but he had fallen asleep.³³

From the road, we move into another space which is the man's office. Armah's choice of the image here comes to portray a particular situation in a closed space. The image of light in the office captures too the moral decadence and the decay. The colors in the office seem strange because the workers are lifeless.

One can say that Fitzgerald and Armah in order to follow the change accumulated with the coming of the twentieth century have produced a kind of literature with new techniques

that suits well with change and innovation. I attempted to highlight the way imagery of space played a crucial role in Fitzgerald and Armah's works. I analyzed the most recurrent images in order to see the relationship between space and characters. I came to the conclusion that both writers succeed to reveal through images of space characters' feelings and states of mind.

As a conclusion to this discussion, I can say that through my analysis of the two novels in question, I discovered the way Armah and Fitzgerald represented and structured space. Both authors as we have seen share a common preoccupation with the representation of space. Despite the differences that exist between the two authors, their novels seem to be a production of the same author. The two works are set in two distinct backgrounds and portray two different societies and cultures. However, I find close affinities between the two works. These affinities are shared through the focus on space and its representation.

I have analyzed the novels of both authors in terms of their representation of space. The space for both authors conveys meaning and information about the person who occupies it. Armah has been a direct witness of the corruption that dominated the Ghanaian society after independence. Similarly, Fitzgerald has reported facts he himself experienced during the period dubbed the Roaring Twenties. Therefore, representation of space became a tool for both authors to criticize and to express their disillusionment toward the newly adopted values of their respective societies. So, both authors are skillful in creating detailed descriptions of the physical environment in which characters move.

In *The Beautiful Ones*, we have seen that Armah expresses his cynicism by focusing on two important spaces: the domestic or the private space and the public one. I have tried to prove that corruption is present in both spaces. In his turn, Fitzgerald in *The Great Gatsby* depicts the Jazz Age morality through his focus on the representation of two spaces: an attractive space symbolized by the haves and a repressive one, represented by the have-nots. From the comparison of the two novels, I deduced that space is crucial to the understanding of

questions concerning corruption, dishonesty and immorality. In fact, it is through the representation of space that we discover the role of characters in the novel. Also, through the movements of the characters, one could easily grasp the main themes or the main ideas the author wants to convey.

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Comparative literature is a branch of literary studies that involves the joint or contrastive study of literatures of the same or different linguistic areas. These literatures are gathered together in order to highlight the links, the divergences, the kinships or the influences between each other. This dissertation can be considered as a contribution to the field of comparative literature since it is concerned with comparing two works of fiction from two different literatures.

The twentieth century is a flourishing era in literature. It hastened change in society, in culture, in politics and essentially in literary studies. In fact, it contributes a great deal in the spatial turn in literature. As my study has shown, Ayi Kwei Armah and Scott Fitzgerald have participated in this turn by giving importance to space in their novels. This is accomplished by the way they depict the human surroundings and the effect they generate.

My research undertaken from a comparative perspective is limited to dealing with the poetics of space in Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*. This comparative study has allowed me to realize that both Fitzgerald and Armah share the same concern in the representation of space. The novels have been respectively produced by two different authors from two different continents. Politically, socially, and culturally, the two authors belong to different backgrounds, but their novels seem to be the product of one writer.

The affinities between Armah and Fitzgerald stem from the shared ideas and themes. More specifically, these affinities are manifest through the two author's focus on the representation of space. In fact, in their novels, description allows us to understand the themes of disillusionment and corruption. Or, put in other terms, affinities in the two novels can be detected by analyzing the authors' disillusioned attitudes and by analyzing the way they focus on space to portray the corrupt conduct of their characters.

All the way through my assessment of the two novels, I tried to demonstrate that space has a crucial role in the two novels. It is considered as poetic because each descriptive passage of a specific space comes or brings meaning into the plot. In the previous chapters, we have seen that the affinities between the two authors are remarkably more than accidental. Therefore, my dissertation leads to the following conclusions.

Through my analysis of the role of space in the poem, I deduced that the poet and the two authors address similar problems and raise similar questions in their works. The representation of the urban city has been a tool for the portrayal of the fragmentation that characterized London, New York and Takoradi during the twentieth century. To my view, Eliot has been too influential for the two authors and this justifies the fact that Takoradi and New York are reproductions of T.S Eliot's city of London. One can say that Eliot's poem has been a point of departure for both Armah and Fitzgerald.

As we stated earlier, the kinship between Fitzgerald and Armah's derives from their shared ideas and themes. The focal point for both writers is the representation of the urban city. From the analysis of Takoradi and New York, I came to the conclusion that both writers have successfully reproduced Eliot's dystopian vision. The fragmentation, the gloom and waste which predominates the *Waste Land* of T.S Eliot, is reproduced in both *The Great Gatsby* and *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*. Therefore, I can say that fragmentation lies also at the heart of New York and Takoradi.

Fitzgerald and Armah succeed in portraying the aspects of their respective modern metropolises. I have attempted to demonstrate that *The Great Gatsby* and *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* stand as quintessential novels that represent the urban metropolis. I came to the conclusion that Eliot's influences on the two authors is manifested through the

sense of fragmentation and despair we recognize in the description of New York and Takoradi.

Accordingly, the two authors have particularly addressed issues concerning corruption and disillusionment by their focus on space. In *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald gives expression to the corrupt minds of the upper class through his focus on four locations which are: East Egg, West Egg, New York and The Valley of Ashes. These locations can be considered as the main settings of the novel since action and perception are linked together to best report the American mentality. Armah in his turn addresses in his novel issues concerning corruption and fragmentation through his satirical view and his critical eye.

The importance of space and its relation to the human being is explained in the book entitled *Natural space (1982)*. In the latter, Tom Henighan claims that the contours of the landscape and the feelings generated by the presence in this space are important elements in the description of any space ^[1]. So in order to analyze any space, we have to focus on two things: the space itself and the feeling or the reaction created by the individual who is present in that space.

By analyzing the most recurrent spaces in the two novels, I realized that the two authors' focal interests are directed towards the description of the dichotomies of public and private space or attractive and repulsive one. This division, in fact, is what helps me to show the extent to which space defines identity

To conclude, I may say that this research is just one among many interpretative readings of Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*. I hope that this modest dissertation will pave the way for other researcher's undertakings. In fact, the scope of this study does not allow me to deal with all the issues that underline these novels. Therefore, it remains the task of other scholars to

expand further research. In my belief, many other aspects in the two novels remain unexplored and much could be written on other issues such as the study of the crisis of identity.

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